

## Meeting of the combined delegations, August 31, 2023

### Members present at Conference Office:

Tami Coleman, chair (head of delegation)  
Jan Brown-Thompson  
Elaine Daugherty  
John Denham  
David Garvin  
Tom Grieb  
David Grout  
Rebecca Heid  
Linda Underwood King  
Sarah McGinnis  
Andrew Singh  
Jay Smith  
Mark Stallons  
Michael Watts  
Lesley Williams  
Robert Amundsen (CAMC)  
Whitley Hensen (CAMC)

### Joining via Zoom:

Esther Jadhav  
Larry Miller  
Tess Welch  
Marilyn Osborne (CAMC)

### Absent:

Iosmar Alvarez  
John Hatton  
Dan Griffiths (CAMC)  
John Newman (CAMC)  
Jim Savage (CAMC)

Meeting called to order by Tami Coleman at 10:06a

Esther Jadhav led devotional time, beginning with the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi. She referenced the book *Uncommon Ground*, which asks the question of “how do we as Christians engage with those around us with whom we differ?” To do that we need postures of humility, patience, and tolerance. Scriptures referenced were Micah 6:8 and Matthew 5:3-10

The entire group shared personal introductions

## Overview of Delegation Handbook (led by Michael Watts)

The handbook is available on Basecamp; some clarifications are noted here:

Daily Christian Advocate is available online; additional copies may be sent to delegates; there are currently three volumes; a fourth volume is anticipated to cover new legislation that has been submitted in intervening months

Any communication received from the General Conference planning team by the leadership of our delegation will be posted on Basecamp so that all have access to information.

At General Conference handheld voting devices will be distributed for use (delegates will not use cell phones as we have been using at Annual Conference recently). It is suggested that delegates bring earbuds for listening devices.

Jurisdictional Conference:

Plan to be at Lake Junaluska by the evening of **July 9, 2024**, for an organizational meeting of our delegation. Those who are members of the Nominations Committee will need to be there on July 8. Early registrations are recommended, particularly if you wish to rent a private accommodation.

There is a possibility that there will not be episcopal elections at SEJurisdictional Conference in 2024.

## Discussion of Sub-Teams

Executive Team (helps to set the agenda) – Tami, Michael, Esther

Communications Team A (events within the conference) – Jay, Lesley, David Garvin

Communications Team B (communication with conference office) – Tom, Marilyn, Iosmar, Rebecca, Tess

Prayer Team – Andrew, Elaine, Mark

There was considerable discussion regarding how to best communicate with churches across the conference regarding the issues that will come before the General Conference. There will need to be sessions held in various locales in the spring. It was agreed that such sessions need to be both informational and allowing for input/feedback from all who are in attendance. We will also need to plan for meetings following General Conference to present what occurs there. It is suggested that there be regular updates to the entire Kentucky and Central Appalachian Conferences after each of our meetings, and that those updates also invite feedback. The group agreed that transparency is critical in working to build trust. Rather frequent communications are recommended. Tom Grieb said that he planned to get information about this meeting out in mid-September.

Group agreed to post minutes and dates of upcoming meetings; the conference website is to be updated with current delegate information.

During this discussion the point was made that all delegates vote their own conscience.

## Jurisdictional Nominations Team

Tess was nominated and moved forward by consensus

David Garvin was nominated and moved forward by consensus

Tami will let us know about any upcoming events. There may be meetings in Nashville to give information about legislation that is coming before General Conference

## Jurisdictional Conference

A Jurisdictional Task Force was established at the last Jurisdictional Conference to consider matters of race in the election of bishops. That group compiled a brief history of the issue and made recommendations ... Tami will post that to Basecamp for all of the delegation to review.

Each conference has been asked to review its policy for selecting episcopal candidates. In the past, the first elected clergy has often been considered the nominee. There was discussion as to how this should be going forward. What about clergy who are not serving as delegates? How do we discern who is being "called?" We realize that this is a new season for us to explore this issue. A team from our conference is needed to review our current policy (guidelines), suggest possible recommendations, and bring those back to the delegation for discussion. Tami, Jan, and Mark agreed to take on this task.

## SEJ Episcopal Leadership

Given the changes in numbers of church membership/affiliation and the financial realities Annual Conferences are facing, there is the possibility that the SEJ will not elect new bishops in 2024. Various options for effective episcopal oversight are being considered. One survey has already been sent to conference leadership regarding the potential aligning of conferences (i.e., a bishop having oversight over more than one conference). A survey regarding possible alignment options is forthcoming to all delegates ... watch for this and please respond in a timely manner.

Please note: merger of conferences is NOT currently being considered. What is being put forth is the possibility of "shared episcopal leadership" ... not merger of conferences.

## Meeting Dates going forward

November 14 – at Conference Office, with Zoom link for those unable to be present

January 25 – at Conference Office, with Zoom link

March 19 – at Conference Office, with Zoom link

Andrew closed the meeting with prayer at 2:58p

Respectfully submitted, Rebecca Heid