**Delegation Meeting Summary**

**January 25, 2024**

The delegations of the Kentucky Annual Conference and the Central Appalachian Missionary Conference met on Thursday, January 25 at the Conference Office.

After a time of devotion centered around Jeremiah 29:11, the group launched into a full agenda. At the outset the delegations re-affirmed their support of the covenant struck at their last meeting in November. The covenant is fashioned around the United Methodist membership vows and affirms that the delegations “will faithfully participate in the United Methodist Church’s General and Jurisdictional Conferences with our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.”

A report was given about the response the Kentucky Conference delegation received from the General Commission on General Conference about the status of Tess Welch, who presently is a provisionally elected member to the Kentucky Delegation. If certified, Tess will serve as second lay alternate to General Conference. The Commission shared that Tess cannot be certified until General Conference passes legislation for that to happen. That legislation is expected to be considered early in the conference. Tess will attend General Conference fully expecting that such legislation will enable her and others like her who have been provisionally elected to serve.

The delegations also heard a report from the SEJ Committee on Episcopacy that will be recommending that no bishops be elected at the upcoming Jurisdictional Conference in July. The Committee also will be recommending to the Jurisdictional Conference that a number of annual conferences be yoked together into new episcopal areas. This is due to recent disaffiliations, shortfalls in the Episcopal Fund, and the need to rightly appoint the number of active bishops available to serve. The recommendation is not to merge conferences, but only to share a bishop. The Committee on Episcopacy will be recommending to the Jurisdictional Conference that the Kentucky Annual Conference, the Central Appalachian Missionary Conference, and the Holston Conference become one of those new episcopal areas. If passed by the Jurisdictional Conference, the arrangement will begin on September 1, 2024 and run through the next quadrennium.

The delegations talked a good deal about the nomination process at Jurisdictional Conference. It was noted that those throughout the conferences interested in being nominated to a general or jurisdictional board or agency will be given an opportunity to express that interest through an appeal made to each Annual Conference.

The delegations spent a good deal of time going over logistics both for the General and Jurisdictional Conferences. The group also considered its outreach to the conferences in advance of General Conference. Of note, there will be a series of five regional meetings in the Kentucky Conference before General Conference, with another in the Central Appalachia Missionary Conference.

The group ended its time together meeting with representatives from the Kentucky Conference’s Communications Team to coordinate communication efforts both before and after General Conference.