

Advance Edition

Daily Christian Advocate

Proceedings of the 2024 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference
of The United Methodist Church





The intertwined talk bubbles form the shape of a cross, embodying the profound relationship with Christ as conveyed through the questions posed in Scripture. The talk bubbles symbolize dialogue and conversation, highlighting Christ's role as a divine communicator who often posed thought-provoking questions. As these bubbles converge to create the cross, they signify the intersection of human inquiry and divine wisdom. Each talk bubble encapsulates a moment in which Christ, through his questions, engaged intimately with individuals and communities, fostering a deeper understanding of faith and prompting self-reflection. The logo serves as a visual testament to the interactive and transformative nature of Christ's teachings, inviting believers into an ongoing conversation that shapes their spiritual journey and fosters a meaningful connection with the cross as a symbol of divine inquiry.

Important Notice

Bring This Document With You!

No printed copies of the Advance Daily Christian Advocate will be published or mailed prior to SEJ Conference 2024, nor will copies be available at the site of the Conference.

All delegates, reserve delegates, conference officials, and guests are urged to download this document and bring a copy with you to the conference. You will need to reference it during Conference proceedings.

We suggest the following alternatives:

- print out a copy and prepare a notebook for yourself
- download the document to your computer, tablet, or smartphone
- download the document to an e-reader (e.g., iPad, Kindle, Nook, etc.)

This e-format for our Advance Daily Christian Advocate is one step toward a “paperless” conference as a way of being better stewards of God’s creation and of the available financial resources.

Please note: Because of extensive use of WiFi for voting purposes, WiFi will only have limited availability during sessions of SEJ Conference. Downloading or printing a copy of this document will be essential for reference because you will not be able to access the document on the SEJ web site.

No Printed Copies Will Be Available.

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Welcome from Our Senior Bishop



Southeastern Jurisdiction
of The United Methodist Church



July 10, 2024

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 2024 session of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference! Though we are a diverse people representing nine Southeastern states and 14 Annual Conferences of The United Methodist Church, we come together at Lake Junaluska in the knowledge of the love of Christ in our lives.

Our theme, “Forward in Faith” calls us to live from a posture of faith rather than fear as we walk faithfully into that future where Christ is leading. We will come together with hope, remembering who God has called us to be and seeking that which God wants for us.-As we gather this year, my prayer is that we will have ears to hear and eyes to see who God needs for us to be.

The hard work of so many people makes this gathering possible. A profound word of gratitude is expressed to the Rev. Julie Hager Love, SEJ secretary, and Rev. Kathy James, assistant SEJ secretary, along with the members of the planning team. For many months, this team has worked collaboratively with many groups to consider every detail. I am certain that you will join me in saluting the proactive leadership of all of these people who have worked so diligently on our behalf.

As we prepare for the 2024 SEJ Conference I ask for your prayers that great and marvelous things will happen through the Holy Spirit who guides and sustains us. Pray that our presence in this place will be a living witness of the grace, mercy and love of Jesus Christ to all whom we meet. I look forward to seeing you all soon at Lake Junaluska.

Grace and Peace,

L. Jonathan Holston
Senior Bishop, Southeastern Jurisdiction
The United Methodist Church

Registration Process

2024 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference REGISTRATION PROCESS

Bethea Welcome Center at Lake Junaluska

Persons needing to check in for lodging at Lake Junaluska and who arrive prior to 6:00pm will go to the Bethea Welcome Center upon arrival on campus. If you arrive after 6:00pm, please go directly to your hotel (Lambuth or Terrace). *No conference business packets or items will be distributed at any of these locations.* A member of the Secretarial Staff will be on duty during peak periods to answer any specific questions about the SEJ 2024 Conference. Also, a “Frequently Asked Questions” answer sheet will be available at the lodging check-in desks.

Credentials for Delegates and Reserves

Name badges in neck sleeves will serve as the credentials for delegates and reserves. Name badges, which serve as your Conference credentials, will be distributed by your Delegation Head to delegates and reserves prior to the opening session on Wednesday, July 10. Reserves, as is customary, will sit outside the bar of the conference, except for the designated Delegation Teller(s) (if that person is a reserve delegate), who will be seated at the end of the delegation.

Members of the Committee on Episcopacy and the Nominations Committee will receive their name badges at their first meeting.

Credentials for Others

- Bishops and Bishops’ spouses will receive their name badge at the first meeting of the College of Bishops.
- Members of the Judicial Council will receive their name badges from Susan Arnold at the front desk in Stuart Auditorium.
- Communicators will receive their name badges from Jasmine Haynes in the Press Room.
- Monitors will receive their name badges from Jennifer Davis.
- Secretarial Staff will receive their name badges from Julie Hager Love at the staff meeting.
- Episcopal Administrative Assistants will receive their name badges from Susan Arnold at the front desk in Stuart Auditorium.
- At-large pages will receive their name badges from Susan Arnold during their orientation session.
- United Methodist guests representing Agencies and Commissions will receive their name badges from Susan Arnold at the front desk in Stuart Auditorium.

Guests

Conference guests are welcome to attend the Conference but will not be issued official credentials or nametags.

Conference Agenda

**Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference
July 9-12, 2024
Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center**

Pre-Conference Schedule (Subject to Change—and Additions)

Sunday, July 7

Throughout Day/Evening Bishops arrive at Lake Junaluska
Committee on Episcopacy arrives at Lake Junaluska
Nominating Committee arrives at Lake Junaluska

Monday, July 8

9:00 a.m. Committee on Episcopacy Meeting—Harrell Center, Room 202

9:00 a.m. Nominating Committee Meeting - Harrell Center, Susan Todd Lounge

Time TBD SEJ College of Bishops Meeting – Gaines Auditorium

Time TBD Bishop’s Retirement Dinner
Warren Center

7:00 p.m. Secretarial Staff Meeting – Terrace Room 213

Tuesday, July 9

9:00 a.m. Committee on Episcopacy -- Harrell Center, Room 202

 Nominating Committee – Harrell Center, Susan Todd Lounge

Time TBD SEJ College of Bishops – Gaines Auditorium

Time TBD Rehearsal for Opening Worship and Communion (College of Bishops)
Stuart Auditorium

Time TBD Delegation Tellers and At-Large Pages Orientation
Stuart Auditorium

7:00 p.m. Optional Orientation Session for Delegates
Stuart Auditorium

8:15 p.m. Reception for Youth & Young Adults
Terrace Room tba

First Day of Conference Session
Wednesday, July 10

Opening Session

All Sessions in Stuart Auditorium unless noted

- 9:00 a.m. Opening Worship with Holy Communion
Bishop Jonathan Holston, preaching
Bishop Leonard Fairley, celebrant
- 10:15 a.m. Transition Break
- Bishop Jonathan Holston, Columbia Area, Presiding**
- 10:30 a.m. Opening Business Session
Gathering Hymn
Call to Order
Opening Prayer
Roll Call, Quorum Certification
Centering Time
Secretarial Staff and Additional Leadership Elections
Committee on Plan of Organization and Rules of Order
Adoption of Agenda
Welcome to Lake Junaluska
Nominations from COB
Balloting Instructions and Testing
Committee on Episcopacy
The State of the Church: Bishop Ken Carter, Charlotte Area
- Noon Lunch Break
- 12:15 p.m. Organizational Meeting for Journal Committee – Harrel Room 101

Wednesday, July 10
Afternoon Session

Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson, Richmond Area, Presiding

- 2:00 p.m. Reconvene Business Session
Centering Time
- 2:05-3:05 p.m. Racial Bias Task Force Report
- 3:05-3:45 p.m. Keynote: Claire Bowen General Session 1
3 Practices
- 3:45-5:30 p.m. Small Group #1 for 3 Practices
Breakout rooms to be assigned
- 5:30 p.m. Dinner Break

Wednesday, July 10
Evening Session

- 7:30 p.m. Retirement Celebration
- 8:15 p.m. Jazz at Junaluska – Memorial Chapel

Second Day of Conference Session

Thursday, July 11

Morning Session

Bishop Tom Berlin, Florida Area, Presiding

- 9:00 a.m. Reconvene Business Session
Centering Time
Reports from SEJ Agencies
Report of Committee on Coordination and Accountability
Committee on Finance and Administration
- 10:30 a.m. Break
- 11:00 a.m. Service of Remembrance
Bishop Bill McAlilly, preaching
Lemonade Reception following service – Tent outside Stuart
- 12:00 noon Lunch Break

Afternoon Session

Bishop Connie Shelton, Raleigh Area, Presiding

- 2:00 p.m. Reconvene Business Session
Centering Time
Report from Nominations
Reports from SEJ Agencies
Nominations from the College of Bishops
Monitoring Report
- Small Group #2 3 Practices
Breakout rooms to be assigned
- 5:30 p.m. Dinner Break
- Committee on Investigation Organized
Place TBA
- Committee on Appeals Organized
Place TBA

Evening Session

Bishop Robin Dease, North Georgia Area, Presiding

- 7:15 p.m. Additional Business as Needed
Committee on Episcopacy
Episcopal Assignments for 2024-2028
Adjourning Prayer
- 8:00 p.m. Area Receptions

Third Day of Conference
Friday, July 12, 2024

9:00 a.m.

Closing Worship
Bishop Debbie Wallace-Padgett, preaching
Remembering your Baptism – Bishop David Graves & Bishop Sharma Lewis

Personnel of the 2024 SEJ Conference

PERSONNEL OF THE 2024 SOUTHEASTERN JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCE

2024 CONFERENCE MEMBERSHIP AND STAFF

The College of Bishops (in order of their election)

H. Hasbrouck Hughes, Jr. (1988)	Retired	Richard J. Wills, Jr. (2004)	Retired
Richard C. Looney (1988)	Retired	Mary Virginia Taylor (2004)	Retired
Clay F. Lee (1988)	Retired	Paul L. Leeland (2008)	Retired
Robert E. Fannin (1992)	Retired	L. Jonathan Holston (2012)	Columbia
Kenneth L. Carder (1992)	Retired	Kenneth H. Carter (2012)	Charlotte
G. Lindsey Davis (1996)	Retired	William T. McAlilly (2012)	Nashville
Joe E. Pennel, Jr. (1996)	Retired	Debra Wallace-Padgett (2012)	Birmingham
Charlene P. Kammerer (1996)	Retired		& Knoxville
J. Lawrence McCleskey (1996)	Retired	Sharma D. Lewis (2016)	Mississippi
Ray W. Chamberlain (1996)	Retired	David Graves (2016)	Alabama-West
Larry M. Goodpaster (2000)	Retired		Florida & South Georgia
B. Michael Watson (2000)	Retired	Leonard E. Fairley (2016)	Louisville
James R. King, Jr. (2000)	Retired	R. Lawson Bryan (2016)	Retired
Hope Morgan Ward (2004)	Retired	Sue Hauptert-Johnson (2016)	Richmond
William H. Willimon (2004)	Retired	Thomas Berlin (2022)	Florida
James E. Swanson, Sr. (2004)	Retired	Connie Mitchell Shelton (2022)	Raleigh
Alfred W. Gwinn, Jr. (2004)	Retired	Robin Dease (2022)	Atlanta

Southeastern Jurisdiction Judicial Council Member

Susan Henry-Crowe (SC)

2024 SEJ Conference Secretarial Staff

(Names of clergy appear in italic type)

Secretary

Julie Hager Love (KY)

Secretary Designate

Kathy James (SC)

Conference Minutes Assistant

Celeste Eubanks (AWF)

Ashley Davis (AWF)

Logistics

Dawn Fairley

Delegate Relations

Susan Arnold (HOL)

Editor of the *Daily Christian Advocate*

Dan O'Mara (SC)

Elections and Tellers

Otto Harris (WNC)

Balloting

Ashlee Hand (WNC)

Jurisdictional Conference Treasurer

David Dommissie (VA)

Media Relations

Jasmine Haynes (MS)

Monitoring

Jennifer Davis (WNC)

Worship Coordinator

Sam Parkes (AWF)

Assistant Worship Coordinator

Shannon Boaz (KY)

Staging and Sound Assistance

Becky Hall (HOL)

Centering Time

Melinda Young Britt (TWK)

Nominations

Vickie White (MS)

Sharon Austin (FL)

Young Adults

Liz Roberts (NC)

2024 COMMITTEE ON EPISCOPACY

(Names of clergy appear in italic type)

CONFERENCE	NAME
AWF	Ester, Clara
AWF	<i>Kincaid, Emily</i>
CAM	Osborne, Marilyn
CAM	<i>Amundsen, Robert</i>
FLA	McEntire, Molly
FLA	<i>Shanks, Alex</i>
HOL	Travis, Anne
HOL	<i>Goddard, Kim</i>
KY	Watts, Michael
KY	<i>Coleman, Tami</i>
MISS	Stotts, David
MISS	<i>Britton, Fred</i>
NAL	Lyles, Steve
NAL	<i>Cowser, Dedric</i>
NC	Dodson, Christine
NC	<i>Joyner, Belton</i>
NGA	Fullerton, Rachel
NGA	<i>Thomas, Byron</i>
SC	Jenkins, Jacquelyn
SC	<i>Nelson, Ken</i>
SGA	Richard Shinhoster
SGA	<i>Smalls, Doreen</i>
TWK	Joshua Shaw
TWK	<i>Bryan, Harriet</i>
VA	Harper, Warren
VA	<i>Baynham Freeman, Lindsey</i>
WNC	Davis, Jennifer
WNC	<i>Ingram, Kim</i>

Ballot Tellers

CONFERENCE	NAME
AWF	Ryan Deaton Gene Lammers
CAM	Whitley Henson
FL	Robin Hager Carlene Johnson
HOL	To be named To be named
KY	John Hatton Sarah McGinnis
MS	To be named To be named
NAL	Steve West Hal Riddle
NC	Susan Graebe Chris Brady
NGA	Jessica Terrell Nate Abrams
SC	Lou Jordan Chris Lynch
SGA	Paula Lewis Lorenza Rooks
TNWK	Steph Dodge (former TN) Leslie Hotzfeld (former TN) Sara Corum (former MEM)
VA	Allison Malloy David Vaughn
WNC	Joseph Navarro Ben Carson

1 **Committee on Plan of Organization and Rules of Order**

2
3 **PLAN OF ORGANIZATION AND RULES OF ORDER**

4 *(As adopted by 2022 SEJ Conference)*

5
6 **PLAN OF ORGANIZATION**

7
8 **I. OPENING SESSION**

9
10 The Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church shall assemble
11 according to the provisions of the 2016 *Book of Discipline* (§§ 24, 26, 27) (or *Book of Discipline* as it
12 may hereafter be amended) and the law of the Church at a place within the bounds of the
13 Southeastern Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church.

14
15 **A. Presiding Bishop**

16
17 Following the administration of Holy Communion by the Bishops of the Southeastern Jurisdiction,
18 the conference shall be called to order by a Bishop of the Southeastern Jurisdiction as determined by
19 the College of Bishops; this Bishop shall preside during the first session of the same.

20
21 **B. Seating of Special Groups**

22
23 Members of the Judicial Council of the United Methodist Church residing within the bounds of the
24 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference shall be seated on the platform of the Jurisdictional
25 Conference and allowed the same Per Diem and travel as elected delegates, and they shall be without
26 vote.

27
28 The general or executive secretaries of the general boards and agencies of the church who are
29 members of the annual conferences within the bounds of the Southeastern Jurisdiction and who are
30 not elected members of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference shall be seated within the area of
31 the conference and shall have the privileges of the floor on matters affecting the interests of their
32 boards and agencies, but without vote, and at the expense of their respective boards and agencies.

33
34 **C. Roll Call and Order of Business**

35
36 The following order of business shall be observed:

37
38 1. The secretary of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference shall call the roll in the
39 following manner:

40
41 a. The names of the Bishops of the Southeastern Jurisdiction and of the delegates-
42 elect of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference who have died since the
43 adjournment of the preceding Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference.

44
45 b. The names of the Bishops of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference.
46

47 c. The roll of delegates shall be called by annual conferences. The chairperson of each
48 delegation shall be provided with a blank form on which to report in writing the
49 attendance of its members, noting absentees and substitutions, which reports shall be
50 tabulated by the secretary and published in the Daily Christian Advocate. Any reserve
51 seated in the place of a regular delegate by his/her Annual Conference shall meet the
52 requirements set forth in *The Book of Discipline* 2016 of The United Methodist
53 Church (§§ 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 514). Delegates, including reserves, when the latter are
54 substituted for a delegate or delegates, shall be seated in the order of their election.
55 Each Delegation Head will certify daily that his/her delegation is properly seated on a
56 form provided by the Conference Secretary.
57

58 2. A majority of the whole number of delegates elected to the Jurisdictional Conference shall
59 constitute a quorum for the transaction of business (§ 518, 2012 *Discipline*). At the
60 conclusion of the roll call, the secretary shall announce whether or not a quorum is present.
61

62 3. The Plan of Organization and Rules of Order, prepared by the Committee on Plan of
63 Organization, shall be submitted to the conference for its action and determination.
64

65 4. The College of Bishops shall present a nomination from the clergy or laity membership
66 of the United Methodist Church within the Southeastern Jurisdiction for secretary designate.
67 Other nominations shall be permitted from the floor. The Agenda Committee shall schedule
68 the time of election. The election, if there are two or more nominees, shall be by ballot with a
69 majority of the votes cast being required for an election. The secretary designate shall assume
70 the responsibilities of the office of secretary as soon after the adjournment of the
71 Jurisdictional Conference as all work in connection with the session, including the
72 preparation, printing, and mailing of the journal, has been completed. The exact date of the
73 transfer or responsibility to the secretary designate shall be determined by the College of
74 Bishops, but shall not be later than six (6) months after the adjournment of the Jurisdictional
75 Conference. Other details about the Conference Secretary position include:
76

77 a. That the Conference Secretary shall be a part-time, paid position.
78

79 b. That the Senior Effective Bishop, the CCA Chair, and CCA Vice-Chair serve as
80 the direct supervisors of the Conference Secretary.
81

82 c. That the Conference Secretary:

83 i. Coordinate the considerable functions associated with planning, executing and
84 reporting on the quadrennial session;

85 ii. Act in executive/administrative role assisting the Committee on Coordination
86 and Accountability as it fulfills its important work; and,

87 iii. Oversee a communications system to connect jurisdictional constituents.

88 iv. Respond to the frequent inquiries for information or action that comes from
89 persons located within the Jurisdiction. (Inquires range from complaining
90 about a position of the church, about some media story, about some action by
91 a pastor, district superintendent or Bishop. Also, calls are received from
92 persons who have some desire to purchase abandoned church property.)
93

94 5. The College of Bishops shall present nominations for the administrative committees, and
95 such other nominations as are hereinafter committed to them, for election by the conference.
96

97 6. Election of Bishop(s) (2016 *Discipline*, ¶ 27.2).
98

99 7. Election of Committee on Episcopacy for the ensuing quadrennium (2016 *Discipline*, ¶
100 50).
101

102 8. Election of the Committee on Appeals for the ensuing quadrennium (2016 *Discipline*,
103 ¶2716.1) and the Committee on Investigation for the ensuing quadrennium (2016 *Discipline*,
104 ¶ 2703).
105

106 9. Miscellaneous business.
107

108 10. Adjournment.
109

110 II. EPISCOPAL MESSAGE 111

112 The College of Bishops and the Program/Arrangements Committee may schedule the hearing of the
113 quadrennial message of the College of Bishops.
114

115 III. LAITY ADDRESS 116

117 The Program/Arrangements Committee may schedule a Laity Address for the quadrennial session.
118 When scheduled, the Jurisdictional Association of Conference Lay Leaders will designate the
119 presenter(s) for the address.
120

121 IV. PRESIDING OFFICERS AND SECRETARIAL STAFF 122

123 A. The effective Bishops of the Southeastern Jurisdiction shall preside over the sessions of the
124 conference in an order determined by the College of Bishops.
125

126 B. The secretary of the Jurisdictional Conference as elected shall serve as herein provided.
127

128 C. The conference shall elect, upon the nomination of the secretary, such assistant secretaries from
129 the clergy or laity membership of the United Methodist Church within the Southeastern Jurisdiction,
130 as it may deem wise.
131

132 D. If in the interim of the Quadrennial Sessions of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference, the
133 office of secretary shall for any reason be vacated, the College of Bishops of the Southeastern
134 Jurisdiction shall elect a successor.
135
136
137
138
139
140
141

142 V. COMMITTEES

143
144 A. The SEJ Committee on Coordination and Accountability

145
146 The SEJ Committee on Coordination and Accountability (also known as CCA) is assigned the task
147 of overseeing the work and ministry of the United Methodist Church across the jurisdiction (*Book of*
148 *Discipline*, ¶530). The responsibilities and function of the committee will include:

- 149
150 1. Having limited power, but with authority, to act between sessions of the Jurisdictional
151 Conference on matters such as ratifying the election of Trustees or Directors for entities
152 requiring such action (e.g., Emory University Trustees and SEJ Agencies and ongoing
153 ministries) and ratifying By-Laws changes of SEJ Agencies and Ongoing Ministries;
154
- 155 2. Being the legal body of the Jurisdiction and guardian of the SEJ title and logo;
156
- 157 3. Focusing on the mission and ministry of the United Methodist Church within the
158 Jurisdiction;
159
- 160 4. Coordinating and/or confirming the program of the General Agencies within the
161 Jurisdiction (*Book of Discipline*, ¶529);
162
- 163 5. Providing financial oversight of the Jurisdiction and its ministries. The CCA will form a
164 subcommittee from within its membership to work directly with the Jurisdictional Treasurer
165 in carrying out this aspect of its work, with CCA receiving full reporting and maintaining
166 responsibility for any decision-making not reserved by the Jurisdictional Conference. (See
167 subcommittee on Finance duties);
168
- 169 6. Receiving regular reports from the subcommittee on Finance, the SEJ Agencies, and
170 jurisdictional groups for mission and ministry; and
171
- 172 7. Relating to and holding accountable groups mandated by *The Book of Discipline*,
173 Jurisdictional Agencies, Networking Groups, Monitoring Groups, and Existing Groups
174 organized and functioning within the Jurisdiction (See below, “Definitions”) and maintaining
175 Covenant Agreements with the Jurisdictional Agencies and Existing Ministries.
176

177 MEMBERSHIP: There shall be one representative from each Annual Conference. The
178 membership shall be comprised of the following positional representation:

- 179 • 2 Bishops
- 180 • 2 Conference Directors of Connectional Ministries or equivalents
- 181 • 2 Conference Lay Leaders
- 182 • 2 Annual Conference Treasurers
- 183 • 6 At-large members with expertise and for inclusiveness

184 (The SEJ Nominating Committee shall work to achieve balance in representation, as far as
185 possible, by considering lay/clergy, female/male, and ethnic participation. Additionally,
186 clergy representation from local church settings is encouraged.)
187
188

189 All members shall be elected by the Jurisdictional Conference upon nomination by the SEJ
190 Nominating Committee in consultation with the Bishops, Directors of Connectional
191 Ministries, Lay Leaders, and Conference Treasurers, to identify their representatives and
192 ensure that each annual conference be represented on the committee. Vacancies occurring
193 during the quadrennium shall be filled by the College of Bishops.

194
195 The Jurisdictional secretary and the Jurisdictional treasurer shall be ex-officio members,
196 without vote, on the CCA. The secretary shall be the staff person assigned duties for and on
197 behalf of the committee. The treasurer shall manage the Jurisdictional treasurer's office,
198 carry out accounting duties necessary for the Jurisdiction, and assist CCA and the
199 subcommittee on Finance in providing general oversight of its financial duties found below.

200
201 The Executive Directors of the Jurisdictional Agencies, Disciplinary Groups, and Ongoing
202 Groups (Ministries) may be invited to attend meetings of the CCA for connections,
203 accountability, and information sharing (voice but without vote).

204
205 The Committee shall elect its own officers. Either a Bishop or lay leader shall serve as the
206 chairperson on a rotating basis for a two-year term. (For example, if a lay leader is
207 chairperson for two years, a Bishop will serve as vice-chairperson, with the next two-year
208 term reversed.) The Jurisdictional Conference Secretary shall arrange an organizational
209 meeting at a time and place determined by the President of the SEJ College of Bishops, who
210 shall be or shall name the convener of the meeting.

211
212 The committee shall meet at least annually, with called meetings held as necessary.
213 Telephone conference meetings and audio/video-conferencing are acceptable. Those present
214 at a duly announced meeting will constitute a quorum, provided at least one-third of the CCA
215 membership is present.

216
217 Subcommittee on Finance and Administration

218
219 Guidelines for the CCA and its subcommittee on Finance shall include, but not be limited to,
220 the following:

221 1. The ministry of the jurisdiction requires a unified budget with one Treasurer's office,
222 which will serve as the primary place for receipts and disbursement of funds. The
223 subcommittee on Finance shall receive and review audits of the Agencies and Jurisdictional
224 groups for mission and ministry and any other matters approved in the Covenant
225 Agreements. Finally, the Treasurer's office will work with the subcommittee on Finance to
226 propose a quadrennial jurisdictional budget and will provide for the operations and financial
227 expenses for the meeting of the Jurisdictional Conference.

228 a. The subcommittee on Finance shall be composed of three (3) members from
229 CCA; one of whom shall be laity, one of whom shall be clergy, and one shall be a
230 Conference Treasurer. The SEJ Conference Treasurer will be an ex officio
231 member of this subcommittee.

232 b. It is recommended that the CCA consider ethnic background, the place of both men
233 and women, the place of adults and youth, and that ability and experience be
234 recognized when appointing this subcommittee. The subcommittee will elect its own
235 chair.

237 c. CCA shall nominate to the Jurisdictional Conference currently in session a
238 treasurer who, on being duly elected by the conference, shall be an ex-officio member
239 of the Committee. If for any reason the office of treasurer shall become vacant during
240 the interim of the sessions of the Jurisdictional Conference, the Committee shall elect
241 a treasurer, following due consultation with the College of Bishops. The Committee
242 may at any time remove the treasurer from office for cause.
243

244 2. The CCA shall have general oversight of all funds included in the Jurisdictional
245 Conference budget. The treasurer shall render to the CCA and/or its subcommittee on
246 Finance quarterly statements of receipts and expenditures and a quadrennial report to each
247 succeeding quadrennial session of the Jurisdictional Conference covering in detail receipts
248 and expenditures for the quadrennium preceding. The treasurer shall be bonded through a
249 suitable bond of a surety company of recognized standing and in an amount fixed by the
250 subcommittee.
251

252 3. The subcommittee on Finance shall meet at least annually, or on the call of the chairperson
253 of CCA or the chairperson of the subcommittee, or of a majority of the members thereof.
254 Telephone conference meeting and audio/video-conferencing are acceptable.
255

256 4. No member or employee of any group or any trustee or employee of any institution, which
257 is a beneficiary of the Jurisdictional Conference budget, shall be eligible for membership on
258 the Committee. The expense of the Committee shall be paid out of the Jurisdictional
259 Conference Expense Budget.
260

261 5. It shall be the duty of the subcommittee to make a careful study of the expense of
262 administration and the causes that may properly be included in the annual Jurisdictional
263 Conference budget, and to recommend to each succeeding quadrennial session of the
264 Jurisdictional Conference for its action and determination an annual budget, showing the
265 share of each Annual Conference in the total. The budget as adopted shall be the
266 Jurisdictional Conference budget for the ensuing quadrennium, including annual budgeted
267 amounts for the ensuing quadrennium, and the apportionment to each Annual Conference as
268 finally determined by the Jurisdictional Conference shall be its annual share in the said
269 budget. Only such items as are distinctly related to the work of the jurisdiction shall be
270 included in the Jurisdictional budget. The jurisdictional treasurer shall transmit annually to
271 the treasurer of each Annual Conference, not less than 120 days prior to the regular annual
272 meeting of each Annual Conference, a statement of the amount apportioned such Annual
273 Conference for Jurisdictional causes. The Annual Conference shall apportion the same
274 among the charges of the conference in such manner as it may determine. The Annual
275 Conference treasurer shall remit each month to the treasurer of the jurisdiction the amount on
276 hand for Jurisdictional causes.
277

278 6. The fiscal year of the Southeastern Jurisdiction shall be January 1 through December 31.
279 All jurisdictional financial accounts shall be kept accordingly.
280
281
282
283

284 7. The CCA may give authority to its treasurer to borrow funds from any reputable bank or
285 trust company to meet any obligation of the Jurisdictional Conference duly authorized in the
286 regular annual budget of the conference; provided, the outstanding indebtedness shall at no
287 time exceed twenty-five percent of the annual budget. The Conference treasurer and/or
288 Conference secretary are authorized to sign previously approved banking or loan documents
289 on behalf of CCA.

290
291 8. Should any urgent and pressing need arise that had not been anticipated in fixing the
292 jurisdictional budget, and in the judgment of the subcommittee is an emergency, the CCA
293 may alter the percentage allowance or grant to any or all committees or agencies receiving
294 funds from Jurisdictional Conference apportionments, or may increase the apportionments to
295 the several annual conferences of the jurisdiction to meet the emergency, provided such
296 action is approved by a three-fourths vote of the Committee.

297
298 9. The CCA shall include in the proposed Jurisdictional budget recommended to the
299 Jurisdictional Conference for its actions and determination the following items:

300
301 a. The Jurisdictional Conference Expense Budget, which shall provide for the
302 expense of the quadrennial meeting of the Jurisdictional Conference, or any called
303 meetings of the same, and the expense incurred in the preparation of such meeting.

304
305 b. The Jurisdictional Operating Budget, which shall make provision for the expense
306 of the Jurisdictional personnel in the performance of the stated duties and for the
307 expense of meetings of the committees of the Jurisdiction as defined in Section V.
308 Items in the Administrative Committee budget for salaries and other administrative
309 costs shall be a prior claim against the jurisdictional fund each month.

310
311 c. Other items which in the judgment of the CCA should be included in the annual
312 Jurisdictional Operating Fund.

313
314 Definitions

315
316 A number of groups, committees, and councils across the jurisdiction will be related to and
317 accountable to the Jurisdictional Conference through the SEJ Committee on Coordination
318 and Accountability. These groups fall into one of five categories.

319
320 1. Disciplinary Groups – Two primary groups and/or events are mandated by *The Book of*
321 *Discipline*: there “shall be” a jurisdictional Commission on Archives and History, and there
322 “may be” a jurisdictional Ministries with Young People Convocation. A system for regularly
323 reporting, coordinating, and overseeing their work will be developed in consultation with the
324 SEJ Committee on Coordination and Accountability.

325
326 There are also jurisdictional organizations for United Methodist Women and United
327 Methodist Men. However, according to *The Book of Discipline*, these two entities are directly
328 accountable to the national United Methodist Women and the General Commission on
329 United Methodist Men, respectively.

330

331 2. Agencies—Three agencies shall be located within the bounds of the Southeastern
332 Jurisdiction: (1) Lake Junaluska Assembly; (2) Hinton Rural Life Center; and, (3) Gulfside
333 Assembly. Each one of these three agencies own property within the bounds of the
334 Jurisdiction and will maintain its own Board of Directors (ratified by SEJ Conference and –
335 between sessions – by the Committee on Coordination and Accountability) that will function
336 as trustees of the property and the ministry. Each Board of Directors will determine the plan
337 of organization and structure for the work and the mission of the agency and will follow all
338 reporting requirements of the jurisdiction. By-Laws changes are to be reviewed and ratified
339 once per quadrennium by the Committee on Coordination and Accountability.
340

341 In this jurisdictional plan, each of the three agencies will have its own Executive Director.
342 Working with the Board of Directors, this person will assist in determining and hiring the
343 appropriate number of staff persons, along with determining the necessary position
344 descriptions. Ultimately, each agency – through its Board of Directors – will be accountable
345 to the Jurisdictional Conference through the Committee on Coordination and Accountability
346 and shall file a quadrennial report, including a budget, a business plan, a ministry plan, and
347 Board of Directors for the upcoming quadrennium to be ratified by the Jurisdictional
348 Conference. When requested by the Committee on Coordination and Accountability, these
349 Agencies shall also file an annual report of the same information.
350

351 The three Agencies shall be asked to maintain a Covenant Agreement with the SEJ
352 Committee on Coordination and Accountability for mutual understanding of roles and
353 responsibilities.
354

355 3. Monitoring Groups – The Book of Discipline requires a jurisdictional organization for
356 both the Commission on Religion and Race and the Commission on the Status and Role of
357 Women and requires a Jurisdictional connection with these two General Commissions.
358

359 Lines of accountability and oversight of their monitoring work will be through the SEJ
360 Committee on Coordination and Accountability. In addition, it is expected and requested that
361 the monitoring function also be applied to SEJ Committee on Coordination and
362 Accountability, both in its membership and participation.
363

364 4. Networking Groups – These informal, ad-hoc groups arise among conference leaders and
365 staff. They share common interests, concerns, and ministry-related areas. These groups may
366 gather periodically to benefit from interaction with peers, to develop contacts, and to
367 exchange information. The understanding is that all Annual Conferences will be invited to
368 participate but doing so will be strictly voluntary. Funding for travel and expenses shall be
369 the responsibility of each participating Annual Conference. Each Networking Group will be
370 responsible for its own life and will have no jurisdictional staff persons assigned.
371

372 5. Existing, Established, Ongoing Ministries – Several groups and organizations provide
373 much needed ministry, training and outreach within the jurisdiction. There are currently two
374 established ministries: (1) Intentional Growth Center and (2) UMVIM. These ministries will
375 be accountable to the Jurisdiction through the Committee on Coordination and
376 Accountability. Each ministry will have its own Board of Directors and/or Advisors, which
377 will be reviewed and ratified annually by the Committee on Coordination and

378 Accountability. By-Laws are to be reviewed and ratified once per quadrennium by the
379 Committee on Coordination and Accountability. Each group will be self-supporting and will
380 file annual reports on the ministry, vision, and results of their programming with the
381 Committee on Coordination and Accountability and a quadrennial report to the Southeastern
382 Jurisdictional Conference.

383
384 B. Nominating Committee

385
386 There shall be a committee who will serve as a Nominating Committee to consider nominations for
387 the general boards and agencies and designated Jurisdictional Committees. There shall be two
388 persons from each conference, one of whom shall be a lay delegate and one of whom shall be a
389 clergy delegate, elected to this committee by the Annual Conference delegation. At least two weeks
390 prior to the conference, the members of the Nominating Committee shall be provided with:

391
392 1. A list of the names of the persons being offered by each Annual Conference to the
393 Jurisdictional pool for consideration as members of the respective program boards,
394 commissions, councils, and agencies. These shall be listed by categories on a form prescribed
395 by the General Conference Secretary. Each person's ethnic background shall be indicated
396 (e.g., Native American, Asian, African-American, etc.). An asterisk shall be placed by the
397 name of any person who is an incumbent and who is eligible for re-election, together with the
398 name of the agency on which he/she is serving.

399
400 2. A recommendation of procedure to be followed by the Nominating Committee.

401
402 3. A reminder that the Nominating Committee shall not only seek to maintain insofar as
403 possible the recommendations of the *Book of Discipline* for having one-third representation
404 each of clergy, lay women, and lay men on general church agencies, with attention given to
405 including youth, young adults, older adults, racial and ethnic persons, persons with
406 handicapping conditions, and persons from small-membership churches, but that these same
407 provisions shall be applicable to the total number of nominations made from each Annual
408 Conference to the agencies of the general church.

409
410 4. A list of the total number of nominees to which each Annual Conference is entitled to the
411 agencies of the general church other than those which the Discipline specifically mandates.
412 These numbers shall correspond to the percentage of members, rounded off to the nearest
413 whole, which each Annual Conference has of the total members of the jurisdiction;
414 notwithstanding the above, the Red Bird Missionary Conference shall be represented in the
415 nominations. In compiling this list, the following nominations shall not be included: those
416 which come from recommendation of the United Women in Faith for the General Board of
417 Global Ministries, those for the National Council of Churches, and those which come from
418 another agency or group and are only reported by the Nominating Committee. The
419 information from the annual conferences shall be in the hands of the Jurisdictional
420 Conference Secretary no later than June 20. The members of the committee shall bring
421 preference sheets and biographical data for prospective nominees to the first meeting of the
422 committee from the respective conferences. The Nominating Committee shall be convened
423 for organizational purposes at the site of the conference by the president of the College of
424 Bishops of the jurisdiction at 2:00 p.m. three days prior to the opening of the Southeastern

425 Jurisdictional Conference. Per Diem expenses for the Nominating Committee shall be
426 provided for the extra days. Nominations shall be in the hands of the conference at a
427 minimum of-three-hours before being presented for election.
428

429 C. Committee on Episcopacy

430
431 The membership of the Committee on Episcopacy shall consist of one clergy and one lay delegate to
432 the Jurisdictional Conference from each Annual Conference elected by the Jurisdictional Conference
433 upon nomination of their respective Annual Conference delegations (§524.1 of *The Book of*
434 *Discipline*). Each quadrennium, the Committee shall be officially constituted with the election of
435 officers and begin its work at the conclusion of the previous quadrennium's jurisdictional conference
436 session. The committee will continue its work through the conclusion of the following jurisdictional
437 conference when the new committee is constituted.
438

439 The sitting Committee on Episcopacy shall report to the conference the church membership statistics
440 of the Southeastern Jurisdiction and the number of Bishops to which the Jurisdiction is entitled on
441 the basis of church membership and shall recommend to the conference the number of Bishops to be
442 elected and the process and manner of their election (cf. Rule 17). The committee shall perform such
443 other duties as are set forth in §§406.1, 524 of *The Discipline*.
444

445 The Committee will recommend minimum housing guidelines for every episcopal residence
446 committee in the Jurisdiction.
447

448 D. Committee on Appeals

449
450 There shall be a Committee on Appeals elected in accordance with §2716.1 of *The Book of*
451 *Discipline of The United Methodist Church*.
452

453 E. Committee on Investigation

454
455 There shall be a Committee on Investigation elected in accordance with §2703 of *The Book of*
456 *Discipline*.
457

458 F. Administrative Committees

459
460 Nominations to the administrative committees shall be printed in the first edition of the Daily
461 Christian Advocate.
462

463 1. Committee on Plan of Organization and Rules of Order

464
465 There shall be a committee of five, known as the Committee on Plan of Organization and
466 Rules of Order, of which the secretary and treasurer of the conference shall be ex-officio
467 members. The committee shall be convened by the conference secretary or designee until a
468 chairperson is elected. To this committee shall be referred any proposed amendments to the
469 Plan of Organization and Rules of Order (see Rule 38). This committee shall restudy the Plan
470 of Organization and Rules of Order between sessions of the Jurisdictional Conference and,
471 after making such needed changes and adaptations therein as in their judgment are necessary,

472 shall present them to the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference for consideration and final
473 action. Any recommendation by the committee as to the organization of the standing
474 committees, their names, number, and responsibilities (except the Committee on the
475 Episcopacy) shall be transmitted to the secretary prior to the convening of the Jurisdictional
476 Conference. The secretary shall notify the head of each delegation the standing committees
477 as recommended by the Committee on Plan of Organization and Rules of Order so that
478 delegates may make their choice of committee assignments. The committee shall have the
479 authority to consult with various persons and agencies in the exercise of this authority. The
480 Plan of Organization and Rules of Order of the preceding Southeastern Jurisdictional
481 Conference, thus adopted and published in the journal, shall be the Plan of Organization and
482 Rules of Order until they have been altered or amended by the action of the Southeastern
483 Jurisdictional Conference.

484 485 2. Committee on Journal

486
487 There shall be a committee of three, known as the Committee on Journal, which shall
488 examine the record of the secretary daily during the session. Any error subsequently
489 discovered in a section of the journal materials, which has been verified, shall be corrected.

490 491 3. Agenda Committee

492
493 There shall be a committee of five, known as the Agenda Committee. The senior effective
494 Bishop and the Conference Secretary shall be two of the committee members. It shall be the
495 responsibility of this committee to see that all items of business required by The Discipline of
496 the church are brought to the attention of the Jurisdictional Conference. Any consideration,
497 proposal, resolution, or communication, which does not clearly refer to the business of the
498 Jurisdictional Conference, as prescribed in the Discipline shall be referred to the Agenda
499 Committee, which shall determine whether or not it shall be presented to the conference and
500 also whether it shall be printed in the Daily Christian Advocate. The Agenda Committee
501 shall report to the Jurisdictional Conference the disposition made of all matters, which have
502 been referred to the Committee. The Agenda Committee shall consult with the Committee of
503 Chairpersons regarding the inclusion of standing committee reports on the agenda of the
504 conference.

505
506 No petition shall be assigned to any Jurisdictional Conference committee unless it comes
507 from some organization, clergy person, or member of The United Methodist Church and
508 contains information essential to the verification of the alleged facts concerning its origin. All
509 petitions shall be presented to the Conference Secretary. Each should deal with only one
510 general subject. All petitions requiring funding shall be so designated and the amount to be
511 specified. Petitions with financial implications shall be referred to the Southeastern
512 Jurisdictional Committee on Coordination and Accountability for their review and
513 recommendation to the conference. All petitions shall be in the hands of the secretary of the
514 conference no later than fourteen days prior to the opening of the conference.

515
516 The Agenda committee shall receive all petitions dealing with the regular business of the
517 conference and, after ascertaining that they meet the requirements herein specified, shall
518 distribute them among the several committees according to their respective responsibilities.

519 It may also withhold from reference or publication any document it shall deem improper,
520 promptly advising the author or authors thereof of its action in order that an appeal may be
521 made to the conference, if desired.
522

523 When the Agenda committee determines that the particular item of business does not
524 naturally flow toward an existing committee, it shall authorize the creation of an ad hoc
525 committee to deal with this particular item. Upon authorization, the Conference Secretary
526 will contact each delegation leader with a description of the business item and a meeting time
527 and place for the committee (including the possibility of a conference call prior to the
528 convening of conference). The delegation leader will be asked to designate one delegate to
529 represent his/her annual conference on the ad hoc committee. The Conference Secretary or
530 designee shall convene the meeting until a chairperson is elected. The ad hoc committee will
531 consider the item of business and prepare a recommended action for conference's
532 consideration.
533

534 4. Committee on Program and Arrangements 535

536 There shall be a Jurisdictional Conference Program and Arrangements Committee composed
537 of one Bishop, who shall be chairperson; a district superintendent designated by the Bishop;
538 the Secretary of the Jurisdictional Conference; the Treasurer of the Jurisdictional Conference;
539 the chairperson Committee on Coordination and Accountability; the president of the
540 jurisdiction United Women in Faith or designee; the president of the jurisdiction United
541 Methodist Men or designee; and the chairperson of the Jurisdictional Association of Annual
542 Conference Lay Leaders or designee; the chairperson of the sitting Committee on Episcopacy
543 or designee; and five (5) others who may be selected to insure inclusivity and expertise. The
544 Bishop serving on this committee shall be selected in the order of seniority from the effective
545 Bishops of the jurisdiction. The duties of the committee shall be to arrange the program and
546 logistics for the Jurisdictional Conference, other than that covered by the Plan of
547 Organization. It shall be established policy of the Southeastern Jurisdiction to have a program
548 that will present to the conference a challenge on behalf of the work of the church in its
549 worldwide mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
550

551 The Conference Secretary will organize a team to execute the program planned and the
552 logistical needs of the conference following the guidance of the Committee on Program and
553 Arrangements. Members of this team will be invited to Committee meetings as determined
554 by the senior Bishop and Conference Secretary.
555

556 5. Committee on Chairpersons 557

558 There may be one or more meetings of all committee chairpersons as determined by the
559 Agenda committee. Such meetings may seek to coordinate and streamline the business of the
560 conference or seek to resolve inter-committee disagreements or difficulty. The secretary of
561 the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference shall convene the Committee of Chairpersons.
562

563 6. Tellers 564

565 There shall be a committee to act as tellers for the purpose of assisting with the ballots

566 ordered by the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference. The committee shall be composed of
567 one clergy and one laity delegate from each of the annual conferences in the Southeastern
568 Jurisdiction. For purposes of this committee only, reserve delegates may be nominated by
569 their delegation and elected as balloting tellers. The committee shall be divided into two
570 groups of fifteen each. In case of emergency, additional tellers may be drafted into service
571 from among the delegation membership.
572

573 G. Financial Implications

574
575 The SEJ Conference shall submit any petition or proposal requiring funding from committees,
576 organizations or individuals to the Committee on Coordination and Accountability (CCA) for study
577 and recommendations prior to consideration. Submissions shall be made no later than 6:00 PM of the
578 day prior to the CCA report.
579

580 VI. DELEGATES' EXPENSE ACCOUNTS

581
582 A. The report of the Delegation Head shall be the basis for settlement with principal and reserve
583 delegates for their Per Diem allowance.
584

585 B. Travel expense for delegates and first lay and clergy reserve to the conference shall be reimbursed
586 as directed by the conference upon recommendation of the Committee on Coordination and
587 Accountability. The total travel expense shall be payable to the principal delegate if he/she be
588 present and seated. If during the session of the conference a reserve beyond the first lay or clergy
589 reserve must be seated in his/her place, he/she shall adjust the travel expense with such reserve on
590 the basis of the time served by each.
591

592 VII. EDITORIAL CHANGES

593
594 The Conference Secretary may make editorial changes to the Plan of Organization or Rules of Order
595 whenever there is a need to update Disciplinary references or law, or to clarify language without
596 changing the meaning or intent. Any proposed editorial changes must be approved by two-thirds of
597 the Rules Committee.
598
599
600

601 RULES OF ORDER

602 I. AGENDA

603
604
605 Rule 1. Agenda.
606

607 (1) The senior effective Bishop and the Conference Secretary, in consultation with the
608 College of Bishops and the Program/Arrangements Committee, will develop the agenda.
609

610 (2) The proposed agenda will be published in pre-conference materials and placed before the
611 conference for adoption in the opening session.
612

613 (3) Once adopted, the Agenda Committee may propose modifications as circumstances may
614 dictate. The conference will be notified of foreseen adjustments in as timely as fashion as
615 possible.
616

617 Rule 2: Worship. Each quadrennial session will begin with an opening worship service. Additional
618 worship experiences will be conducted periodically during the session.
619

620 II. PRESIDING OFFICERS 621

622 Rule 3. The Bishop presiding shall be legal chairperson of the Jurisdictional Conference. He/she
623 shall decide points of order raised by the members as he/she deems necessary to conform to these
624 Jurisdictional Conference Rules of Order, subject to an appeal to the conference by any member
625 without debate; except that the chairperson and the appellant, in the order here named, shall each
626 have three minutes for a statement in support of his/her position. A tie vote in the case of an appeal
627 shall sustain the chair. When any member raises a point of order, he/she shall cite by number the rule
628 he/she adjudges to have been violated. The Bishop presiding when the committee is created, unless
629 otherwise directed by the conference, or as directed by the plan of organization, shall name the
630 members of any special committee. (See Rule 38.)
631

632 Rule 4. When the chairperson stands in his/her place and calls the conference to order, no member
633 shall speak, address the chair, or stand while the chairperson stands.
634

635 III. RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF MEMBERS 636

637 Rule 5. Attendance and Seating Reserves. No member, unless hindered by sickness or otherwise,
638 from being present, shall be absent himself/herself from the sessions of the conference without
639 permission of the conference, and all absentees shall be reported by the chairperson of the several
640 Annual Conference delegations to the Conference Secretary. Reserve delegates will be seated as
641 necessary. Each Delegation Head will certify daily that his/her delegation is properly seated on a
642 form provided by the Conference Secretary (Plan of Organization, I. C. (1) c).
643

644 Rule 6. Directions for Securing the Floor. When a delegate desires to speak to the conference, he/she
645 shall arise at his/her seat, respectfully address the presiding officer, and, after recognition, proceed to
646 the speaker's platform or to the nearest microphone, where, before speaking, he/she shall state
647 his/her name and the Annual Conference from which he/she comes.
648

649 Rule 7. Interrupting the Speaker. No member who has the floor may be interrupted except for a
650 breach of order, or misrepresentation, or to direct the attention of the conference to the fact that the
651 time has arrived for a special order, or to raise a very urgent question of high privilege.
652

653 Rule 8. Speaking More Than Once. No member shall speak a second time on the same question if
654 any member who has not spoken desires the floor, nor more than twice on the same subject under the
655 same motion, nor longer than three minutes unless his/her time shall be extended by the conference,
656 except as provided in Rule 37. This three-minute limit may be reduced by a majority vote of the
657 conference at any time, and for any period of duration. Note: Any eligible elder, who is not a
658 nominee in the episcopal election process and who receives 10 or more votes on any ballot, will be
659 permitted to address the conference for no more than 10 minutes.
660

661 Rule 9. Question of High Privilege. A member claiming the floor at any time for what he/she
662 believes is a very urgent question of high privilege shall be allowed to indicate briefly the nature of
663 the question, as if it be adjudged by the chair to be such he/she may proceed at his/her pleasure, or
664 until the chair judges that he/she has exhausted the privilege.
665

666 Rule 10. Voting Area of Conference. Only delegates within the area of the conference when the vote
667 is taken shall be entitled to vote. All delegates within the area at the time a question is put shall vote,
668 except such as have been excused for special reasons by the conference.
669

670 Rule 11. Method of Voting. Voting shall be by a show of hands unless otherwise ordered by the
671 conference. An “Aye” and “No” vote by written ballot or a count vote may be ordered on call of any
672 member and supported by one-third of the members present and voting. Ballots and count votes will
673 be taken by electronic voting device when available at the conference session. No other business
674 shall be in order when a vote is being taken, or when the previous question has been called, until the
675 process is completed, except such as relates to the vote itself, or that which can be appropriately
676 fitted into the time while waiting for the report of the secretaries on a count vote, or an “Aye” and
677 “No” vote (see Rule 26 (2)). When a count vote is ordered, and electronic voting devices are
678 unavailable, the count shall be made by the chairperson of the delegation, who shall report to the
679 secretary of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference the number of those in the delegation voting
680 for and voting against a motion or a report.
681

682 Rule 12. Division of Question. Before a vote is taken, any delegate shall have the right to call for a
683 division of any question, if it is subject to such division as he/she indicates. If no delegate objects,
684 the division shall be made, but if there is an objection the chair shall put the question of division to
685 vote, not waiting for a second.
686

687 IV. BUSINESS PROCEDURE

688
689 Rule 13. Motion for Adoption of Reports and Resolutions Unnecessary. Whenever a report of a
690 committee, signed by the chairperson and secretary thereof, or a resolution signed by two or more
691 members of the conference shall be presented to the conference for its action, it shall be deemed in
692 proper order for consideration by the conference without the formality of a motion to adopt and a
693 second thereto.
694

695 Rule 14. Required Forms for Reports, Resolutions, Motions, and Amendments. All resolutions and
696 committee reports shall be presented in triplicate and electronically, and when requested by the
697 secretary, motions, including amendments, shall be presented in writing.
698

699 Rule 15. Reading of Reports and Resolutions. All resolutions, committee reports, and
700 communications of the conference may be read by the secretary, if determined by the conference,
701 except as otherwise provided in Rule 31.
702

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

708 upon adoption of the motion or proposal itself, unless accompanied by a specific motion that such
709 material is included in the action of the conference.

710

711 Rule 17. Episcopal Election Process

712

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

723

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

726

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

728

729 (1) To adjourn, when unqualified, except to adjourn the conference finally.

730 (2) To suspend a rule or rules or any provisions of the Rules of Order.

731 (3) To lie on the table, except as provided in Rule 35.

732 (4) To take from the table.

733 (5) To call for the previous question.

734 (6) To reconsider a non-debatable motion.

735 (7) To limit or extend the limits of debate.

736 (8) To call for the orders of the day.

737

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

743

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

747

748 (1) To fix the time to which the conference shall adjourn. (This motion is subject to
749 amendment, or it may be laid on the table.)

750 (2) To adjourn.

751 (3) To take recess.

752 (4) To raise a question of privilege.

753 (5) To call for the orders of the day.

754 (6) To lie on the table.

755

- 756 (7) To order the previous question.
757 (8) To limit or extend the limits of debate.
758 (9) To postpone to a given time.
759 (10) To refer.
760 (11) To amend or substitute (one amendment being allowed to an amendment).
761 (12) To postpone indefinitely.

762
763 Rule 21. Tabling Related Motions. No motion, which adheres to another motion, or has another
764 adhering to it, can be laid on the table by itself. Such motions, if laid on the table, carry with them
765 the motions to which they respectively adhere, or which adhere to them.
766

767 Rule 22. Referring a Section of Report. It shall be in order for the conference to refer to a committee
768 a section or part of a report or resolution which is before the conference for consideration or any
769 amendment offered thereunto.
770

771 Rule 23. Procedure for Consideration of Substitutes. When a resolution or committee report is
772 properly before the conference for consideration and action, even if amendments thereto are
773 pending, a delegate may offer a substitute for the resolution or report under consideration. The
774 substitute must be an alternative to what is before the body and not simply a negation of the main
775 motion.
776

777 The conference will first consider the substitution/alternative before the body. Debate on the motion
778 to substitute will be limited to the question of substitution only. No amendments to the main motion
779 or the substitute will be considered during this period of initial consideration. Following the debate
780 on the motion to substitute, a vote on substitution will occur. If the motion to substitute prevails by
781 majority vote, the substitute motion becomes the main motion. If the motion to substitute fails to
782 receive a majority vote, the original main motion remains on the floor for consideration. Debate,
783 including the offering of amendments, moves forward on the main motion as per the rules of
784 procedure.
785

786 The previous question may not be put on the adoption of the report or resolution, or making the
787 proposed substitution, until two members (including the chairperson of the committee presenting the
788 report and the member presenting the substitute) shall have spoken.
789

790 Rule 24. Previous Question (see Rules 18 (5), 23, 25, 35). When any member moves the previous
791 question (that is, that the vote be now taken on the motion or motions pending), he/she shall indicate
792 to what he/she intends it to apply, if any secondary motion or motions are also pending. If he/she
793 does not so indicate, it shall be regarded as applying only to the immediately pending question.
794

795 This motion shall be taken without debate and shall require a two-thirds vote of those present and
796 voting for its adoption, and if adopted the vote shall be taken without debate and shall require a two-
797 thirds vote of those present and voting for its adoption, and if adopted the vote shall be taken on the
798 motion or motions to which it applies without further debate, except as provided in Rule 35.
799

800 Rule 25. Unlawful Motion after Speech. It shall not be in order for a member immediately after
801 discussing a pending question, and before relinquishing the floor, to make a motion whose adoption
802 would limit or stop debate.
803

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

- 806
- 807 (1) A tie vote sustains the chair, if an appeal is made from his/her decision (Rule 3).
 - 808 (2) One third of those present and voting shall suffice to sustain a call for an “Aye” and “No”
809 vote or a count vote (Rule 11).
 - 810 (3) A two-thirds vote shall be required to sustain a motion to suspend or amend a rule or rules
811 or any provision of the Rules of Order (Rules 37, 38); to sustain a motion for the previous
812 question (Rule 24); to set aside a motion for the previous question (Rule 24); to set aside a
813 special order; to consider a special order before the time therefore; or any motion whose
814 adoption would limit debate.

815

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

819

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

- 822
- 823 (1) When a delegate has the floor.
 - 824 (2) When a question is actually put, or a vote is being taken, and before it is finally decided.
 - 825 (3) When the previous question has been ordered and action there under is pending.
 - 826 (4) When a motion to adjourn has been lost, and no business or debate has intervened.
 - 827 (5) When a motion to fix the time to which the conference shall adjourn is pending. The
828 foregoing does not apply to a motion for final adjournment of the conference.

829
830

831 V. COMMITTEES: DUTIES AND PREROGATIVES

832

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

840

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

845

846 Rule 31. Published Reports in Possession of Conference. A report of any committee signed by the
847 chairperson and secretary thereof shall be regarded as in possession of the conference when posted
848 to the conference website, published in the Daily Christian Advocate, or distributed on the floor of
849 conference. The business shall be in order for consideration at the pleasure of the conference
850 anytime thereafter. The same rule shall apply to a report of a minority of any committee signed by
851

852 one tenth of the members of the committee or by ten members thereof (see Rule 16 and Rule 23).

853
854 Rule 32. Preparation and Printing of Reports. Reports of the standing committees shall be posted to
855 the conference website and distributed in the Daily Christian Advocate with as much advance notice
856 as possible given the abbreviated duration of conference prior to being presented for consideration
857 by the conference, and they shall not be read unless by its order. Reports of minorities of committees
858 adopted by them with a view to their being offered as substitutes for committee reports shall likewise
859 conform to this rule so far as it is applicable, indicating clearly to what committee the respective
860 minorities belong and for what report or reports, by serial numbers, etc., they propose the respective
861 substitutes.

862
863 Rule 33. Committee on Chairperson Not in Harmony with Report. When a chairperson of a
864 committee is not in harmony with a report adopted by the committee, it shall be his/her duty to state
865 the fact to the committee, which shall elect one of its members to represent the committee, and said
866 representative shall have all the rights and privileges of the chairperson in relation to such report.

867
868 Rule 34. Presentation of Report of Minority. A member selected by the signers of a minority report
869 of a committee to present the same shall have the same rights and privileges in relation thereto which
870 belong to the chairperson in the presentation of the regular (majority) report of the committee-

871
872 Rule 35. Speakers For and Against. When the report of a committee is under consideration, it shall
873 be the duty of the presiding officer to ascertain which side a speaker proposes to speak. The speaker
874 shall not be granted the floor to speak on the same side of the pending question as the speaker
875 immediately preceding if any member desires to speak on the other side. Except for non-debatable
876 motions, no report shall be adopted or question relation to the same decided without opportunity
877 having been given for a least one speech for and one against the said proposal, provided this right is
878 claimed before the chairperson or duly authorized member representing the committee's report, of
879 the minority report if there be such, is present to close the debate. When all have spoken who desire
880 to do so, or when (and after) the previous question has been ordered, the chairperson and/or duly
881 authorized member or members presenting the committee's report (and the minority report, if there
882 be one) shall be entitled to speak before the vote is taken. This right of the chairperson and/or other
883 member or members to close the debate shall prevail in like manner to a limit of three minutes when
884 a vote is about to be taken on a motion to amend, to substitute, to postpone, to refer, to lay on the
885 table, or any other motion whose adoption would vitally affect the report under consideration,
886 provided that this five minute limit shall not apply to a motion to substitute a minority report for a
887 regular (majority) report of a committee.

888
889 Rule 36. Legal Enactment. All actions of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference of The United
890 Methodist Church shall become effective upon the adjournment of the present session of the
891 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church, unless otherwise specified.

892
893 VI. SUSPENDING, AMENDING, AND SUPPLEMENTING

894
895 Rule 37. Suspension of Rules. The operation of any of the provisions of the Plan of Organization or
896 the Rules of Order may be suspended at any time by a two-thirds vote of the conference (see Rule 26
897 (3)).

898

899 Rule 38. Amending Rules. The Plan of Organization and these Rules of Order may be amended or
900 changed by two-thirds vote of the conference, provided the proposed change or amendment has been
901 presented to the conference in writing and referred to the Committee on Plan of Organization and
902 Rules of Order, which committee shall report thereon not later than the day following (see Rule 26
903 (3)).

904
905 Rule 39. Roberts Rules of Order, Revised: Supplemental Authority. In any parliamentary situation
906 not clearly covered by this Plan of Organization or these Rules of Order, the Southeastern
907 Jurisdictional Conference shall be governed in its actions by Roberts Rules of Order, Revised.
908

GNTV Voting Guide

Practice Online Voting Webpage

demo.gntvmedia.com

What Do You Need to Vote?

1. Six digit "Voter ID" as provided in advance.
2. A web browser on your device (phone, tablet, computer, etc...)

Practice Voting is Now Available!

1. Visit demo.gntvmedia.com
2. At demo.gntvmedia.com, enter the practice Voter ID: "123456"
3. Click the "Submit" button
4. The practice ballot will show on your screen
5. Make your voting selection(s)
6. Click the blue "Submit Vote" button
7. You will receive confirmation that your vote has been received.

That's it! Go ahead and practice again!
You can click the green "Load Ballot"
to load the ballot again

The screenshot shows a mobile interface for the voting system. At the top, there are icons for a smartphone, a laptop, and a tablet, along with a hamburger menu icon. Below these are two buttons: a green "Load Ballot" button and an orange "Get Recognized" button. Underneath the buttons, the text "VOTER ID: 123456" is displayed. A white box contains the question "Do you speak more than one language?" with two radio button options: "Yes" and "No". At the bottom of this box is a blue "Submit Vote" button.

Need Help?

Contact your delegation teller.

GNTV Secure Online Voting Frequently Asked Questions

Using The Voting System

Since it will be recommended that we not hold Episcopal elections in 2024, the voting system will be used for votes on items as needed.

Voting Identification Number

Each delegate and reserve delegate will have a unique identifying number with which to vote. If somehow a person loses her/his unique number (which will be located on the back of your nametag), that person may report to the Elections and Tellers Secretary, Otto Harris.

If a reserve delegate is seated for a primary delegate, the primary delegate's unique identification number will be deactivated, and the reserve delegate's unique identification number will be activated. The Head of Delegation will fill out a form giving the name of the delegate being replaced and the name of the reserve delegate being seated. Your delegation teller must take that form to the Elections Assistant, Otto Harris, *before a vote is opened by the presiding Bishop*.

We realize that emergencies can occur, but we ask that delegates be seated for the duration of one session if at all possible (not changing between a delegate and a reserve delegate during a session while voting is occurring).

What constitutes an invalid ballot?

This system generally prevents invalid ballots because you will get a notice indicating what is incorrect with your submission and, while the ballot is still open, you will have the opportunity to correct your ballot.

If someone enters an invalid ID, does it prevent them from submitting their vote?

Yes. If a voter enters an invalid ID that is outside the working range of the system, they will receive an "Invalid Voter ID" error and will not be able to log in to load ballots. If the person is using an ID that is not activated (for example, if they are the reserve delegate and have not properly notified the Elections and Tellers Secretary), they will be able to log in but will not be able to load ballots; instead, they will receive a message saying they are not eligible to vote on this ballot.

If a reserve delegate is duly seated for a delegate who is not present during a ballot, the teller for your delegation must notify the Elections and Tellers Secretary, Otto Harris, using the above process. See above "Voter Identification Number" for the correct process.

If I start my ballot but do not successfully submit it, is it invalid?

You must click the "Submit Ballot" button before the Bishop closes the ballot. Only submitted ballots can be marked invalid. If you do not click the "Submit Ballot" button (that is, your ballot is not submitted), then your ballot is not counted at all and cannot be considered valid or invalid.

How do I know my ballot is submitted?

A confirmation message (“thank you for your vote” with a green box) appears when your ballot is successfully submitted.

You must click the “Submit Ballot” button before the Bishop closes the ballot.

I’m getting a message that there are “No Ballots currently available. Ballots are only available to eligible voters.”

- Are you the active voting delegate, for example, if you were the reserve delegate, did the chair of your delegation notify the Elections Assistant that you are taking an open delegate position?
- You only see a ballot if one is open for voting. Is a ballot currently open?
- The ballot does not open until the vote is officially called by the presiding Bishop.
- If you believe it should be open, please wait a few seconds and click the Load Ballot button again. You may have been just a little faster than the Bishop and our team on opening the ballot.

Can we vote before the “Please Vote Now” message appears on screen?

The ballot does not open to accept submissions until the vote is officially called, but you can vote before the “Please Vote Now” message if the ballot is open.

What do I do if I need more time to vote?

Please raise your hand and alert a teller before the ballot is closed by the presiding Bishop. Once closed, ballots cannot be reopened.

I already submitted my vote but I need to change my answer.

You can submit your ballot more than once while a ballot is open. Once the presiding Bishop closes the ballot, your final submission will become your vote and will be counted. If you submit your ballot again before the ballot is closed by the Bishop, it will erase your first selection and replace it.

Are votes confidential? Does my voter ID mean the conference knows how I vote?

The unique voter IDs are privately assigned and distributed by the voting system administrator and the conference office. Voter IDs are recorded with each ballot submission and used for validation purposes to ensure only the ballots cast by valid voters are counted. Records of the votes are maintained for post-session audit, but no voter information is made available outside of the voting system to ensure confidentiality of each ballot cast.

Will there be practice ballots?

There will be practice ballots onsite to give everyone time to practice.

Can Lake Junaluska WiFi handle the balloting load?

Lake Junaluska has very recently made significant investments in upgrading their internet connectivity and access points to handle our voting needs in Stuart Auditorium.

Reminders

- Each time, you will have limited time to convey your vote.
- If you don't want to participate in a particular vote, don't push any buttons during the voting interval.
- If you make a mistake in voting, simply vote again before the ballot is closed. The system will tabulate the last vote that you enter.

Questions

If you have any questions regarding the electronic voting systems or procedures, please ask your delegation teller or visit the electronic voting help desk in the rear of the Stuart Auditorium.

Committee on Program and Arrangements

The 2024 Committee on Program and Arrangements met twice between November 2022 when they were elected and the 2024 conference. Under the able guidance and direction of Bishop Jonathan Holston, these meetings were held virtually by Zoom.

In addition to the meetings, the committee received information on schedule changes through follow-up emails. Membership on this Committee included the following persons, for whose work we are most grateful:

Senior Effective Bishop: *Bishop Jonathan Holston*

Conference Secretary: *Julie Hager Love*

Secretary Designate: *Kathy James*

Committee on Coordination and Accountability Chair: *Bishop William McAlilly*

Jurisdictional President UMM: Andrew Kissell

Jurisdictional President UMW: Sue Owens

Committee on Episcopacy Representative: David Stotts

District Superintendent: *Mickey Rainwater*

At Large:

Judith Pierre-Okerson	FL
Solomon Christian	TWK
<i>Sherri Reynolds</i>	NAL
<i>Liz Roberts</i>	NC
<i>Haywood Hannah</i>	MS

Decisions

Significant decisions made by the Program and Arrangements Committee included theme, plans for worship services, teaching/learning time (leader chosen by the College of Bishops), agenda, method of balloting and per diem.

We appreciate the concise work of the Committee, as there was not much planning time between November 2022 and July 2024. We are thankful that the 2022 worship director, Sam Parkes, was again willing to serve in this role for the 2024 conference.

Balloting

The Committee initially decided to contract for hand-held voting devices. However, after the recommendation to have no episcopal elections, the team moved to a contract with GNTV to provide voting on individual devices.

Per Diem and Travel

The per diem was recommended at \$165/day based on double occupancy onsite at Lake Junaluska using the American Meal Plan.

The travel allowance will be \$0.30 per mile for automobile travel. For delegates flying to Lake Junaluska, the delegate will be reimbursed at \$0.30/mile for the distance from home address to Lake Junaluska.

Delegate Seating

Delegate seating was assigned based on the reverse of the 2022 seating.

Paperless Work

Pre-Conference work will all be done using the SEJ Conference web site. The ADCA and other pertinent documents will be posted on this web site (www.sejumc.org).

To further our efforts at being paperless, the 2024 SEJ Journal will be provided to all delegates in .pdf format via a link that will be emailed to delegates following the publication of the Journal. Any delegates desiring a paper copy of the Journal may obtain it via print on demand; the information for print on demand will be provided to delegates along with the link to the Journal in .pdf format.

Secretarial Staff

Julie Hager Love, Conference Secretary, and Kathy James, Secretary Designate, have recruited a competent staff to assist with the many details associated with the planning and administration of the 2024 SEJ Conference. The group met often by Zoom. The following persons will be serving on the Secretarial Staff:

Celeste Eubanks (Conference Minutes)	Jennifer Davis (Monitoring)
<i>Ashley Davis</i> (Minutes Assistant)	Jasmine Haynes (Media Relations)
Dan O'Mara (DCA Editor)	<i>Sam Parkes</i> (Worship)
<i>Susan Arnold</i> (Delegate Relations)	<i>Shannon Boaz</i> (Worship)
<i>Otto Harris</i> (Elections and Tellers)	Becky Hall (Staging)
Ashlee Hand (Elections and Tellers Assistant)	David Dommissie (Treasurer)
<i>Vickie White</i> (Nominations)	<i>Sharon Austin</i> (Nominations)
<i>Liz Roberts</i> (Young Adults)	Ben Smith (Photographer)
Dawn Fairley (Logistics)	<i>Melinda Britt</i> (Centering)

Many other persons will assist this secretarial staff as volunteers throughout the Conference to attend to all the details and needs of the attendees. We are grateful to each of these persons for their willingness to serve.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Hager Love, Conference Secretary
Kathy James, Secretary Designate
2024 SEJ Conference

Committee on Episcopacy

2022-2024

The 2016 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church describes the work of the Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy (COE) as:

1. Responsibilities of the Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy (§524)
2. Duties of the Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy (§524.3)
3. Assignment Process (§406)
4. Vacancy in the Office of Bishops (§407)
5. Termination of Bishops (§408)
6. Status of Retired Bishops (§409)
7. Leaves (§410)
8. Review and Evaluation of Bishops (§412)
9. Complaints Against Bishops (§413)

The Southeastern (SEJ) COE and College of Bishops typically meet concurrently in January of each year and spend time meeting together.

On **November 4, 2022**, the COE met following the conclusion of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference to organize and elect officers: Rev. Kim Ingram (Chairperson), Christine Shutters (Vice Chairperson) and Rev. Alex Shanks (Secretary).

On **January 19, 2023**, the COE met by zoom to build relationships, create a covenant, and orient the committee to our work. We reviewed the evaluation process, formed relational teams for the bishops and discussed the work of two task forces: The Racial Bias Impact Task Force and the Episcopal Leadership and Area Alignment Task Force.

On **August 22, 2023**, the COE met by zoom to hear a report from the Racial Bias Impact Task Force and the Episcopal Leadership and Area Alignment Task Force. Following this meeting, the SEJ COE sent a letter to all delegates with an update and the statement “it is highly probable we will not elect any bishops in 2024.”

On **October 26, 2023**, the COE met by zoom to process a complaint.

On **January 3 and 4, 2024**, the COE met in Charleston, SC. Some of this meeting was with the College of Bishops. We met with each bishop individually for the purpose of consultation. We prepared for the assignment process. We met with the episcopal relational teams. We heard reports from the Racial Bias Impact Task Force and the Episcopal Leadership and Area Alignment Task Force. We finalized our recommendation that no episcopal elections take place in 2024 and recommended the proposed ten episcopal areas in the SEJ. This recommendation was shared with SEJ delegates.

We look forward to approaching the episcopal assignment process collectively, with the missional needs of the jurisdiction and each annual conference as our first priority. The COE has engaged in its work faithfully. Members have been responsive and faithful; and the conversation and work have been guided by prayer. The COE remains grateful for the relationship it has shared with the College of Bishops.

Respectfully submitted:

Rev. Kim Ingram, Chairperson
Christine Shutters, Vice Chairperson
Rev. Alex Shanks, Secretary

Racial Bias Task Force

Implications of Racial Bias within the Episcopal Nomination Process

At the 2022 SEJ, the Rev. Jeremy Troxler, Western North Carolina Conference, made a motion that the conference would ask the Committee on Episcopacy to create a task force to study the impact of racial bias in the process of selection of episcopal candidates and recommend to the COE potential reforms to the process that might reduce the harmful effects of racial bias in the nomination and selection process for episcopal candidates. Furthermore, he moved that such a task force be composed of greater than 50% representation from under-represented groups and that the task force interview recent and past episcopal candidates to hear their experiences and solicit their input. In addition, Rev. Esther Rodriguez-Perez, Florida Conference, asked for an amendment to the motion to request compensation for those groups doing this work. Bishop Wallace-Padgett asked that she come back to the microphone once the motion is received in writing and properly before us. The motions were approved.

The following is a report of the task force and work that has been done since the 2022 SEJ Conference.

Co-conveners: Ms. Molly McEntire (Laity, FL) and Rev. Lindsey Baynham Freeman (Clergy, VA)

Members: Rev. Dan Kim (Clergy, VA), Rev. Dr. Yvette Massey (Clergy, N. GA), Ms. Jan Brown Thompson, (Certified Lay Minister, KY), Rev. Lisa Yebuah (NC)

The Racial Bias Task force concluded phase one of their work in the summer of 2023 and made a written report to the Committee on Episcopacy and the College of Bishops in the Southeastern Jurisdiction. That report gave an overview of our process, questionnaire for interviews and written narrative, key findings and 6 recommendations. The Committee on Episcopacy engaged the recommendations at their January 2024 meeting to make recommendations about next steps.

Since August of 2023, the report has been shared more broadly with delegations across the jurisdiction. Some conferences have engaged this report with members of the task force as a part of their delegation meetings. The hope is that the report would serve as a precursor to more in-depth conversations and work at the 2024 jurisdictional conference. The task force's work will coincide with the work of Claire Bowen who will lead us through Circles based on the resource *3 Practices for Crossing the Cultural Divide* by Jim Henderson and Jim Hancock.

Update on the Task Force's Work

The original task force has completed what we are calling "Phase One" of our work. We feel that this group has carried out the original intent of the forming of this task force. Members were given an honorarium for their work. "Phase Two" is being led by Rev. Dr. Yvette Massey (North Georgia, Clergy) and is composed of persons from across the jurisdiction. The focus of their work is to look more closely at the nomination and election process for episcopal candidates as well as make any recommendations prior to future episcopal elections. The task force will work with the COE for any adjustments to process or conference rules.

Timeline with 2023 Report recommendations

January 2024: Conversation around 6 recommendations with SEJ COE and College of Bishops.

- **Recommendation:** Create a Monitoring Team for Conference Sessions. To be led by Ms. Jennifer Davis, Western North Carolina

- **Recommendation:** Implement a Phase 2 of the Racial Bias Task Force. To be led by Rev. Dr. Yvette Massey
 - **Recommendation:** Assess the implicit bias and racism inherent in the jurisdictional model as a whole. *(Ongoing work)*
 - **Recommendation:** Assess & align of how episcopal Candidates are named across Annual Conferences. *(Ongoing work if no elections in 2024)*
 - **Recommendation:** Assess the spoken and unspoken requirements for episcopal candidacy in the SEJ. *(Ongoing work)*

March: Task Force “Phase 2” began meeting with Rev. Dr. Yvette Massey convening

March-June Members of SEJ COE met to discuss a presentation for the SEJ Conference in July (Rev. Ken Nelson, South Carolina; Rev. Emily Dueitt Kincaid, Alabama-West Florida; Ms. Molly McEntire, Florida and Rev. Lindsey Baynham Freeman, Virginia).

May: Updated Report submitted to SEJ COE and SEJ Secretary

July: Presentation to the SEJ Conference in conjunction with work with Claire Bowen

A lexicon of terms will be provided to delegates to further engage in this work together.

August: Task Force “Phase 2” will work on crafting ways to continue the conversation throughout the quadrennium as well as work with the COE to prepare for 2028 elections.

- **Recommendation:** Standardize the process by which candidates make themselves available to be elected.
- **Recommendation:** Identify resources for training on implicit bias for delegations and caucus groups.
- **Recommendation:** Identity resources/processes for best ways to discern episcopal candidates
- **Recommendation:** Need for mental, emotional and spiritual support for episcopal nominees following conferences.

January: Task Force “Phase 2” will make preliminary recommendations to the SEJ COE

Committee on Coordination and Accountability

Introduction

In 2008, the SEJ Conference approved a structure that created the Committee on Coordination and Accountability (CCA), a group to oversee the work and ministry of The United Methodist Church across the Southeastern Jurisdiction. During the 2008-2012 quadrennium, the CCA worked to understand its role and function, the scope of its work, and its relationship with the agencies and ministries of the Jurisdiction.

Present Day Meetings

The committee, led by Bishop William McAlilly, has met by Zoom two times since the November 2022 SEJ Conference.

In October 2023, we received written reports from agencies and ministries. In the spring of 2024, we met with each leader via Zoom to hear about their work.

Celebration of Ministries

The CCA affirms and celebrates the ministries of the Southeastern Jurisdiction. We are grateful for the faithful leadership that each ministry executive and governing board offers for the sake of these ministries. We appreciate the time and attention they give to annual reporting and financial accountability to our CCA and CFA.

In the pages following the CCA report, you will find individual reports from each of these jurisdictional ministries, which have been a part of CCA's ongoing review:

Agencies

Gulfside Assembly
Hinton Rural Life Center
Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center

Disciplinary Group

Archives and History (Heritage Center)

Existing Ministries of SEJ

Intentional Growth Center
United Methodist Volunteers in Mission

We affirm the fruit of each ministry and invite local churches, districts, and annual conferences to explore more fully the resources each ministry offers. Some of their resources would enhance the disciple-making ministry in your local church, while other ministry offerings would expand the reach of your local ministry. Each of these ministries needs financial support to carry out their work, and most of that support comes from those who receive benefits and feel connected to these ministries.

Changes for 2024-2028

Per the rule change made to the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order, by the 2022 Southeastern Conference, there will now be a Subcommittee on Finance and Administration of the CCA. This will replace a separate SEJ Committee on Finance and Administration.

Committee on Finance and Administration

The SEJ Committee on Finance and Administration (CFA) was created by the 2008 SEJ Conference in the Plan of Organization. The focus of the work of the SEJ CFA was to oversee jurisdictional finances. That included periodic review of the SEJ Agencies finances.

2025- 2028 Budget:

Apportionment. Your CFA recommends a reduction of approximately 25.3% for the 2025–2028 quadrennium, to **\$1,120,000**. This amount is projected to be sufficient for the ongoing operational costs of the Jurisdiction and its committees; a called SEJ Conference, if necessary; providing financial assistance for attendance at the Global Youth Event; as well as provide a cushion for unforeseen contingencies as the future unfolds; and should there be a need to fund emerging ministries. This reduction follows a reduction of 18.25% for the 2021-2014 quadrennium and a return of assets to the annual conferences of \$1,095,000 in 2021.

The GCFA formula was used to establish apportionments to the SEJ Annual Conferences.

SEJ Treasurer. We wish to acknowledge and thank David Dommissie Treasurer of the Southeastern Jurisdiction, and his assistant, Tina Gudgel for their service to the Jurisdiction. CFA is thankful for David and Tina’s gifts of their service, experience and expertise to our Jurisdiction.

SEJ Audits. Jurisdictional Financial Records have been audited each fiscal year. For the fiscal years ending December 31, 2021 and 2022, CFA engaged the services of Dixon Hughes Goodman (which recently changed its name to FORVIS, LLP to audit our financials. The most recent financial report by SEJ’s auditors is posted on the SEJ website at www.sejumc.org.

Over the quadrennium, the SEJ CFA and the Committee on Coordination and Accountability (CCA) met jointly by ZOOM with representatives of the SEJ Agencies and reviewed their financial reports. We provided feedback to the agencies from our perspective on the ministries to the Jurisdiction. You will find more about that process in the CCA report found elsewhere in this Advanced Daily Christian Advocate.

While CFA has provided reimbursement to agencies and ministries of up to \$10,000 each year for their completed annual audit of their financial records, CFA ended this support following the audit of fiscal year 2022 financial records. The 2025-2028 proposed budget reflects this decision.

CFA approved paying ongoing legal expense regarding cases against the SEJ in the Boy Scouts of America Abuse Litigation.

A detailed Proposed Budget with Apportionments to the Annual Conferences follows this report. That report reflects a faithful commitment to the ministries of the Jurisdiction with collections on apportioned funds to a projected payment of over 98% in the current quadrennium.

The Committee on Finance and Administration of The Southeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church presents the following recommendations to the 2024 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference for action:

1. We recommend a budget for the 2025-2028 quadrennium in the total amount of \$1,120,000 allocated as provided in the Proposed Budget which follows.

2. We recommend that this amount be apportioned to the annual conferences as also provided in the Proposed Budget which follows.
3. We recommend the election of David Domnisse as Treasurer of the Southeastern Jurisdiction for the 2021–2024 quadrennium.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Dunnewind, *Chair*

**Committee on Finance and Administration
Proposed Budget and Apportionments
2025-2028**

SEJ Proposed 2025-2028 Budget

	2021-2024 Budget	2025-2028 Proposed Budget	Increase (Decrease)	Pct. Change
Income				
Apportioned	1,500,000	1,120,000	(380,000)	-25.3%
Less: Allowance for uncollected apportionments	(75,000)	(75,000)	-	0.0%
	<u>1,425,000</u>	<u>1,045,000</u>	<u>(380,000)</u>	<u>-26.7%</u>
Interest income		26,000	26,000	
Total Income	<u>1,425,000</u>	<u>1,071,000</u>	<u>(354,000)</u>	<u>-24.8%</u>
Expenses				
Jurisdictional Conference Session	450,000	525,000	75,000	16.7%
Called Sessions, Operations and Contingency	100,000	-	(100,000)	-100.0%
CCA Committee				
Board expenses	60,000	35,000	(25,000)	-41.7%
Conference Secretary, taxes and travel	100,000	135,000	35,000	35.0%
Pre-GC Educational program for SEJ Delegates	10,000	-	(10,000)	-100.0%
SEJ Treasurer, taxes and travel	80,000	85,000	5,000	6.3%
Audit	60,000	65,000	5,000	8.3%
Insurance	15,000	15,000	-	0.0%
Legal fees	10,000	10,000	-	0.0%
Agency audit support/reimbursement	110,000	-	(110,000)	-100.0%
Young People's Global Convocation	5,000	5,000	-	0.0%
Committee on Episcopacy	125,000	130,000	5,000	4.0%
Committee on Appeals	25,000	20,000	(5,000)	-20.0%
Commission on Archives and History	260,000	36,000	(224,000)	-86.2%
Committee on Program and Arrangements	25,000	15,000	(10,000)	-40.0%
Other administrative expenses	20,000	20,000	-	0.0%
Total Expenses	<u>1,455,000</u>	<u>1,096,000</u>	<u>(359,000)</u>	<u>-24.7%</u>
Net Revenues/(Expenses)	<u>(30,000)</u>	<u>(25,000)</u>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>-16.7%</u>
Beginning fund balance	<u>1,048,426</u>	<u>1,025,000</u>		
Total Fund Balance	<u>1,018,426</u>	<u>1,000,000</u>		

Proposed Annual Conference Apportionments 2025-2028

SEJ 2025-2028 Apportionment Projection

Total proposed apportionment **1,120,000**

	GC		Quadrennial	Annual
	Apportionments	Pct.	Apportionment	Apportionment
Alabama- West Florida Conf	1,384,765	4.579%	51,300	12,825
Florida Conference	3,205,726	10.601%	118,700	29,675
Holston Conference	2,101,879	6.950%	77,800	19,450
Kentucky Conference	1,168,277	3.863%	43,300	10,825
Mississippi Conference	1,167,621	3.861%	43,200	10,800
North Alabama Conference	1,571,190	5.196%	58,200	14,550
North Carolina Conference	2,279,078	7.536%	84,400	21,100
North Georgia Conference	3,623,200	11.981%	134,200	33,550
Central Appalachian	9,972	0.033%	400	100
South Carolina Conference	2,941,271	9.726%	108,900	27,225
South Georgia Conference	970,835	3.210%	36,000	9,000
Tennessee-West Kentucky	2,421,419	8.007%	89,700	22,425
Virginia Conference	3,897,029	12.887%	144,300	36,075
Western North Carolina	3,498,612	11.569%	129,600	32,400
Total	30,240,874	100.000%	1,120,000	280,000

Southeastern Jurisdiction Commission on Archives and History

The Southeastern Jurisdiction Commission on Archives and History (SEJCAH) continues to enthusiastically celebrate and help preserve the records of the SEJ and its agencies. We thank the SEJ and the United Methodists in the southeast for your ongoing financial support of our work in stewarding and preserving the history of Methodism in the SEJ and its member conferences. And we are grateful for the work of Dr. Brandon Wason and his colleagues at the Pitts Theological Library at Emory University in Atlanta for their hard work and care as the new official repository of the SEJ records (since May 2023).

Our SEJCAH members met at Pitts Theological Library in November 2023, and took a tour of the archives, and were very pleased with the new location. We continue to feel that this is a good long-term solution for the preservation of our historical records. As noted in our 2022 report, as part of our formal agreement with Emory, Pitts Library will continue to include open access for researchers and scholars to view and use the records of the SEJ and Pitts will also receive future SEJ papers and records (including the records and journal of this 2024 conference).

Our commission had a good meeting in November 2023 in Atlanta, and our next meeting will be September 19-20 here at Lake Junaluska (immediately following the September 17-19 meeting of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Historical Society). We have been working hard to make sure that our commission is fully represented as we begin this new quadrennium, and look forward to the renewed energy and enthusiasm these new members will bring to the table.

Thank you for your continuing support of your Southeastern Jurisdiction Commission on Archives and History.

Michael Feely
Chair
SEJCAH

Agency & Ministry Reports

Volunteers in Mission Report

UNITED METHODIST VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION | SOUTHEAST JURISDICTION



Director's Report, Spring 2024

Since 2020, the lack of travel due to the COVID pandemic has been a major obstacle facing the UMVIM movement. In 2023, we began to see evidence that churches and volunteers are more comfortable living with the many uncertainties the world has thrown to all of us, and are once again engaging in mission. For the first time since the pandemic, the deployment of mission teams has increased and we believe that growth will continue in 2024 and beyond. But we still have work to do.

The biggest challenge UMVIM now faces is the rapid exit of many churches from the denomination and the accelerating sense of division that has taken hold of our country and public discourse. These challenges are large and beyond the scope of any individual church or ministry. However, they present an opportunity for the UMVIM movement and Christians as a whole. This opportunity is an invitation from God to show the world that missions and Christ's love can be agents of reconciliation and resurrection in a broken and divided world.

It is a critical time for all United Methodists and followers of Christ. We find ourselves a smaller denomination, with smaller budgets and—as a result—are tempted to give into the fear of smaller hopes and dreams. But the Gospel of Christ tells us that God is always doing new things, and God never stops breaking down the barriers that limit our abilities or separate us from one another. Jesus and the disciples were small in number, but they changed the world.

In 2024, UMVIM will continue its ministry of resourcing mission teams by releasing a new Team Leader Handbook with a heavy emphasis on theology of mission and updated mission planning steps. In addition, UMVIM will be expanding our library of resources to include training videos and materials on a wide variety of topics which affect mission teams today, and will better prepare them for missional engagement.

UMVIM's desire for the United Methodist Church is simple: go. Spend time outside of the walls of your church. Speak to your neighbors, show others the surprising and powerful witness of God's love in the world, and try new and creative ways to reach those on the margins of society. Jesus expects no less of us despite what we have been through or where we will go.

UMVIM will be there to help prepare the way for United Methodist Churches engaging in God's work in the world.

Thank you for your support of UMVIM, and continued faith that God is always at work in everything we do.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Matt Lacey".

- Rev. Matt Lacey, Exec. Director, UMVIM, SEJ

Hinton Rural Life Center

Hayesville, NC

As a mission and retreat agency of the Southeastern Jurisdiction (SEJ) of The United Methodist Church, Hinton Rural Life Center serves the SEJ annual conferences and beyond through equipping clergy and congregations (particularly small, rural churches) and offering opportunities for individuals and church groups to serve and/or come for retreats and renewal. *Our Mission: Inspired by Jesus Christ, Hinton Center serves individuals, congregations, and rural communities through retreat ministries, educational opportunities, and missional outreach.*

2023 Highlights

- **Retreats:** In addition to hosting groups from 47 churches for missional outreach, Hinton hosted 63 retreats, including a fall Rural Clergy Renewal Retreat, which offered worship, meals, free time options, and conversational times with rural ministry and clergy health experts; participating clergy came from the Kentucky Conference, Western North Carolina Conference, South Carolina Conference, and the North Alabama Conference.
- **Confirmation:** Over 280 youth and adults from 23 churches participated in Hinton's four Theotokos Confirmation Retreat weekends in the spring of 2023. (Over 300 in 2024!) Participating churches were from the South Carolina Conference, Western North Carolina Conference, and the Holston Conference. Hinton also provided our *Theotokos Connections* confirmation curriculum to 50 churches in the SEJ, from 10 different conferences. These orders were for a total of 456 participants (confirmands and leaders). www.hintontheotokos.org
- **Safe and Healthy Home Assessment and Repair Ministry:** Hinton hosted 47 church mission teams (38 from SEJ churches) and facilitated their engagement in addressing housing needs in our rural Appalachian area. The teams worked on 61 homes and completed 282 projects.
- **Firewood Ministries:** Hinton leveraged volunteer labor to gather, process, and distribute 706 loads of firewood to neighbors in the local community to those who cannot afford to heat their homes. This is a value of \$139,455 and a tremendous savings for Hinton's neighbors.
- **Volunteers:** Much of Hinton's community outreach work is completed by volunteers. In 2023 there were 1,164 unique volunteers recording 20,180 hours in service -- a value of \$602,575.

2024 Objectives

- **Rural Poverty Simulation:** To increase understanding about the individuals Hinton serves and to promote a "walk alongside model" of ministry, Hinton developed and offers a rural poverty simulation. Since 2023 over 460 individuals have participated in this poverty simulation, which is now packaged for use in other locations and available through Hinton's web site.
- **Educational Tool Barn:** On April 15, 2024, Hinton's educational tool barn will be dedicated and launched as a new component of Hinton's Safe and Healthy Home Repair ministry. Funded by The Duke Endowment, it will equip neighbors and mission volunteers with the skills and knowledge to improve the safety and health of homes in the local community and beyond.
- **Cyle of Christian Faith Formation:** Over the years, Hinton has developed programming for youth through its Summer Mission Outreach ministry, which includes missional leadership components for high school students and college-age young people. In 2021 Hinton added *Theotokos Connections* confirmation curriculum and Theotokos Confirmation Retreats, which

primarily serve middle school youth. Hinton staff are currently developing an intentional discipleship pathway, so youth can connect with Hinton from middle school through college, creating a network of engagement opportunities that strengthens their faith formation and participation in their local churches and within The United Methodist Church. Because an important component of their faith formation is the building of relationships with adults, this fall Hinton will launch BOOM, Boomers on Outreach Mission, as another engagement opportunity in this faith formation cycle. It will be September 8-12 for adults 60 and older, replicating Hinton's summer program for youth mission teams. The goal is to increase adults' understanding of and commitment to their call (through the baptismal covenant) to support younger generations as co-disciples through this shared, connectional experience.

Just as Jesus modeled a life of loving God and neighbor through serving and teaching, Hinton continues to serve in impactful ways in its three-county area through Safe and Healthy Home Repair, firewood, Christmas Care, and other ministries, as well as focusing on generational equipping through educational ministries, such as the rural poverty simulation and educational tool barn. Following the life of discipleship modeled by Jesus, Hinton offers ministries for retreat and renewal for all ages, knowing that as Christians grow in love for God and self, they are also more able to love their neighbor in transformational ways.

Jacqueline Gottlieb
President and CEO
jackie@hintoncenter.org
www.hintoncenter.org; 828-389-8336



Ministry Overview

Gulfside Association's mission is to serve as a "Partner in Advocacy" to underserved, and marginalized people and communities. Our mission is based on the Chautauqua pillars of faith, education, recreation, and culture.

Gulfside partners with faith leaders, organizations, and agencies within the community to design and implement programs, and experiences that build relationships, educate and improve the lives of all community members across the lifespan.

Strategic Initiatives

- I. Revitalizing the Gulfside brand through storytelling and a vibrant online presence. Increasing name recognition and spreading a new narrative about Gulfside.
- II. Maximizing the value of our board, staff and volunteers. Getting the right people involved, doing the right things at the right time.
- III. Establishing and executing strategic goals and impactful programming. Pursuing partnership as a key strategy and financial self-sufficiency for programmatic offerings.
- IV. Pursuing greater financial stability, making Gulfside a viable ministry partner for years to come. Increasing giving by rejuvenating and increase size of database and volunteer database. Creating a long-range plan (10+ years) for facilities and income generation.

I. Revitalizing the Gulfside Brand

- We have increased our visibility within the community by speaking to local organizations about Gulfside, attending local meetings and inviting the community to use our facilities. Stories about Gulfside have been written in the Historical Society's Newsletter, the community's on-line magazine, and the MS Conference newsletter. The history of Gulfside was presented in a podcast with the General Commission on Archives and History of the UMC. Gulfside was recognized by the Hancock County Chamber of Commerce in August of 2023 for excellence in community service.
- We have contracted with a webmaster to rebuild our website and link it to multiple social media platforms.
- We have completed the documentary, "The Story of Gulfside Assembly". This historical documentary tells the story of Bishop Jones, Gulfside Assembly and its' ministries from its' inception to the present time. It has taken two years to produce and include interviews from many individuals who tell of the impact that Gulfside has had on their lives. This PBS quality documentary is scheduled for release in September 2024.

II. Maximizing the value of our board, staff, volunteers and friends

- We have been intentional in maximizing our board by adding six new members to replace officers and members who will transition out of leadership to membership or Friends of Gulfside positions. These new members were on-boarded in our April 12, 2024 meeting and will continue to be mentored by seasoned board members. Additional new board members will be brought in at our fall meeting. They bring diversities of race, age and skills that will support Gulfside's future sustainability.

III. Establishing and executing strategic goals and impactful programming

- **The Annual Mission Education Travel Study Seminar (METSS)**
The Mission Education Travel Study Seminar has continued to be one of our signature programs. It provides opportunities for underserved students in the eighth through twelfth grade to visit colleges, universities, and mission sites with an emphasis on those related to the United Methodist Church. In addition, the students participate in the Southeastern Jurisdiction Black Methodist for Church Renewal SEJ Youth Harambee. One of the youths attending this program in 2023 stated, "the experience changed my life." Since its' inception, this program has been attended by over 700 youth. Two of our new board members were youth who participated in the METSS program for multiple years.
- **Life Skills Training for Youth**
Youth from Hancock County participate in Gulfside sponsored Life Skills Training classes taught by skilled professionals using evidenced based curriculum. Training is developed to enhance the social, emotional, and people skills of children and youth. Children in grades 6-12 years of age in Hancock and West Harrison Counties participate in hands on interactive training at Gulfside Assembly and designated locations. Youth who attend our life skills program are excited and engaged as they set goals, discuss bullying, and conflict resolution techniques. Since its' inception this program has impacted over sixty youth.
- **Senior Lunch and Learn**
Our seniors love coming to Gulfside to learn how to stay safe, healthy, and fellowship.
- **Community Garden**
The garden is a cross-generational program has been a platform for organizing a council with rules and officers, encourages relationship building, and promoting healthy eating. The community garden produced despite the heat of last summer. Planting has already begun for this years' garden.
- **Partnering with Community Organizations**
Gulfside has been blessed to have been assigned a full-time missionary from Global Ministries since January 1, 2022. In her role is Community Outreach Coordinator, she has been busy leading faith based and local organization collaboratives,

developing relationships with area churches and leading and conducting programs. assessing the Bay Waveland Community, building relationships, and identifying needs. She and I volunteer at the local Boys and Girls Club.

- We represent Gulfside by serving as active members and participants in several area organizations whose mission and goals align with ours, including, but not limited to an organization that provides scholarships and mentoring for minority girls assisting them to continue their education and become successful members of the community.
- Gulfside collaborated with its' many partners in a community Martin Luther King Celebration, Black History Month Programs, and other activities.
- **First Aid and CPR Training**
A First Aid and CPR certification class was offered to members of the community.
- **100th Anniversary Celebration**
Gulfside's 100th Anniversary Celebration was held April 27th through 29th, 2023. It was a tremendous success. Hundreds of friends and supporters from across the country attended this celebration which included a museum exhibit, a "meet and greet" event, gala, and a food give away to over 250 families followed by a closing worship service on the grounds of Gulfside.

IV. Pursuing Greater Financial Stability

- Simultaneously, we have contracted with a donor management platform to increase our fundraising by organizing, engaging, and tracking donors.
- One of our board members is a professional fundraiser. He is leading us in a fundraising campaign identifying various levels of donors and other initiatives to insure that Gulfside and its' ministries not only survive, but thrive.
- Gulfside is applying for multiple grants to support our ministries. Our office serves as a meeting and educational space. We are exploring opportunities to maintain a safe and appropriate environment for those who meet in the space, and participate in our programs.

Gulfside is excited about the great things happening in our ministries, our community and beyond. While we are acutely aware of the challenges that lie ahead, it is our faith and our belief that God is with us that outshines all challenges.

Gulfside is grateful to the SEJCCA for its' continued support. It is because of your support that we can continue to grow in ministry.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cheryl W. Thompson

Cheryl W. Thompson

Executive Director

Candler School of Theology

2024 Report to the UMC Annual Conferences

Since 1914, **Candler School of Theology at Emory University** has educated faithful and creative leaders for the church's ministries throughout the world. An official seminary of The United Methodist Church, Candler holds true to the Wesleyan value of ecumenical openness, enthusiastically welcoming students from more than 40 denominations, with nearly half of Master of Divinity students coming from the Methodist family, including United Methodist, African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Christian Methodist Episcopal, Wesleyan, Free Methodist, Church of the Nazarene, and others. Our student body reflects the diversity and breadth of the Christian faithful, with an enrollment of 419 from 12 countries and 38 states, and 44% persons of color. This diversity is a blessing, enriching our life together and providing a "learning laboratory" for ministry in the 21st century—ministry that cultivates community across difference, welcomes all to contribute and belong, and embodies Christ's love in and among us.

Candler offers six degrees (Master of Divinity, Master of Theological Studies, Master of Religion and Public Life, Master of Religious Leadership, Master of Theology, Doctor of Ministry) and ten dual degrees, most of which are available in hybrid or online formats. Response to our new hybrid-format Master of Divinity, which launched in Fall 2023, has been strong: 65% of 2023's MDiv entering class chose the hybrid model, blending online classes and in-person intensives. Plus, around 20% of MDiv students participate in Candler's Teaching Parish program to earn contextual education credit as they serve as student pastors in local churches. Our proven DMin program—with a near 90% completion rate—is 90% online as well. These flexible options plus Candler's recognized academic excellence and hands-on learning opportunities are opening possibilities for even more people to follow God's call to ministry.

Reducing student debt through generous financial aid is a top priority for Candler. In 2023-2024, we are on track to award \$6.3 million in scholarship support, with 100% of MDiv students receiving aid. All MDiv students who are certified candidates for ordained ministry in the UMC receive full-tuition scholarships, and all MDiv, MTS, MRL, and ThM students receive a scholarship covering at least 50% of tuition. MDiv students also receive financial coaching and complete a financial literacy program to strengthen their budgeting skills and reduce debt. That knowledge will serve them—and the ministries they serve—well into the future.

Candler is growing in exciting directions as it creates avenues to bring high-quality theological education to a wider audience. It is a hub of Christian learning with multiple entry points. Those who aren't seeking an advanced degree can engage in learning through The Candler Foundry, our innovative program to make theological education accessible to the public through short courses, events, and related activities; the United Methodist Course of Study to educate licensed local pastors; the new Candler Center for Christian Leadership to refine business-related skills of United Methodist leaders; and La Mesa Academy, offering diplomas in pastoral leadership via a two-year hybrid program with courses in Spanish, English, and Korean.

One of the biggest news items of the year for Candler is the announcement that after nearly 18 years, Dean Jan Love will step down from Candler's deanship in the summer of 2024. Through Dean Love's transformational leadership, Candler has expanded to offer three new degrees, five new dual degrees, and more online and hybrid options, including the highly successful hybrid MDiv and DMin degrees. She has increased the diversity of Candler's faculty and student body, continued the school's tradition

of world-class scholarship in hiring 75% of the current full-time faculty, and grown the number of endowed professorships. Her efforts have enhanced Candler's ability to fulfill its mission in a rapidly changing environment, and she leaves the school in a strong position. The next dean of Candler is expected to be named by early summer.

Candler depends upon your prayers, partnership, and support. Thank you for the countless ways you advance this essential ministry in the life of our denomination. We invite you to visit us online at candler.emory.edu.

—*Office of Communications*
Candler School of Theology, Emory University



Lake Junaluska

Report to the SEJ

July 2024

Living into Our Mission

Lake Junaluska Assembly continues to live into its mission to be a place of Christian hospitality where lives are transformed through renewal of soul, mind and body. During the pandemic in 2020, conference and retreat industry leaders predicted that 2023 would be the first year we would see full recovery and that group travel would be among the last industries to recover. Both of those predictions were accurate. Large conferences returned this past year, and every event that did come back came back smaller than before 2020.

Given the changes in the size of events, we have learned to be very creative at supporting multiple small events simultaneously versus one large event, as has been the case historically. This change has enabled us to host many first-time events at Lake Junaluska and, most importantly, to create the same outcome of large numbers of people being impacted by this special place. We anticipate this trend continuing in 2024 and beyond. It is beautiful to see the new ways that God is using this place and how these beloved grounds are transforming lives every day.

We've also seen the utilization of the grounds by families and individuals who want to be together at records exceeding what we saw before the pandemic. That's exciting because our strategic vision is to become known as the most welcoming and inviting place for personal renewal in the United States, and our numbers seem to indicate people are looking for that.

Covenant Agreement

Lake Junaluska continues to honor and value its relationship with the Southeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church through the covenant agreement adopted in July 2018 and affirmed at the SEJ Conference in November 2022.

Lake Junaluska is committed to assisting The United Methodist Church fulfill its mission "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" by welcoming all of God's children to its beloved sacred grounds.

Fresh Expressions of Ministry and a Bright Future

The 2024 Theologian in Residence and Summer Worship schedule is set for June 30-August 16. The visiting theologian each week will preach on Sunday mornings during the series and offer personal and interactive experiences throughout the following week. A variety of musicians will participate each week, and the Artists in Residence at Lake Junaluska will coordinate with local artists to provide altar art for summer worship.

Summer activity programs will also return with offerings such as yoga, bonfires, devotions and special events. The Festival of Wisdom and Grace returns on August 19-22, and the 36th Choir Music Weekend is scheduled for October 18-20.

Looking toward the future, Lake Junaluska continues to focus on the following guiding aspirations, which were adopted by the board of trustees in 2020:

Aspiration 1: To preserve and enhance the lake and grounds so that more people will recognize the natural beauty of God's creation.

Aspiration 2: To be a conference center that rivals hospitality industry leaders by exceeding guests' expectations through excellence in staff and facilities.

Aspiration 3: To be the place that connects more youth to Christ through meaningful ministry, recreation, and education programs.

Aspiration 4: To identify, uphold, and strengthen the Lake Junaluska tradition of implementing innovative, shared experiences – for both individuals and families – that celebrate faith, recreation, the arts, and education.

Aspiration 5: To be an involved, inclusive community that provides the highest quality of life for residents and guests.

Finances, Charitable Giving and Capital Improvements

Lake Junaluska ended 2023 with a profit, which was reinvested back into moving our staff towards a living wage, which is, unfortunately, an anomaly within the broader regional tourism industry. Lake Junaluska projections for 2024 are in line to finish the year with a balanced budget.

Charitable giving remains strong and, in 2023, we exceeded our fundraising goal to the Annual Fund for the fifth straight year. The Annual Fund is a budget-relieving initiative that is a line item in Lake Junaluska's annual operating budget.

Since generous charitable giving provides opportunities for Lake Junaluska to reinvest in its facilities and grounds, great strides have been made toward improving our infrastructure, enabling the conference center to continue meeting all guests' needs. Some of the significant improvements completed in 2023 include upgrades to Stuart Auditorium with a state-of-the-art Danley sound system, removal of the Crow's Nest (sound booth), a new sound/video booth, and replacement of the main projectors and screens.

Work on the Warren Center multi-function event space (the former Methodist Museum building) is complete, and the first events have been booked in July 2024.

Leadership

We deeply appreciate the leadership of Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett, Bishop Ken Carter and Bishop Jonathan Holston who serve on the Lake Junaluska Board of Trustees. Their wisdom, along with our 23 other trustees, assures that we are fully living to our mission every day.

In addition to myself as executive director, also serving on the executive leadership team are Sindy Crenshaw, Director of Finance and Administration, Mike Huber, General Manager, and Carroll Woody Jr., Director of Assembly Public Works. An announcement will be made in the future for the team member who will serve in the position of Director of Advancement.

Conclusion

The Board of Trustees and staff celebrate our relationship with the SEJ and invite you to visit Lake Junaluska for a conference, retreat or vacation. The lake and surrounding mountains will provide the perfect setting for you to experience transformation and renewal. To plan your next visit, please visit lakejunaluska.com.

Ken Howle
Executive Director

Episcopal Area Reports

Alabama-West Florida Area

Bishop David W. Graves

On August 10, 2023, the Alabama-West Florida Conference announced updated priorities to guide our ministry work for the coming year. These four priorities were launched out of dedicated work, conversations, and prayer about how the conference collaborates to fulfill its mission in the coming months to revive us again. This work came after a year where disaffiliations and town halls consumed many leaders and local churches.

The current priorities state that the Alabama-West Florida Conference leadership, including staff, cabinet and others serving in conference leadership positions, will:

1. Define a strategy for open itineracy by reclaiming who we are as United Methodists.
2. Implement a program for churches to develop a process of spiritual formation through tools such as Disciple Bible Study.
3. Develop practices for healthy clergy and healthy congregations.
4. Support the AWF New Ministry Strategy team and its work.

As we begin 2024, significant progress has been made on each of these goals, as indicated below from conference staff and cabinet members who are leading these efforts.

Define a strategy for open itineracy by reclaiming who we are as United Methodists

(Dr. Jeff Wilson, dean of the cabinet) - Ministry in the United Methodist Church is a connectional partnership between laity and clergy, and this is certainly true in the calling, training, and deployment of appointed clergy. As the AWF cabinet members have reflected upon the priority of a renewed commitment to the Wesleyan practice of open itineracy across our annual conference, they have focused their work on concrete ways to “identify, train, and support congregations to receive clergy of color and female clergy as their Senior Pastor.” The cabinet members are educating themselves on best practices, resources materials, and the experiences of clergy in our annual conference around this priority. Their work has included the following:

- The cabinet has met with the General Secretaries (and staff members) of both the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women and the General Commission on Religion and Race. They are also reviewing material that these Commissions have produced to be used in the local church, including [Investing Well in Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural Ministry: Laity & Clergy](#), [Women Called To Serve](#), and [Welcoming a Woman Pastor](#).
- Two focus groups were held in early January with clergy from AWF. One group consisted of female clergy currently serving in senior pastor positions in our annual conference, and the second was with pastors who are or have served in Cross-Cultural, Cross-Racial appointments. The report from these groups will be shared with the cabinet in the coming days.

- Cabinet members will gather with an ad hoc advisory group later this month to include District Lay Leaders as well as representatives from the annual conference Committee on Status and Role of Women and the conference Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns. The group will be asked to reflect and give guidance on ways that laity can lead their churches in this important work.

Implement a program for churches to develop a process of spiritual formation through tools such as Disciple Bible Study

(Rev. Ashley Davis, director of connectional ministries) - Many clergy and laity in our conference can testify to their experience that Disciple Bible Study is a proven tool for spiritual transformation in individuals and congregations. The AWF Board of Discipleship and individuals with experience and passion for Disciple Bible study have been exploring ways to encourage and equip churches to utilize this resource as we seek to become more scripturally literate, develop deeper connections with God and one another, and help people know their gifts and use them to live out their calling.

- To assist local churches in using Disciple Bible Study, the Board of Discipleship will offer an online Disciple I Fast Track Bible Study class that will train clergy and laity to teach the course in the future. This class will begin in August of 2024, is offered at no cost, and will be led by members of the Board of Discipleship and will feature sessions led by Rev. Dr. Jason Borders, Professor of Religion at Huntingdon College and ordained elder in the Alabama-West Florida Conference. CEUs will be made available for clergy (and laity upon request). Those who complete the class will be given a free Disciple I Fast Track Bible Study starter kit for use in the local church. If you are interested in participating, please fill out an interest form [available at this link](#).
- For those already engaged in Disciple Bible Study, an app is available to further your engagement and aid in the growth of your faith. Visit <https://beadiscipleapp.com/> to learn more about many discipleship resources and to get the app.
- In addition, the Board of Discipleship is working to provide training for local churches around intentional discipleship processes. If you or your church would like to learn more about these trainings, please contact Rev. Ashley Davis, ashley@awfumc.org.

Develop practices for healthy clergy and healthy congregations

(Rev. Robin Wilson, director of healthy clergy and congregations) – Ministry of the clergy and the laity is a joyful responsibility of all Christians, as we live the mission of The United Methodist Church: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Multiple ministries in our connectional system already exist to help clergy and congregations grow in health, and those have renewed emphasis on our Website and conference communications. In the last five months, over 60 clergy have contacted the Office of Healthy Clergy Leading Healthy Congregations and have been directly connected with existing resources. Additional emphasis has been placed creating new pathways for physical, spiritual, mental, financial, vocational, and relationship health in the following areas:

- A [clergy coaching grant system](#) was developed and made available for clergy.
- Gathering the Order of Elders in “Halftime Huddles” for conversations about ministry into the future, under the leadership of Dr. John Dew and Dr. Brian Miller, took place in the fall.

- The operations team, cabinet, and BOM staff have been engaged in making health a priority that is woven into many decisions, initiatives and events, with special emphasis on the benefits of our EAP and the formation of a future Clergy Care team.
- “Restore Renew Rejoice,” a day of worship and friendship for all Alabama-West Florida Clergy will be Feb 12, 2024. Additionally, the Alabama-West Florida United Methodist Foundation and Wespath will be there to consult with pastors about personal or congregational financial health. [Click here to learn more.](#)
- Other events to come include a Webinar focusing on trauma and healing from Center for Sacred Space and a “Leading God’s People with Resilience and Hope” retreat for July 28-31 at Blue Lake.

Support the AWF New Ministry Strategy team and its work

(Rev. Jean Tippit, director of new ministry strategies) - The New Ministry Strategies team has been working with existing and new churches in many ways.

- Over 25 clergy and laity from existing churches have attended [training events through Discipleship Ministries](#) and [Fresh Expressions](#). In addition, NMS have hosted training opportunities for large church pastors from the AWF and North Alabama Conferences and for the new church pastors.
- The cultivators have guided several churches, in [listening sessions designed to help these churches determine what God is calling them to specifically do to reach their communities](#). Several new ministries and new outreach opportunities have started throughout the conference through the work of the local churches.
- The AWF Conference has eleven new churches/faith communities at varying stages of becoming chartered churches. Each church faces unique challenges, and our cultivators help them along the way. The clergy gather regularly for New Pastor Cohort meetings which offers training and support. To support and encourage this work with the help, we have begun [publishing articles](#) that highlight each new church plant.
- Most recently, through the work of New Ministry Strategies, one new church has opened in the Pike Road area, Three Rivers UMC in Grand Ridge, FL, held their soft-opening and Restoration UMC, kicked off 2024 with a Celebrate Recovery Program for their community.

All of these new churches aim to establish ministries and reach out to their communities.

As we look forward to the next quadrennium, the Alabama-West Florida Conference is focused on these priorities. We believe that as we are intentional about these priorities we will better make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Our conference stands poised to turn the page on disaffiliations, struggles, and loss, and begin to move into a future with a newfound focus on joining God in the work of making all things new.

Birmingham Area (North Alabama Conference) Report

Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett

It is with hope and joy that I share this report on the life and ministry of the North Alabama Annual Conference. Since our November 2022 Jurisdictional Conference, we have experienced deep challenges as well as profound hope and renewal.

Like many other Annual Conferences, we have weathered a painful and heartbreaking time as treasured churches disaffiliated and beloved clergy withdrew from our denomination. Yet, Annual Conference 2023 marked a turning point for us. The positivity and renewed commitment to move forward with purpose and faith propelled us into the rebuilding season in which we find ourselves now. Indeed, we are guided by our newly implemented vision of "A bold Annual Conference fearlessly following the Holy Spirit together."

Discipleship at the Forefront

One of our key priorities has been a renewed focus on discipleship and living out our United Methodist mission to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." Leadership and I have been intentional about our priority of developing passionate spiritual disciples and leaders to lead us in fulfilling our mission. Through new ministries and experiments, we are equipping our churches to be increasingly effective in this vital work.

Planting New Communities of Faith

Amid disaffiliations, we have prioritized beginning new faith communities and fresh expressions of ministry. The deployment of District Developers in December 2022 and the upcoming launch of Conference Cultivators in July 2024 are tangible signs of our commitment to reach new people for Christ. These leaders, who are working with our New and Renewing Churches Team, are walking alongside local churches starting innovative ministries that connect with their communities.

Streamlining for Greater Effectiveness

As we lived through a year of intentional transition and recalibration (June 2023-June 2024), our Appointive Cabinet included four District Superintendents who each oversaw two Districts. With the able assistance of consultants Ms. Kay Kotan and Rev. Dr. Blake Bradford, we also began realigning from eight to four Districts with an intentional focus on simplified and accountable leadership structures. This realignment, pending approval of our June 2024 Annual Conference, will take effect on July 1.

An experiment we launched in 2023 was appointing Associate District Superintendents for each district. These clergy served dual appointments that included another ministry context and assisting with the administration of the districts. The success of these appointments has resulted in us staffing each of our four new districts with two Associate Superintendents and one Administrative Assistant.

Renewing Relationships and Equipping Leaders

The work of our NAC3 Team, convened in Spring 2022, has been instrumental in renewing and rebuilding relationships throughout our Conference. Focusing on Christ, community, and clarity, this

team has gathered churches to share their best ministry ideas and identify resources our local churches currently need. These relational listening sessions have generated a new excitement about connecting and a renewed hope for our United Methodist ministry in North Alabama moving into the future.

Additionally, our annual conference themes and guest speakers have equipped our clergy and lay members with practical models for evangelism and leadership development. In 2023, our Annual Conference theme was *Offer Christ Every Day*. We welcomed guest speakers Rev. Dr. Priscilla Pope-Levison and Dr. Jack Levison, who inspired our clergy and lay members with practical evangelism models for local churches. This year, our theme is *Living the Story of Jesus: All for the Glory of God*. Our guest preacher Bishop William T. (Bill) McAlilly will help us focus on leadership development. We are also incorporating Learn and Lead Workshops into our Annual Conference schedule to keep practical teaching and leadership development opportunities front and center,

Heart for Missions

The North Alabama Conference has a long-standing commitment to ministry with the poor and missions. Our faithful giving to missions (\$772,000 in 2022 and \$307,795 in 2023) is a testament to the generosity of North Alabama United Methodists. Our 2022 Annual Conference special offering supported United Methodist Churches in the Baltics, providing care and assistance for Ukrainian Refugees. Over the years, the North Alabama Conference has partnered with United Methodists in the Baltics in numerous ways. This offering of almost \$75,000 was a timely way for our Conference to respond to the devastating war in Ukraine. Our 2023 mission offering provided grants for congregations in North Alabama and missionaries around the world in evangelism ministries. Our 2024 mission offering will go to support our Advance Special ministries in North Alabama as well as provide ministry grants for rural churches in our Conference.

Birmingham-Southern College

In March, we learned that our United Methodist-related college, Birmingham-Southern College, would cease operations in May 2024. As we mourn the closure of our beloved Birmingham-Southern College, we give thanks for its lasting impact of 168 years and are also discerning the next chapter for our United Methodist Center. Our Conference Trustees are currently evaluating various options for operating The United Methodist Center in the current building or another location.

A Future Filled with Hope

As I reflect on my 12 years as episcopal leader in North Alabama, I am filled with a deep sense of gratitude for the opportunity and privilege of serving this Conference. I also have great hope for the future of the people called United Methodists who live, serve, and make disciples across this faith-filled, resilient, creative, caring, fearless, bold Annual Conference. The words of Romans 15:13 have been a guiding light for us since our 2022 Jurisdictional Conference. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." This is my prayer and summary of the ministry we are experiencing in North Alabama.

Charlotte Area (Western North Carolina Conference) Report

Bishop Kenneth H. Carter, Jr.

The Western North Carolina Conference is composed of forty-four counties, which include the cities of Charlotte and Greensboro in an area that extends to the Tennessee, Virginia, South Carolina and Georgia borders. We are 643 churches with 173,159 members. In addition, we gather in 200 fresh expressions of church, 16 emerging communities, 12 campus ministries and 10 new church plants. Our mission also includes five colleges, three retirement communities, three camps, and an initiative with children who have experienced trauma, and the ministries of the Lake Junaluska Assembly and the Hinton Center are located here.

Along with the North Carolina Conference, the Charlotte Episcopal Area was blessed to host the General Conference in May, 2024 in uptown Charlotte. Over one thousand laity and clergy gave extraordinary hospitality, many of our local choirs and musicians contributed to the worship of the global gatherings, and visiting missionaries, bishops and pastors preached in churches across our annual conference. An interpretive webinar held following the General Conference has received more than twenty thousand views.

We are blessed with 739 active clergy who serve local churches and in extension ministries. These clergy have led faithfully through a season of a pandemic, polarization and disaffiliation. Preachers are offering Christ to persons who gather in sanctuaries and, increasingly, who worship online. The faith is being shared with next generations in our campus ministries, in confirmation retreats, in summer camps and in vacation bible schools. Many churches are learning to become more externally focused, offering meals for the hungry, repurposing their buildings for unhoused persons, and tutoring children in elementary schools, in the spirit of Matthew 25. Over one hundred Lighthouse Churches have identified themselves publicly as sanctuaries for all people, without exception, through the grace of Jesus Christ. Many of our churches are finding their voices for a more just world, especially in response to racism, poverty, violence, extremism and exclusion.

There is an undeniable “pivot” as our leaders move beyond the season of lawsuits and disaffiliation. Our losses of congregations were predominantly in rural areas, our losses of clergy primarily local pastors. We lament these losses, and have sent these persons forth with our blessings in a series of called annual conferences. As our usage of Paragraph 2553 in the Book of Discipline has ended, and in congruence with the action of General Conference, we are now focused on the future, building up and encouraging our members (1 Corinthians 12), seeing and developing their gifts,

and as importantly seeing the many people who are beyond the walls of our church buildings.

We are blessed with partners who have walked with us over the past years, especially the United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina, the Duke Endowment, and the Parish Ministry Fund. Our partners have helped us to establish and continue offerings in leadership development, clergy well-being, the mentoring of younger clergy, church planting, resourcing present and future district superintendents, and doctoral programs with Duke Divinity School in the areas of rural church leadership and missional innovation.

We continue to do the work of anti-racism as an expression of discipleship and sanctification. Over the last quadrennium, all clergy and many laity have participated in antiracism training. We are intentionally moving toward the reduction of the salary gap for clergy of color and clergywomen through the appointive process and just compensation schedules. We have held gatherings of our youth and provisional clergy at the International Civil Rights Museum in Greensboro and hosted the Southeastern Regional Conference of Black Methodists for Church Renewal. We anticipate the development of pilgrimages in the future to Greensboro and Cherokee.

The National Gathering of the Reconciling Ministries Network was held in Charlotte. We are supporting the development of curriculum for churches and camping experiences that integrate the values of discipleship and the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ persons. Our appointive cabinet had done previous work on an “expanded profile” for churches and clergy that anticipated many of the outcomes of the General Conference. We have sought to honor conscience, build trust and provide safe places for ministry among all whom God is calling.

Our focus on Fresh Expressions of Church has included hosting the first National Gathering of Fresh Expressions United Methodist in Charlotte, hosting a denominational training prior to the General Conference, and creating communities of listening and discipleship beyond our church walls.

We are a connectional church. Our apportionment is the third largest in the denomination, and we have supported the essential characteristic of connectionalism through financial giving, through our leaders who serve the broader connection, and through flexibility in partnering for a season in a shared episcopal assignment with the Florida Conference. We have also sought to be good

and prudent stewards of God's resources and have reset our budget for a sustainable and vital future.

Lastly, as residential bishop I am blessed to serve this area, my home annual conference where I was a local church pastor for twenty-eight years. Relationships are at the heart of it all. I met with over 90 small groups across the annual conference in 2023, and preach consistently in local churches on Sunday mornings. In addition, we have experimented by having a presence in public spaces such as Merlefest (a large music festival) and the Hickory Crawdads (minor league baseball); these are experiences of wonderful fellowship and help to build awareness of who we are.

I conclude on a note of gratitude. I want to name especially the support of my wife Pam; Amy Coles, assistant to the bishop and DeEtta Rivens, administrative assistant in the episcopal office; and Jennifer Davis and Kim Ingram, lay and clergy representatives to the Jurisdictional Committee on the Episcopacy. Lastly, I give thanks to God for the people of our annual conference, who have encountered Jesus Christ and have come to know his grace (Ephesians 2). They have walked beside each other in a connection for the purpose of making a difference in this world, and they are growing in love with God and each other. We do not deny the complexity and challenge of the past few years; and yet we have experienced the truth of the scripture that "God is faithful" (1 Corinthians 1).

Kenneth H. Carter, Jr.
Resident Bishop, Charlotte Episcopal Area

Columbia Area Report

Bishop L. Jonathan Holston

The South Carolina Annual Conference remains passionate in pursuing our shared mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We know that this passion springs forth from our local churches – and it is multiplied by the ever-deepening partnership between our dedicated clergy and our faith-filled laity. These relationships have been critical in 2023-2024, as we have continued to navigate the ongoing evolution of our denomination and strive to be “On the Leading Edge of Ministry.”

With that in mind, our Ministry Advisory Team, which is composed of lay and clergy representatives from all aspects of ministry across the Annual Conference, has encouraged South Carolina United Methodists to look afresh at our mission field with this guidance: “Don’t think less, think different.” This means focusing on what God provides, rather than what we don’t have. It means looking toward a future with hope, not looking back in despair. It means focusing on the mission and ministry work that is right here in front of us today, rather than expending time and energy worrying about what tomorrow might have been.

Clergy and laity in our local churches are leaning into that challenge as an opportunity to reflect on two simple but powerful questions: “Who is in our community?” and, “How are we engaging our community?” We are reminded to focus on those things that we can control and to leave the rest to God. With the goal of “Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership,” we have met with hundreds of lay and clergy leaders at 12 “Bishop’s Day in the District” events across the conference. These were two-way conversations, and we heard much from these faithful disciples about the challenges and blessings of doing ministry in their communities.

We are nurturing and supporting the development of the new South Carolina Cognitive Connection Ministries – a grass-roots ministry with the goal of helping local churches discern for themselves how best to be in ministry *with* those living with the loss of cognitive functioning and those who care for them – rather than in ministry *to* them.

Felecia and I are grateful for the opportunity to be in ministry with the laity and clergy across the Columbia Area. We thank South Carolina United Methodists for allowing God to work through each of you and to use every one of us to make a difference in our communities and the world for the sake of Christ.

Grace and peace,
L. Jonathan Holston

Florida Area Report

Bishop Tom Berlin

This report is offered with gratitude to the dedicated followers of Jesus Christ, lay and clergy, who lead local churches, fresh expressions, extension ministries and who serve on the Conference staff of The Florida Conference. Bishop Berlin began his ministry among us in January of 2023 and has hit the ground running to offer passionate leadership filled with abounding hope for the future. Bishop Berlin's focus has been on the local church where he has preached in dozens of our churches. Through district and regional gatherings, Bishop Berlin has sought to connect with the Florida Conference and engage with its diverse constituency. We have continued our focus on the work of anti-racism as a matter of discipleship led by a Bishop's Task Force on Anti-racism and guided by a comprehensive plan.

Our 2023 annual conference theme was Abounding in Hope and we welcomed Rev. Jasmine Smothers and Dr. Carla Works to lead in worship and bible study. Our 2024 annual conference theme will be Come, Holy Spirit, Come and we will welcome Dr. Paul Chilcote and Rev. Dr. Shively Smith.

With support from the Strategic Leadership Team, Bishop Berlin established a realignment team to help us turn the page as an annual conference and respond to the reality of disaffiliations. This team will report its findings to the annual conference session in June of 2024. Its recommendations include a reduction of the number of districts from eight to six, a thirty-five percent reduction in the annual conference budget, a new leadership structure, as well as a focus on a innovation hub and resources related to equipping and training. We are working towards a renewed strategy related to planting diverse communities of faith. In the next year, we will invest in new church development and in our continued work related to Fresh Expressions of faith.

Our camp and conference center has received new leadership and is planning for the future with hope through new development of donors and the creation of a long-range plan. Bishop Berlin has led the way in developing the culture of our conference staff through the creation of five key values and the use of a performance management system to ensure that each staff person is accountable through goal setting. Our disaster recovery ministry has responded to the greater volume and intensity of named and unnamed storms and continues to perform long term recovery throughout the state. Our missional engagement team is involved in the ongoing development of our global missional partnerships as well as the training of our local churches to engage in ministries that alleviate suffering in our local communities.

We seek to reach the next generation of leaders through our campus ministries and our work with children and youth. We know an ongoing focus and investment will be needed to ensure we are building the future church and continuing to develop the pipeline of our next leaders. Our Board of Ordained Ministry worked diligently with our clergy session to care for the provisional class that was not approved in 2022. We celebrated as we commissioned over 20 provisional members in 2023. Our Office of Clergy Excellence received a 1.25 million dollar

grant from the Lilly Endowment's Compelling Preaching Initiative to expand the mission of the Institute of Preaching.

We are developing a conference wide focus on being Wesleyan Rooted by encouraging all of our clergy to set aside a few days for prayer and study in Wesleyan theology and doctrine as they develop a sermon series and plan small groups for laity in each church to deepen our understanding and engagement with our Wesleyan tradition.

The Florida Conference remains a strong and vital connection of local churches, fresh expressions and extension ministries. We thank God for the conference leadership and staff who have helped in this time of transition. We look forward to the many ways God is calling us to continue to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Knoxville Area (Holston Conference) Report

Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett

As I write this report summarizing the work of the Holston Conference since December 2022, the words of the Apostle Paul to the church of Rome come to mind. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)

Hope runs deep in Holston as this vibrant, strong, caring, mission-minded, discipleship-focused Annual Conference celebrates our Bicentennial year. Recognizing that we stand on the shoulders of many outstanding leaders who came before us, we move into a hope-filled future.

Embracing Our Future with Abounding Hope

My heart is filled with hope as the Holston Conference clergy, laity, and congregations continue to respond to God's call on our lives. This hope is grounded in our Triune God: The Creator who made the heavens and the earth, Jesus Christ who redeems us, and the Holy Spirit who empowers us in all that we do.

God is at work in the Holston Conference. Guided by prayer and communal discernment, we are at a pivotal moment in our ministry together. We have discovered a renewed mission and vision for our collective aspirations and path forward.

Our Renewed Mission and Vision

"Developing passionate spiritual leaders who reflect Jesus," is both our mission and a call to each of us to deepen our discipleship and leadership in Christ. It is an invitation to embody the qualities of Passionate Spiritual Disciples who are being shaped and led by the Holy Spirit, and engaging in accountable relationships that foster spiritual, missional, and relational growth.

"A conference of passionate spiritual leaders making disciples of Jesus Christ" is the vision that compels us in our movement forward. We envision a conference where every member is a disciple and a disciple-maker contributing to the transformation of lives, churches, communities, and the world through Christ and Christ's love. In addition, many of us will be leading teams of disciples in our shared mission together.

Introducing Hope Abounds: A Conference-Wide Action Plan

In response to this renewed mission and vision, we have launched "Hope Abounds," an emphasis designed to cultivate Passionate Spiritual Disciples, Leaders, Groups, and Congregations across our Conference. This strategic initiative is structured around four pivotal areas:

1. **Passionate Spiritual Disciples (PSD):** We are committed to nurturing individuals who reflect the lifestyle of Jesus Christ, filled with and embodying the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23) A Passionate Spiritual Disciple's identity is:
 - centered in Christ,
 - shaped and led by the Holy Spirit,
 - impacted by accountable relationships with other Passionate Spiritual Disciples, and
 - continually growing spiritually, missionally, and relationally.
2. **Passionate Spiritual Leaders (PSL):** Building on the foundation of discipleship, we are focused on equipping leaders who inspire and mobilize others in a shared mission. These are individuals who practice the qualities of Passionate Spiritual Discipleship, lead with a clear and shared purpose, and are committed to developing the leadership capacity of those around them.
3. **Passionate Spiritual Congregations (PSC):** Our congregations are called to be vibrant communities of faith focused on following Jesus in the joy of transforming lives, communities, and the world. This involves equipping and mobilizing for prayer, creating authentic community empowered by the Holy Spirit, developing discipleship pathways that result in new Passionate Spiritual Disciples and Leaders, engaging in ministries that reflect Jesus' compassion and justice, and starting at least one holy experiment per year that is cultivated into a new fresh expression of ministry.
4. **Passionate Spiritual Groups (PSG):** We believe in the power of groups to foster deep spiritual relationships and growth. These groups are essential for cultivating a sense of community, accountability, and mutual encouragement in our spiritual journeys.

Bridge-Building: A Connectional Denomination

As we embrace these initiatives, we do so with the recognition of the diverse gifts and perspectives within the Holston Conference. Our strength lies in our unity as a connectional church consisting of Christ-followers committed to building bridges across differences. As

we accomplish this, we mirror the wide love of Christ. Our hope is that through our shared mission and vision, we will not only grow closer to God and one another, but also extend the transformative love of Jesus Christ in increasing ways to the world around us. Together, we are striving to embrace the hope that abounds through our faith in Christ, committing ourselves to be passionate disciples and leaders who reflect Christ's love and teachings in every aspect of our lives.

It is a true joy to serve the Holston Conference. As we move through our Bicentennial year and into the future, may we be inspired by the love of Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit with hope abounding in our lives.

Louisville Area Report

Bishop Leonard Fairley

The Louisville Area covers ninety percent of the Commonwealth of Kentucky and includes the Central Appalachian Missionary Conference and the Kentucky Annual Conference. The mission statement of the Kentucky Conference is to Discover, Develop, and Send passionate spiritual leaders and resources to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

To emphasize and further develop our mission, the Annual Conference themes for this quadrennium have been:

2021: *Know the Love of God*

2022: *Grow in the Love of God*

2023: *Show the Love of God*

2024: *Lead with the Love of God*

Since the last Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference in 2022, much of our energy and focus has been on helping congregations and the conferences maintain non-anxious spirits. We have also been working on a pivot toward new structures. While much of our time has been focused on disaffiliation, and now pastors and congregations who are still upset, we have been able to help the conferences be relatively calm through this season. Yet there is still great hope and effort coming from the people in Kentucky who simply want to move forward. New faith communities are being formed in areas that have been hit hard by disaffiliation.

Further, we have worked on a set of missional priorities to help us narrow down to the things that are non-negotiable for our future health. In addition, a Discernment Workbook was developed for Christian Ministries and Churches to provide a discernment process that empowers churches and ministries to discover their calling.

Beyond disaffiliation, much time has been spent with our young adults and in district gatherings listening and vision casting. We have also worked to right-size our annual conference budget to do more with less. This has allowed new ideas to develop and a realization that, while funds are limited, there are things we can still do to help us fulfill our mission of “making disciple of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

Central Appalachian Conference

A laity excited to witness and participate in a vibrant, living church within our individual communities and our conference as a whole. We have discovered unique ways to sustain and extend our outreach, and we are inspired by new methods to serve our community effectively.

Through initiatives like Hope Harvest, we continue to mentor relationships and address food insecurity, helping everyone from children to the infirm and homebound. This initiative sustains both physical and relational hunger. We also celebrate our Earth Keepers for their dedication and the opportunities they have created.

By working the very creation soil He has gifted us, we are bringing the church into new territories. Truly, it is a harvest of hope in Central Appalachia, and your laity is eager to address food insecurity through these exciting ventures.

We are committed to the church's mission of fostering relationships and caring for creation, meeting immediate needs while also seeking long-term solutions and community engagement. Our growth

through lay and Clergy Leadership Development trainings has strengthened us as passionate spiritual disciples of Christ, for which we are grateful.

In Appalachia, we are surrounded by His majesty in every hill and plant, a beauty that calls glory to His name moment by moment.

Renovating our Joy Center is crucial to sustaining thriving ministries and nurturing new ones. These upgrades will create a conducive environment for meaningful engagement and outreach within our community. Investing in the Joy Center ensures effective support for existing ministries while fostering the growth of innovative initiatives to meet emerging needs and enrich lives.

Our mission for S.E.E.K. is to grow personally and lead our young adults towards more vitality in our churches, making disciples who transform the world. Young adults will be encouraged throughout the event to Search their souls, Energize themselves, Elevate their communities, and build the Kingdom.

We remain hopeful—hopeful to step into the next phase He has called us to, continually building His church and looking forward to the harvest of our every effort.

Mississippi Area Report
Bishop Sharma D. Lewis

Mississippi Episcopal Area Report
Bishop Sharma D. Lewis

It has been my joy and honor to serve the Mississippi Annual Conference this past year and a half! I want to take this opportunity to thank Bishop James E. Swanson Sr. for his diligent hard work in serving this conference an additional two years before retirement. Because of the Jurisdictional Conference held in November 2022, I was assigned to the Mississippi Episcopal Area on January 1, 2023.

I hit the ground running by facilitating the Bishop's Chat and Chew Sessions by visiting all eleven districts. This was a time for praying, listening, sharing, and getting acquainted with the clergy and laity of the conference. It was apparent that the Mississippi Annual Conference desired to streamline the conference for financial viability and sustainability as we worked through the disaffiliations. Unfortunately, like many other conferences in the connection, disaffiliation impacted the Mississippi Annual Conference. Here, we lost approximately 330 churches through disaffiliation by December 31, 2023.

Bishop Swanson and the Mississippi District Realignment Task Force worked for two and half years preparing for the reduction and realignment of the eleven districts. It was crucial to continue this work. Therefore, at the 2023 annual conference session, the conference voted to reduce the districts to seven. Currently, the conference is living into the new structure of seven districts.

To continue to set the spiritual atmosphere of the annual conference the Bible Study Challenge was instituted in 2023. In addition, I'm elated that the Mississippi Annual Conference has partnered with Rev. Dr. Terry Tekyl in reading his current book, *"Praying In Jesus Name for 21 Centuries,"* In the Fall, Dr Tekyl and I will tour the Mississippi Conference teaching on the importance of being a prayer focused conference.

The annual conference theme in 2023 was *"Moving Forward in Making Disciples,"* guided by the biblical passage found in Matthew 28:19-20, NIV. The conference engaged in the first *"Take Jesus to the Streets"* block party with food, fellowship, and fun. This initiative has changed the conference to emphasize the outward focus of the gospel message beyond the church walls.

From the inception, I have challenged the conference to adopt a new narrative that the “Mississippi Annual Conference must transition from *disaffiliations to discernment to discipleship*.” This has been our primary focus for the last year and a half.

In 2024, the Bishop’s Chat and Chew Sessions were held in the new seven districts with the clergy and laity. We discussed the importance of casting a new vision for the annual conference. The Senior Staff, Cabinet and Communication Specialist accompanied and participated in these sessions.

As we prepared for the General Conference, I witnessed the conscientious hard work and dedication as the delegates prepared for the General Conference. I was blessed that thirty clergy, laity, and staff traveled to General Conference to support the delegation and to learn how The United Methodist Church functions.

As it pertains to the *Book of Discipline*, restrictive language has changed concerning homosexuality and the new model of regionalization. I am currently working with the clergy and laity to promote unity and understanding of the future of Methodism.

The 2024 Session of the Mississippi Annual Conference will be held at Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi. This school has been affiliated with The Methodist Church since its founding in 1890. Millsaps has produced more United Methodist bishops than any other college or university in the country.

The theme is “*Reigniting Our Identity*,” guided by the biblical passage found in 2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV. This year we will host our first mission fair in “The Millsaps’ Bowl” for churches and extension ministries to display their servanthood ministries. I encouraged the annual conference to come out and witness the love of Jesus Christ as we continue to “*Take Jesus to the Streets*.”

I am grateful for the privilege of serving Jesus Christ, for the last year and a half, with the wonderful people of the Mississippi Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

North Carolina Conference Report

Bishop Connie Mitchell Shelton

North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church 2024 State of the Conference Report

I am overjoyed and humbled to have been welcomed as Bishop for the North Carolina Conference on January 1, 2023.

While our Conference has experienced so much change over the last several years, we celebrate the collaborative leadership of laity and clergy who focus on a hopeful future through Disciple Making, Leader Forming, and Peace Building. Our vision remains clear: *Healthy Congregations and Effective Leaders in Every Place making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.* The North Carolina Conference is strong and is experiencing the generosity of God and of God's people in expansive ways.

This is possible because of the risk-taking ministries of our local churches, our collective emphasis on disciple-making practices, the investment in leadership formation, and churches and leaders committed to building peace and seeking justice. It is also possible because of incredible lay leaders, clergy, and partners who work collaboratively to align and leverage our collective resources to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

So many of our local churches have engaged in risk-taking ministry these last several years. One hundred thirteen local churches chose to become Lighthouse Congregations, committing to being United Methodists and offering radical hospitality to all of God's children. Many of those churches meet regularly to learn from one another and encourage each other as they recommit to Wesleyan practices of worship, discipleship, mission, sacraments, and care for each other and their neighbors. In this particular season, these churches also committed to welcoming anyone displaced or disconnected from their church due to disaffiliation. Over 890 people dedicated to remaining United Methodists in the North Carolina Conference transferred their membership from a disaffiliating church to The United Methodist Collective. These members have received pastoral support and care from duly appointed UM Collective chaplains. Due in large part to the hospitality and care of our lighthouse congregations, 206 of those members have already transferred their membership into a new United Methodist Church home.

Due to the faithful stewardship and generosity of our local churches, the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, and in partnership with The Duke Endowment, we were able to offer support and strengthen many of our churches who were wounded by disaffiliation-related efforts. One way we were able to support churches was by offering micro-grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000 to 53 of our local churches. Another way was to provide grants and credits to offset short-term expenses so churches could focus on

building toward longer-term vitality. Many of these churches shared stories of renewed vitality in their children and youth ministries, sustained outreach to their neighbors, new partnerships in their communities, and people returning to church with a new sense of peace, an aligned purpose, and a renewed sense of connection to one another.

Regarding disciple-making, I had the privilege to travel and meet with clergy and lay leaders across the Conference in several intentional gatherings in every district. Our gatherings focused on practices of discipleship for ourselves and our congregations. One significant emphasis on discipleship has been rooted in our commitment to becoming anti-racist churches and anti-racist disciples. We continue implementing the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) across our Conference. We also have offered and engaged with multiple resources to train and engage people in anti-racism practices, including Changing the Lens and Healing Haunted Histories. Our teams have recently completed the development of our own curriculum based on biblical interpretation and the teachings of Jesus, called HEART (Holistic Equity Anti-Racism Training), which will be rolled out over the next year. Our Conference Media Center is also proactive in providing churches with online and print materials to increase their access to strong Wesleyan discipleship resources. It has won awards for its clear and accessible communication.

Strengthening leadership continues to be a central priority. The Center for Leadership Excellence invites clergy and laity into inspirational ideation and engagement with practical strategies for church leadership. Online workshops, webinars, and in-person Days of Learning allow churches to spark new initiatives. Longer commitment programs, such as Leadership Fellows (a two-year clergy/lay leadership journey), The Colossian Way (a 10-week study on working through differences), Preaching WELL, and IMPACT (a rural church program), allow churches to formulate strategies and implement change. We have also increased our attention to clergy care and well-being. In partnership with the Duke Clergy Health Initiative and the Office of Clergy Life, we provide opportunities for renewal and integrate proven practices and disciplines to increase clergy health.

Our Conference also remains committed to co-creating new places for new people to gather in communion with Jesus Christ. In partnership with The Duke Endowment, our Office of New Faith Communities increased its work and focused on strengthening wounded churches and addressing emerging UMC deserts in our Conference. A remnant group started a new faith community in a rural county and was voted “Best Church” in their first year. Our Conference’s first lighthouse congregation welcomed displaced UMC members, has already quadrupled the number of people in worship, and is looking for ways to expand its space to welcome new people into its community. Many other innovative projects have continued, and more will begin this year as we pay attention to how the Holy Spirit is already moving in our churches and communities. One of these initiatives is a spiritual direction and mental health clinic in an anchor United Methodist Church co-created to welcome new people and explore mental and spiritual health practices as individuals and in a community. Two more initiatives will strengthen smaller, existing churches to serve as hubs for United Methodist ministry in UMC desert areas.

I celebrate our Youth Ministry and the intentionality of leadership formation through *Global Vision, Kaleidoscope, Más Diversity, Breakaway, and Pilgrimage*. Congregations for Children, a shared vision with the Western North Carolina Conference, reflects the love of Christ toward our neighbors by advocating for children in public schools living in poverty. Outreach Ministry is leveraging peace-building opportunities for local churches, bringing transformation to communities. Church Transformation Ministries gives vision, inspires congregations to identify their mission, and facilitates Cooperative Communities on Mission. I am still learning the depth and breadth of all our work together in the North Carolina Conference and am amazed by the robust and expansive ministry in this Conference.

I feel privileged to be a part of this wonderful connectional community and look forward to witnessing the incredible work God will do in and through the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church for years to come (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Bishop Connie Mitchell Shelton

Richmond Area (Virginia Annual Conference) Report

Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson

The Virginia Annual Conference (VAUMC) is delighted to be making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world and to imagine new ways for this mission to unfold. Over the last 18 months as VAUMC has welcomed Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson to serve as Resident Bishop of the Richmond Episcopal Area, there has been abundant work in the conference office and in local churches to focus on emergence into a new season of mission and ministry.

Conference Office

One of the main priorities of the last 18 months in the Virginia Annual Conference has been the destruction of organizational silos and the creation of alignment, collaboration, and connection across all sectors of the Annual Conference. This has unfolded in some exciting ways.

- In 2024, the extended cabinet has invited members of the Common Table, Board of Ordained Ministry, and Conference staff to work together on a shared visioning and strategic planning process. Using Margaret Wheatley's *Who Do We Choose To Be?*, the "extended extended cabinet" has worked together to develop a framework for conference leadership and organizational development that can extend over the next quadrennium.
- The Church Development Team, in partnership with the Common Table and the Virginia United Methodist Foundation, has been working to create a new grants process that allows for a centralized, simple granting process for participants in the Annual Conference while also seeking out large-scale grants on behalf of local churches and extension ministries that may be housed outside of the Annual Conference.
- A new staffing model has been adopted for the Conference Office to allow for extended work in the areas of innovation, discipleship, congregational vitality, and intersectional justice. Additionally, new appointments to the Cabinet are a strategic adaptation to the on-going reframing of the appointive cabinet's ministry as "missional strategists".
- A new Conference Commission on Religion and Race (CCORR) out of discernment for a clearer path for work toward racial reconciliation and justice. This team, chaired by Rev. Chenda Lee, focuses on systemic racial injustice that is present in the Virginia Annual Conference and calls the Annual Conference to places of repentance and reconciliation.
- The Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CFA) has pioneered a new methodology for collaborative, prayerful budgeting in the Virginia Annual Conference. Over the last 12 months, CFA has encouraged conference leadership to work together to ensure stewardship of the financial resources of the Annual Conference in a way that reinforces a theology of abundance while working with a reduction in total financial resources. In the coming months, CFA will be working toward a whiteboard model of budgeting that invites

- conference leaders to develop budgeting priorities from the ground up alongside a narrative budget that can help to frame the work of budgeting while communicating important concepts regarding the connection between budgeting and missional engagement.
- The Virginia Conference United Methodist Foundation, in collaboration with other partners within the Conference and connectional church, is rigorously pursuing alignment around leadership development and donor recruitment for the purposes of funding ongoing initiatives in community development, leadership training, and new faith-based opportunities.

Local Churches and Extension Ministries

Across the eight districts that make up the Virginia Annual Conference, we see some common trends in two principal directions: churches growing connection in community and narratives of resurrection. A few examples of this include:

- For more than a decade, **Central UMC** (Northern Virginia) has worked toward transforming their property to better serve the local community. Located in the bustling Arlington, VA area, this church is at the center of a very diverse population with an increasing need for affordable housing. The church entered into a partnership and broke ground in 2021 with a nonprofit to provide a building that houses the church; affordable, rental units; and a preschool. The new building opened for worship and to residents in April 2024.
- **Embrace** (Valley Ridge) is an ecumenical outreach ministry hosted by the congregations of the Valley Ridge District. The ministry is self-defined as that of a toolbox from which members share their resources to share a message of grace and peace and to love their community well. The campus is a site of community gardens and a prayer labyrinth, a Dinner Church gathering, outreach programs, teen tutoring center, neighborhood events, community meals, public meeting space, educational classes, support groups and more.
- The **Eastern Shore Youth Group** (Coastal Virginia) is a ministry of Epworth, Franktown, Grace & Onley UMCs & Camp Occohannock. This collaboration of churches is a safe space for youth (grades 4-7 and 8-12) to focus on faith service and friendships. Additionally, each month the group travels to Virginia Wesleyan University for a time of worship and connection with a thriving campus ministry.
- The **Struggle Bus** (Shenandoah River) has a mission to create resilience through play and connection. It is quite literally a vehicle for college students and young adults to play with purpose, create resilience, and live authentically in trauma-informed community. As shared on their website, “We can hold space for play, for absurdity, and laughter, and over time, we can journey with young adults as they create resilience and discover that they are not alone. When we laugh, play, cry, and share life together, we will be changed.”

- **New Town** (Mission Rivers) is emerging to new life following a challenging season. After a failed attempt to disaffiliate in 2023, the property of New Town UMC was surrendered to VAUMC. Now, having a thriving preschool and an opportunity to establish connection with the nearby Wesley Foundation at William & Mary, New Town is receiving an appointed “Chief Visionary” as of July 1, 2024.
- The **Gathering at Washington Street** (Living Waters) took two years to re-imagine a dormant 40-year district and conference dream for a unique faith community in the city of Petersburg. Several United Methodist pastors along with ecumenical, nonprofit, educational, and city partners met weekly to discover what has and has not been fruitful in the city and to discern ways God invites United Methodists to be in relationship with residents that honors the dignity, value, and gift of each human life.
- The people of **Good Shepherd UMC** (Three Notch’d) have used partnerships and a former church building to create new life in the metro Richmond area. A home has opened for young adults exiting foster care at the former campus of Chamberlayne Heights UMC. Using several area partnerships, this ministry is giving young people a chance to step forward into life beyond foster care.
- **Kaleidoscope – The Gathering Place** (Mountain View) is a center for collaborative programming and outreach that serves families and individuals in the surrounding community. This center, borne out of a closed United Methodist church property, welcomes local non-profits, civic organizations, churches, and individuals to be part of their mission in serving the community by providing space and resources for multicultural and intergenerational learning.

The movement of the Holy Spirit is tangible in the Virginia Annual Conference. As the largest Annual Conference in the connection, VAUMC has a responsibility to steward resources well to strengthen local churches, foster connectionalism, and create space for God’s love to move in big ways in people and communities. We are excited to bear witness to the ways this has happened already and is happening now, and we can’t wait to see how God will move in the coming days, years, and decades.

South Georgia Area Report

Bishop David W. Graves

It has been my joy and honor to serve the South Georgia Annual Conference since September 1, 2021.

I am thankful I get to see firsthand the richness and aliveness of God at work through the people called United Methodists in the South Georgia Conference. Our local churches – through our faithful clergy and laity – are daily seeking to fulfill our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

When I first arrived in South Georgia, we set three conference priorities for our work together:

1. Resourcing the local church in ways that refocus our energies on mission and ministry.
2. Dismantling racism and focusing on social justice in our communities.
3. Creating a culture that gives priority to mental health for clergy.

We then added a fourth priority at the beginning of 2023:

4. Cultivating growth in the areas of new church planting and revitalization.

We have made so many strides in these areas: a renewed focus on creating a culture of intentionality around disciple making, offering tools to make that happen, “Restart” and “Clarity” cohorts, local church trainings, impactful work from our Task Force on Diversity, Inclusion, and Vitality and our Task Force on Clergy Mental Health, a renewed focus on fresh expressions and new church starts in UM deserts and areas of high potential, and revitalization efforts among our existing congregations.

We have an incredible staff who help resource our local churches, and I am grateful for their spirit and their energy as we lean into all God has called us to be in this season.

I do not take lightly the responsibility to lead an Annual Conference through the uncertain times we have found ourselves in. Through it all, I have witnessed the graciousness of South Georgia as we have navigated denominational conversations, voted on church disaffiliations, and conducted special called sessions. There has been grief and sadness. Yet, despite all that is going on around us, I am excited about our steadfast focus on mission and ministry and the great work we are doing in connection with one another as we look forward. There is so much strength in our connection and in our relationships.

South Georgia has been through conference staff restructure and realignment of resources all in efforts to support the local church and be good financial stewards of the money entrusted to us. In 2023, we moved to a smaller Cabinet structure with three District Superintendents each covering two districts. I am proud of the way this conference has put in the hard yet necessary work to reduce the budget while still keeping our ministry impact at the forefront of all we do.

Through conversations and collaborations, we have sought to minimize the distractions that are out there. Instead, we are promoting the call of young people into ministry through 9-month internships through the Peed Foundation and our Commission on Higher Education and Collegiate Ministry. Our camping and retreat ministries continue to be an impactful, life-changing and challenging place where youth grow closer in their relationship with Christ. Our disaster response ministries continue to show up in pivotal moments to show hospitality to their neighbors, open their doors as shelters, put together cleaning kits, send monetary gifts, and offer refuge to evacuees. Our Early Response Teams are trained and ready to go into affected communities to clean, tarp, and chainsaw. The connection is seen in these immediate needs and also in the long-term recovery efforts established in these communities. There are so many great things happening in this conference, and these are just a few shining examples.

I have great hope for the future of the South Georgia Conference. While we may be smaller, numbers do not tell the full story or define our ability to bear witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ. I believe we will be stronger as we focus on reaching new people with the gospel message.

I give thanks to God for all He has done in my life and in the lives of the people in the South Georgia Annual Conference. I am deeply honored to serve here and partner with laity and clergy in the life-changing ministry in our local churches. God is at work, and I look forward with great joy and anticipation to what lies ahead for the South Georgia Conference. The words of the Psalmist ring so true, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (Psalm 23:6).

Bishop David Graves