

### **Section 3: General Conference, Jurisdictional Conference, Delegations**

Yes, being a part of a faith community can be messy. When we have General Conference in 2024, some things will be messy. Yes, there will be new legislation that comes to the 2024 General Conference, and at this point, we have no idea whether all the previous legislation will also be included in the work of General Conference of 2024.

We do know there will be a Jurisdictional Conference in November of this year. Jurisdictional conferences will happen in the United States. There is a separate meeting process for Central Conferences of The United Methodist Church that exists for churches and annual conferences existing outside of the United States. Jurisdictional conferences will take place in the United States in November 2022, for the purpose of electing bishops.

The West Virginia Conference is part of the Northeastern Jurisdiction. In the Northeastern Jurisdiction we could elect up to three bishops. We could elect 2 bishops. We could elect one Bishop. We could elect no bishops. That decision is up to the delegates to the Jurisdictional Conference. When bishops are elected, then assignments of bishops are made by the Northeastern Committee on Episcopacy and bishops are to begin their new assignments on January 1, 2023. Whether or not I will be your Bishop at the 2023 Annual Conference session will be determined by the November 2022 Jurisdictional Conference. It is my hope to come back to West Virginia and be with you through 2024.

Unless the Book of Discipline is changed in 2024 regarding how long a Bishop may serve in any one area (12 years), I would be reassigned to a new area in 2024. I was assigned to West Virginia in 2012 and so 2024 would mark my 12<sup>th</sup> year of service to this wonderful episcopal area. It is my hope that I would remain assigned to the West Virginia area at least until 2024. Amy Shanholtzer is the head of our delegation and Judi Kenaston is the first elected lay delegate of our delegation. These two persons are also West Virginia's representatives on the Jurisdictions committee on the episcopacy.

Amy and Judi shared the following during the annual conference session 2022. "We affectionately refer to this group as the ready, set delegation. We are waiting to go. We have spent about three years together meeting and learning and studying and preparing to do what you elected us to do. When they

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were elected, two of our members had newborn babies in their arms. We have watched these little ones grow up over zoom because we typically meet at bedtime and that's been a blessing as we've waited and prepared. We are ready to serve. We do plan to go to the Jurisdictional Conference in November. We seek your prayers and your guidance for us as we seek to move forward. Thank you for your prayers and your support.”

So, there is a Jurisdictional Conference to come, and our delegation will be there. One additional item that is in question is whether we will need to elect new delegates for the 2024 General Conference. We are waiting for a decision from the Judicial Council as to whether we will need to have new elections at the 2023 annual conference session. If we need to elect new delegates, you have already, in this Conference session, made the needed changes and adapted our Conference rules, so that we have a process in place to make sure the nominations are in front of the Conference members well before the start of the annual conference session 2023.

#### Questions for reflection

1. What are your prayers of hope for the 2024 General Conference? Could your congregation begin an intentional plan of prayer for the upcoming General Conference session and for the persons around the world who will attend the General Conference? Do you know the names of the West Virginia delegation and could you pray for them weekly as they prepare for the November Jurisdictional Conference?
2. Could you or your church do a study to discover the functions and responsibilities of General and Jurisdictional Conferences? Members of our West Virginia Delegation would be happy to work with any congregation or leadership group to resource this kind of study and to help explain the connectional system of The United Methodist Church. Umc.org has resources about structure and belief located under the “Who we are” tab.