Beyond the Crystal Ball: The State of the Church AS OF TODAY BISHOP LATRELLE MILLER EASTERLING

## WELCOME THANK YOU FOR JOINING US

#### Deuteronomy 31:8

The Lord is the One who goes before you. The Lord will be with you. He will be faithful to you and will not leave you alone. Do not be afraid or troubled.

My Lord God, We have no idea where we are going. We do not see the road ahead of us. We cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do we really know ourselves, and the fact that we think we are following your will does not mean that we are actually doing so.

But we believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And we hope we have that desire in all that we are doing. We hope that we will never do anything apart from that desire. And we know that if we do this you will lead us by the right road, though we may know nothing about it.

Therefore, will we trust you always though we may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.

We will not fear, for you are ever with us, and you will never us to face our perils alone.

~Thomas Merton Prayer, modified

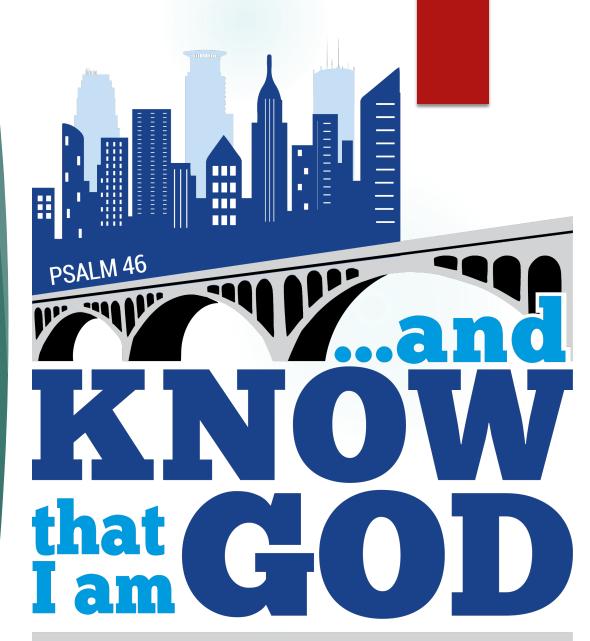


#### A Quick Orientation to Conferencing



## Part I:

The 2020 General Conference of The United Methodist Church



The United Methodist Church General Conference 2020 MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

### Decision of the Commission on General Conference

The postponed session of The 2020 General Conference scheduled to be held on August 29 – September 7, 2021 in Minneapolis, MN has been POSTPONED!

The new date for the postponed session of The 2020 General Conference is August 29 – September 6, 2022 in Minneapolis, MN.

# Why was the postponed session postponed?

- The continuing effects of the Coronavirus and the health risks of large in-person gatherings.
- The international challenges the virus poses: Increased testing for air travel, visa issues, quarantines.
- The justice issue of full access to all elected delegates, including international delegates (44%).

### What Our Forebears Could Not Envision

When the Book of Discipline (BOD) was written, our forebears could not envision a global crisis of this magnitude. Our four-year cycle of gathering is actually necessary to conduct our business. Matters such as:

- Populating Boards and Agencies
- Passing the Quadrennial Budget
- Central Conference Gatherings
- Retirement of Bishops

Cannot happen without the General Conference

#### How Do We Get Unstuck?

- There will be a Special Called Session of the General Conference on Saturday, May 8, 2021, held virtually.
- This gathering has been called for the specific and sole purpose of constituting a quorum to suspend the rules (by 2/3 vote) so that 12 Disciplinary items may be considered, which will allow the General, Jurisdictional and Annual Conferences to do their work.
- A quorum is 50% plus one (862 delegates 432 for quorum).

### Voting During the Special Called Session

- If 2/3 of the voting delegates vote to suspend the rules, there will be a motion to utilize paper ballots to act upon the 12 Disciplinary items contained in the call.
- Each Disciplinary item will be voted upon by a "Yes" or a "No." There is no debate, discussion or amendment once the ballots are mailed.
- The result of the balloting is scheduled to be announced on July 13, 2021.

#### Who Are The Delegates

The delegates to the postponed and special sessions of General Conference are those who were elected during the 2019 BWC Annual Conference.

At this time, the Council of Bishops' (COB) chancellor and the GC parliamentarian affirm the continuation of the slate of delegates duly elected from each annual conference for the 2020 Session of the General Conference. The Baltimore-Washington Conference Delegates GENERAL CONFERENCE

LAITY Cynthia Taylor Melissa Lauber Ken Ow Daniel Colbert Sarah Ford Chris Schlieckert

CLERGY Ianther Mills Joe Daniels Ginger Gaines-Cirelli C. Anthony Hunt Giovanni Arroyo Sarah Schlieckert

The Baltimore-Washington Conference Delegates JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCE

LAITY Christie Latona Tracy Collins Sharon Milton Nathan Jones Chet Jechura Mittie Quinn

CLERGY Stacey Cole-Wilson J.W. Park Conrad Link Leo Yates Kirkland Reynolds Bryant Oskvig

The Baltimore-Washington Conference Delegates ALTERNATES

LAITY Charlie Moore Danny Pembamoto Heather Kraus CLERGY Edgardo Rivera Malcolm Frazier Laura Norvell Melissa Rudolph

# Why Not Hold A Virtual Session of the Postponed GC

- The Commission on GC is charged with "taking the necessary measures to assure full participation of all GC delegates" (Para. 511.4.d).
- The Technology Study Team determined it was not feasible to conduct a virtual conference due to the inequity of access (e.g., connectivity, electricity, translation services), and time zone differences in our global church.
- Full participation could not be guaranteed, therefore the CGC voted to use paper ballots.

## Categories of Items to be Voted Upon

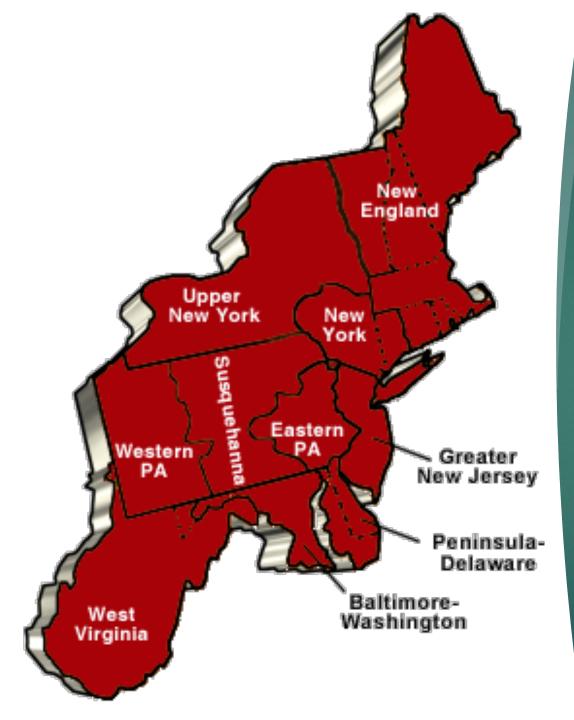
Compliance with JC Decision 1383
General Conference Matters
Central Conference Matters
Retirement of Bishops
GCFA & Budget
Annual Conference Matters

#### Matters Pertaining to Separation

- Our polity and practice of holy conferencing presupposes the opportunity to prayerfully discuss, debate, amend and perfect the legislation placed before the body.
- The significance and impact of legislation leading to major changes within the denomination are deserving of holy conferencing.
- A "Yes" or "No" vote does not afford the dignity these significant items deserve.
- Until a decision is made on matters of separation, we will continue to uphold the moratorium on charges pursuant to matters of human sexuality.

## Preparations for the Special Called Session of GC

April 2-9 – Sample ballots and explanatory notes are sent to translators and prepared for release April 26-30 – COB Meeting May 8 – Special Called Session of GC (virtual) May 14 – Ballots and explanatory notes mailed ▶ July 13 – Announcement of the results of the paper balloting



## Part II: The 2020 Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference Of The United Methodist Church

Special Called Session of the NEJ Jurisdictional Conference

- The Postponed Session of the 2020 Jurisdictional Conference (JC) has been postponed until the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2022.
- There will be a Called Special Session the week of July 19<sup>th</sup>.
- The Call for this Special Session will be finalized on March 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- ► Each jurisdiction will issue a Call.

Just as in a special church conference, only the items named in the call can be addressed.

#### Proposed Items for the Call

Bishops who are seeking retirement will be voted upon.

- Coverage announcements will be confirmed and finalized.
- Reports may be offered based upon the contextualized Call of the jurisdictions.

There will be modified worship services, to include the naming of persons who have transitioned from the church militant to the Church Triumphant.

Existing members of boards and agencies will be asked to continue until 2022.

#### Why Aren't We Electing Bishops?

The same issues of holy conferencing exist for JC as those articulated for GC.

The process of interviewing, electing and consecrating new bishops is severely impacted without in-person gatherings.

Secondary Matters:

The recommendation of the COB concerning sustainability of the Episcopal Fund.

The unknowns of how many bishops will be necessary.

#### NEJ Coverage Matters

The NEJ Committee on Episcopacy and the NEJ College of Bishops have been working together to contemplate coverage during this liminal time.

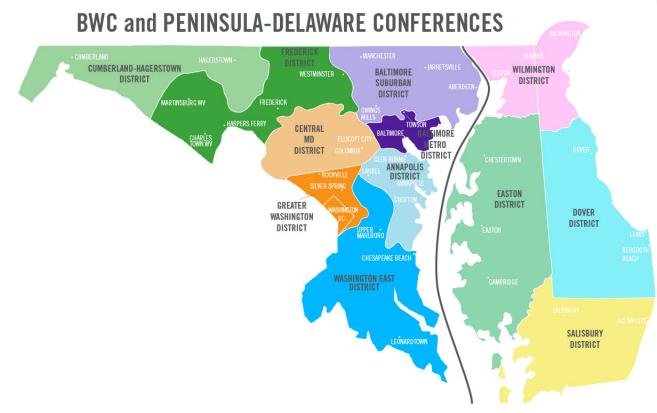
- One proposal is to partner the Baltimore-Washington Conference with the Pen-Del Conference.
  - This "Affiliation" will be informed by the past, but not imprisoned by it.
  - Discussions are underway to position both conferences for effectiveness and vitality.

## THIS IS NOT A MERGER

Affiliation means two conferences are served by the same bishop. There will be committees, boards, task forces, etc. that work together to streamline administrative tasks and leverage strengths and assets.

However, both conferences will remain separate entities

There will still be separate Boards of Ordained Ministries, CFA, Trustees, etc.





Part III: The Global Methodist Church On March 1, 2021, The Global Methodist Church unveiled its new name, logo and website.

This body was borne out of the proposal entitled, The Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation (The Protocol).

The Protocol states that, "A total sum of \$27,000,000 shall be set aside to assist New Methodist Denominations."

The Protocol states, "Of the set aside funds..., a total sum of \$25,000,000 shall be paid to approved and recognized Traditionalist Methodist Denominations..."

- Although the aforementioned information is available, the GMC has not officially been instituted.
- Other streams of Methodism may form and meet the criteria to be recognized by the United Methodist Church.

When the GMC or other streams of Methodism are fully instituted and recognized by the United Methodist Church, our Trustees are prepared to work with congregations on matters of disaffiliation and affiliation with these new streams.

## What Is Most Needed Right Now

#### Prayer

▶ Patience

Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing

Please use the Q&A feature to submit your questions.

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