

2012 General Conference and Jurisdictional Conference Handbook

Prepared for the South Carolina Annual Conference Delegation

Section 1: What is General Conference?

Theme: “Make Disciples of Jesus Christ to Transform the World”

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the General Conference is to set direction for the United Methodist denomination for the next four years. The General Conference has a unique role within the denomination because it is the only official body that speaks for the denomination known as The United Methodist Church.

1.2 An Overview of General Conference

The conference will be held from April 24-May 4, 2012, in Tampa, Florida. During the ten-day session, delegates will revise the Book of Discipline, which regulates the manner in which local churches, annual conferences, and general agencies are organized. The book also sets policies regarding church membership, ordination, administration, property and judicial procedures. Delegates also revise the Book of Resolutions, a volume declaring the church’s stance on a wide variety of moral,

social, public policy and economic issues. In addition, delegates approve plans and budgets for church-wide programs.

1.3 Delegation Mission Statement

“As delegations to the General and Jurisdictional Conferences, we are committed to gathering in community to prepare ourselves physically, spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually to fully and faithfully serve Christ and the Church.”

Section 2: Travel Arrangements and Expenses

2.1 Per Diem

Each delegate will be given per diem (\$ TBD) for lodging and food. The first two alternates to General Conference, lay and clergy, will receive per diem from the South Carolina Conference. Any cost above the per diem allowance is the responsibility of the delegate.

2.2 Lodging and Reservations

Blocks of rooms are usually reserved with special negotiated rates in downtown hotels that are designated for delegates, bishops and staff. These persons will be allowed to reserve rooms first. Delegates will receive their housing forms as a part of the official General Conference mailing for delegates sent out in the late fall of 2011. International delegates will be automatically booked through the office of the Business Manager. At the discretion of the Business Manager, any rooms not booked by a date established in 2012, will be made available for booking by visitors to General Conference.

2.3 Travel and Reservations

The official General Conference mailing for delegates will include prearranged discounted airline fares (several different carriers) for interested delegates. By completing a travel form for General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) travel requests will be processed through the designated travel agency after the delegate's approval has been obtained. Delegates choosing to make their own arrangements will be reimbursed providing the fare is within the guidelines established by General Conference.

2.4 Payment of Delegate Expenses

The *Plan of Organization and Rules of Order* of the General Conference as approved by the 2008 General Conference only provides for the travel expense and the lodging and meal per diem of the primary delegates, not the reserve delegates. Each annual conference is responsible for determining what funding they will provide to the reserve delegates as well as any supplemental funding for the primary delegates.

2.5 Expenses Covered by the General Conference

The policy for reimbursement of the delegate expenses is set through the Rules of the General Conference adopted during the opening session. The rules being recommended are as follows:

Delegate Expenses

- A. Full travel expenses and per diem shall be paid for the number of allotted voting delegates from each conference according to the report of the chairperson of each annual conference delegation. If during the conference, a reserve delegate is seated for a principal delegate for one or more full days, the principal delegate shall adjust the per diem with such reserve based on the time served by each.
- B. Air travel shall be by the most economical round-trip coach airfare directly to and from the site of the General Conference. Special excursion and promotional fares shall be utilized whenever possible. Additional expenses may be allowed delegates from conferences outside the United States for arrival and departure not to exceed two days before or after General Conference. The per diem expense allowance for all such days before and after General Conference shall be at the same rate as granted delegates during General Conference. Exceptions to these limitations must be approved by the Business Manager of the General Conference.
- C. When one or more delegates come in the same automobile, the owner will be reimbursed for the actual cost of travel (en route parking, en route mileage and tolls, en route meals and lodging). Mileage shall be reimbursed at the business rate established by the IRS and will be measured from point of origin to the site of General Conference and return. Meals and lodging shall be reimbursed up to the established General Conference per diem. When the round trip exceeds 1,000 miles for any one round trip, the cost of transportation shall be paid either on the actual costs as defined above or at the most economical airfare available

plus airport-related ground transportation cost, whichever is less. Passengers who are the principal voting delegates to the General Conference shall submit only the cost of room and meals en route up to the established General Conference per diem rate.

- D. For the dates General Conference is in session, no General Conference delegate shall receive expense money from the general Church or any of its boards and agencies other than approved per diem and travel expenses available to all delegates. This provision is not to restrict official assistance to delegates from their own annual conferences.

Section 3: Preparations for General Conference

3.1 Delegation Meetings

The frequency of delegation meetings will be established by the delegation members at the first full meeting. The number of task force reports plus various issues coming to General Conference will be taken into consideration during the establishment of these meeting dates. Additional gatherings may be conducted via e-mail, conference calls and at the site of General Conference.

Location:

Delegation meetings will be held at the United Methodist Conference Center in Columbia. The location of other events such as training offered or listening posts offered by the delegation has yet to be determined.

Purpose:

The delegation is committed to preparing spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually to fully and faithfully serve Christ and the Church.

Content:

The content of the delegation meetings will be determined by the requirements of the General Conference (i.e., Legislative Committee assignments, Election Verification) and the requests/needs of the delegation.

3.2 Legislative Committee Selection

General Conference delegates choose the Legislative Committee on which they will serve at General Conference by their order of election. One lay and one clergy

delegate will be assigned to each committee. Delegates should take time to review the information in section four of this handbook and be prepared to share where their gifts and graces could be best utilized at General Conference.

3.3 Official Communications/Contact Information

How will other official information be communicated to me?

The credentialing forms will be entered into a database that will make your current contact information available for official communications. If you change address, email, or phone before General Conference, please notify either the *Secretary of the General Conference* or the *Business Manager of the General Conference* immediately. All official communications of the General Conference will come by mail and/or email from either the *Secretary of the General Conference* or the *Business Manager of the General Conference*. **It will be helpful for you to do whatever process is necessary for your email program so that our emails do not end up in your spam folder.**

Contact Information:

As information is available, materials will be posted on the General Conference web site at www.gc2012.umc.org. Please check the web site often. You may also call InfoServ. Due to travel schedules, contacting the *Secretary of the General Conference* or the *Business Manager of the General Conference* **by email** is preferable.

Secretary of the General Conference

Rev. L. Fitzgerald Reist

freist@cpcumc.org

(570) 972-0537

Business Manager of the General Conference

Rev. Alan J. Morrison

gc2008@gcfa.org

(615) 369-2350

3.4 Official Pre-Conference Materials

Information about General Conference and the issues that will come before it begin to be shared in preliminary form about a year before the actual date of General Conference. If you are interested in reading about proposals from general boards

and agencies and other press releases, you have several choices. You can subscribe to *United Methodist News Service*, which will send you daily press releases on items of interest to United Methodists, including General Conference issues. Or you can make a practice of visiting www.umc.org and reading the information posted on the General Conference section of this website.

In the spring (2012) you will receive the *Advance Edition* of the *Daily Christian Advocate*. It is generally composed of several volumes and hundreds of pages. It contains all the petitions to General Conference, arranged by legislative committee. The purpose of these petitions is to propose additions or amendments to the Book of Discipline or the Book of Resolutions.

In addition, important materials will be given out at each delegation meeting.

Be prepared to have to organize hundreds of pages of materials given out before and during the general conference. It is helpful to develop one place where you store the various materials in separate folders. Some delegates use cardboard or plastic file boxes, and others use the rolling crates/briefcases/suitcases they plan to take to General Conference.

Learn to skim materials for content, as it is almost impossible to read every communication and the whole *Advance Daily Advocate* in depth. Concentrate on the material for your legislative committee especially. The delegation meetings will give you information on major pieces of legislation from other committees.

The rules of General Conference allow for one alternate (lay and clergy) which means the advance material is only forwarded to the one lay and clergy alternate. Names of other alternates must be submitted as additions to the mailing list for the Advance Edition of the *Daily Christian Advocate* to reach the second alternates. This cost is covered by the conference.

3.5 Sharing of Delegation Responsibilities

It takes the entire delegation working together to properly prepare for General and Jurisdictional Conferences.

3.6 Lobbying Materials for Conference Delegates

You will receive materials from groups and individuals across The United Methodist Church expressing their opinion about proposed General Conference

legislation. The volume of this mail rises sharply after the publication of the *Advance Daily Christian Advocate* when the content of the petitions is made public.

In the spring you will also begin receiving information, brochures, etc., concerning the persons who will be Episcopal nominees in the Southeastern Jurisdiction.

Again, learn to skim for content, and develop a system for organizing this material. Manila file folders are a good investment.

You may receive individual lobbying letters. It is important that if you receive such letters from members of churches in the South Carolina Conference that you respond to them. A short note thanking the author for their communication is all that is needed. You do not need to engage in debate—but you do need to acknowledge your receipt of the letter. If you receive an individual letter from a United Methodist from outside the annual conference, you are not *required* to respond, but it would be gracious to do so if you have the time.

3.6.1 List of Lobby Groups

The following information is intended to help delegates recognize the alphabet soup of groups and sift through the variety of voices.

Organizations officially Sanctioned by the UMC:

Delegates will receive General and/or Jurisdictional Conference related information from our Boards, Agencies, Affiliates, or organization with official relationship to the UMC. Our UMC has fifteen officially sanctioned ministry entities. They are:

General Boards of:

- Church and Society (GBCS)
- Discipleship (GBOD)
- Global Ministries (GBGM)
- Pension and Health Benefits (GBOPHB)
- Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM)

General Commissions on:

- Archives and History (GCAH)
- Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns (GCUIC)
- Communication (UMCom)
- Religion and Race (GCRR)
- Status and Role of Women (GCOSROW)
- UM Men (UMM)

General Council on:

- Finance and Administration (GCFA)

United Methodist Agencies:

- UM Committee on Relief (UMCOR)
- UM Publishing House (UMPH)
- UM Women (UMW)

Also note that each **Board or Commission** has a **number of officially recognized Affiliate UM and/or Ecumenical Organizations**. The listing of Affiliate/Ecumenical entities can be found at www.gc2012.umc.org page under the directory listings.

Our UMC has six **organizations with an official relationship** as proscribed by The Book of Discipline. They are:

- The American Bible Society
- The Commission on Pan Methodist Corporation
- Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC)
- National Council of Churches
- World Council of Churches
- World Methodist Council

There are also organizations with interest in the UMC with no official status or connection.

3.7 Helping your Church Understand General Conference

Being a delegate to General and Jurisdictional Conference is an honor and a responsibility. It will take time away from your ministry in the local church. Many members of your congregation will not be familiar with the importance of these conferences to the life of our denomination. It is helpful for clergy and lay delegates to provide information to their congregations so that they can understand the work you will be undertaking as a delegate. Clergy may find it useful to notify their Staff Parish Relations Committee and Church Council, providing the purpose of General and Jurisdictional Conferences as well as the dates of meetings related to these events. A teaching event will help the congregation understand the topics that will be in the news during General Conference and the particular legislative committee on which you will serve. Interested persons in your congregation may be willing to help you by reading and summarizing some of the official information and lobbying materials you are receiving prior to General Conference. While the delegate is still primarily responsible for reviewing this information, it may be possible to involve others who want to know about the dialogue of the church in various legislative committees.

Section 4: Legislative Committees

4.1 Overview

Delegates will spend the first four days of General Conference in a legislative committee discussing and voting on all petitions relevant to that committee. Each committee will then form proposals based on these petitions to send to the general conference. Proposals from a committee are called ‘calendar items.’ These calendar items enable the delegates of General Conference to work through large volumes of material in a timely fashion.

4.2 Listing of Legislative Committees

Church and Society (1)
Church and Society (2)
Conferences
Discipleship
Faith and Order
Financial Administration
General Administration
Global Ministries
Judicial Administration
Independent Commissions
Local Church
Ministry and Higher Education

Section 5: What is Jurisdictional Conference?

5.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Jurisdictional Conference is primarily to elect bishops, although delegates have additional responsibilities as well. A list of these responsibilities is found in section 8.

5.2 An Overview of Jurisdictional Conference

On July 17 - 21, 2012, the delegation from the South Carolina Conference will meet in Stuart Auditorium at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, for the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference (SEJ). The day prior to the start of Jurisdictional Conference delegates will gather at Lake Junaluska to meet the Episcopal candidates and prepare for Jurisdictional Conference. This means that you should

plan to arrive in time to participate in the meetings which begin at noon on July 17 (subject to change). Assigned to a specific section and to specific seats in the auditorium, we will be joined by the delegations from the other Annual Conferences in the SEJ: Alabama-West Florida, Florida, Holston, Kentucky, Memphis, Mississippi, North Alabama, North Carolina, North Georgia, Red Bird Missionary, South Georgia, Tennessee, Virginia and Western North Carolina. Interestingly, the SEJ is the most populous of the five areas into which the United States denominational units are divided. As at the General Conference, the jurisdictional gathering will have an equal number of lay and clergy members.

Section 6: Travel Arrangements/Expenses– Jurisdictional Conference

6.1 Location and Date

The Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference will be held at the Lake Junaluska Assembly, North Carolina, with the official opening on July 17, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. through July 21, 2012, after the consecration of the new bishop. Preparatory meetings begin at noon on July 9.

6.2 Per Diem

Elected delegates to the Jurisdictional Conference will receive per diem (\$ TBD) for lodging and food (The first four alternates to Jurisdictional, lay and clergy, will receive the same per diem from the South Carolina Conference).

6.3 Lodging and Reservations

The Jurisdictional Conference secretary will mail lodging information to all delegates sometime in the fall. Selections must be returned to the stated address immediately to receive desired choices. The lodging list will include motels (Super 8, etc.) located close to the Junaluska Assembly.

6.4 Travel Costs

Mileage will be paid at 40 cents per mile for delegates driving personal automobiles. Airline fare will be reimbursed based on the mileage cost verses the airline cost. The Jurisdiction will pay the lesser amount.

Section 7: Preparations for Jurisdictional Conference

7.1 Episcopal Elections

7.1.1 Episcopal Nominations

Episcopal candidates must be elders in full connection. They are frequently endorsed by caucuses, associations and jurisdictional conference delegates from the various annual conferences. Candidates may also be nominated directly by the annual conference membership. However, a person does not have to be nominated or endorsed to be elected.

7.1.2 Qualities Desired Of Episcopal Candidates

Spirituality

- ✓ The episcopal candidate should be a mature believer.
- ✓ The spiritual life of the episcopal candidate should be undergirded with an active and intentional devotional life and the candidate should exemplify the highest ethical and moral character.
- ✓ The candidate should be prophetic, seeking to do the will of God.
- ✓ The candidate should have an evangelical passion to serve the Lord and make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Vision

- ✓ The episcopal candidate should articulate a clear local, regional and global vision for the Church in the 21st century, a vision that views the local church as God's agent of love and salvation through Christ. Such a leader will possess the ability to think creatively and "outside the box" in response to the demands of a changing time, and to mobilize persons around the development of a clearer understanding of God's vision for the church of the future.
- ✓ The visionary leader should, like Wesley, demonstrate a commitment to ministry with and for the poor.

Administration/Leadership

- ✓ The episcopal candidate should possess the gift of leadership, equipped by the Holy Spirit to lead the church with vision and energy in a way that inspires others to deeper levels of commitment for Christ.
- ✓ Spiritual leadership will result from being well grounded in the faith and demonstrating the importance of practicing the spiritual disciplines to stay in touch with the One who ultimately is in charge

- ✓ A candidate should possess proper regard for the traditions and history in which the church is rooted. He/she will continue to be a student of the Bible, church history, theology and our Wesleyan tradition. He/she will manifest accountability to the doctrinal standards of the church.
- ✓ It is essential that an episcopal candidate claim the historic role of the bishop as a presider, a teacher, a preacher one who upholds, defends and promotes the doctrine of the United Methodist Church.
- ✓ The episcopal candidate should demonstrative administrative and managerial gifts, experience and training, resulting in a proven track record in effective ministry.
- ✓ He/she should model a lifestyle of ministry which effectively demonstrates such qualities as passion, creativity, courage, empathy, sensitive listening, and humility.
- ✓ The transformation-oriented candidate should want to see the local church grow numerically so that people can experience the transformation of Jesus Christ in the own lives, working to insure that church members grow in the depth of their faith.
- ✓ A candidate should possess excellent time management skills, being able to balance demands of the conference, Council and College of Bishops, boards and agencies, and the church at large.
- ✓ A candidate should be able to differentiate between the qualities and skills needed as a bishop in the Council of Bishops versus in his/her annual conference. He/she needs a broad and deep theological perspective and agenda as a member of the Council of Bishops and ability to give direction to the future of the annual conference as its president.
- ✓ There must be a willingness to serve the general church by assuming various responsibilities in the Council of Bishops.
- ✓ The episcopal candidate should be responsible in the face of conflict, understanding that conflict is often necessary when God's will is pursued. However, he/she will not be contentious or stubborn by nature.
- ✓ An episcopal candidate should possess a record of faithful leadership in the church throughout the years: a positive experience as a local church pastor coupled with diverse and wide experience in the connectional ministries of the church.
- ✓ To address a crisis of leadership, a bishop should be able to identify, equip and employ leadership in new ways.
- ✓ New ways of capturing people for Christ should be employed.
- ✓ There should be increased attention to the teaching responsibility with attention given to laity.
- ✓ The candidate will know the contents of the *Book of Discipline* and its use.

- ✓ The candidate should have a strong commitment to the itinerancy and the courage to make appointments based upon missional needs of congregations as opposed to the preferences of the clergy or laity.
- ✓ A bishop should take risks and speak the truth in love.

Personal

- ✓ The candidate should be deeply committed to “building the unique inclusive community of the Church,” composed of all races and nationalities, economic classes, genders, ages (from children to youth to older adults). He/she will want to see the gifts of all the Christian community utilized, honored, encouraged and nurtured.
- ✓ A candidate needs to be very secure in his/her own being.
- ✓ A candidate should maintain the common touch, humbly desiring to be a servant of the servants of God rather than enamored of the office.
- ✓ A candidate should manifest a collegial style open to receiving counsel and assistance from colleagues including clergy, other bishops and laity.
- ✓ A candidate must have high energy, good physical health and commitment to maintaining such.
- ✓ Though some persons actively seek the episcopacy, a candidate’s sense of humility and integrity should be evident.
- ✓ A candidate should evidence strong commitment to church growth, spiritual and numerical. Connectional accountability such as the payment of apportionments is needed.
- ✓ A candidate should give evidence of good stewardship in his/her personal life.
- ✓ A candidate should be committed to inclusiveness for all persons without regard to race, gender, theological position or political opinion.

7.2 Pre-Conference Materials

Since the primary purpose of Jurisdictional Conference is to elect bishops, the majority of material you will receive is information about Episcopal nominees. There will, however, be some additional issues to be voted upon by the Jurisdictional Conference.

One other major part of Jurisdictional Conference is the elections to General Boards and Agencies. You will be asked to complete a form prior to the Conference indicating your preferences to possible service on a General Board or Agency. Think about your interest and availability to serve in this way and then complete the form and return it. Each annual conference delegation elects representatives to the SEJ Nominating Committee that meets prior to and during

Jurisdictional Conference to select those who will be nominated to serve on General Boards and Agencies.

7.3 Ideas to Manage the Materials

Create files or a notebook to keep information about each Episcopal nominee together.

Review the information about each nominee and develop questions that you will want to ask the nominees. There will be time for each delegation to meet with each nominee and to ask questions.

7.4 Additional Thoughts: Dress, Lodging, Pacing, Meeting Length

- The SEJ Conference meets in Stuart Auditorium at Lake Junaluska (LJ). The auditorium is now air conditioned. So dress cool and comfortable – business casual. Weather can vary – may be cool in the evenings.
- There are several lodging choices and LJ will assign us.
 - The Terrace Hotel is the closest to the auditorium (across the street) and is an air conditioned hotel.
 - Lambuth Inn is located up the hill from the auditorium. Trams are provided for transportation or you can drive your car down the hill.
 - When staying in the Terrace or Lambuth, meals are included.
 - Private residences may be available for rent for the week. Check with Lake Junaluska.
 - Other lodging rooms are available in the form of apartments and single rooms. Check to see if they are air conditioned.
 - Area motels are also available.
- Long days are the norm – meeting from morning into the evening. The Conference concludes on Friday (may be very late) with the consecration service for the new bishop(s) on Saturday.
- Some “committees” meet during the SEJ Conference as well, so if you are selected to serve on one of those committees, that will be an additional time commitment (i.e., Nominations).

Section 8: At Jurisdictional Conference

8.1 Episcopal Elections

Most often, the first jurisdictional session begins with blank ballots. Delegates are asked to list the names of clergy for the number of bishops to be elected.

Information about candidates who have been nominated or endorsed is generally circulated two weeks before the conference. If a candidate receives 10 votes or 5 percent of the total number of ballots and his or her biographical information has not been circulated earlier, that information will be distributed after the vote. At the recommendation of the Committee on the Episcopacy (COE), subsequent balloting will occur until one candidate receives a 60 % of the votes cast. If additional Episcopal vacancies need to be filled, the balloting will be continued until this responsibility has been completed.

8.2 Other Business at Jurisdictional Conference

While it is rightly assumed that the primary responsibility of the Jurisdictional Conference is to elect bishops (and, at this time, it is projected that five bishops will be needed for election in the SEJ in 2012), this Conference has additional powers and duties:

1. To promote the evangelistic, educational, missionary, and benevolent interests of the Church and to provide for interests and institutions within their boundaries.
2. To elect bishops and to cooperate in carrying out such plans for their support as may be determined by the General Conference.
3. To establish and constitute jurisdictional conference boards as auxiliary to the general boards of the Church as the need may appear and to choose their representatives on the general boards in such manner as the General Conference may determine.
4. To determine the boundaries of their annual conferences
5. To make rules and regulations for the administration of the work of the Church within the jurisdiction, subject to such powers as have been or shall be vested in the General Church.
6. To appoint a committee on appeals to hear and determine the appeal of a traveling preacher of that jurisdiction from the decision of a trial committee.

8.3 Delegation Meetings

The delegation will meet on Tuesday, July 17, 2012 (subject to change), at Lake Junaluska to hear the Episcopal nominee remarks followed by nominees visiting each delegation for dialogue.

8.4 After Elections

The delegation may have a meeting or other gathering to recognize or honor one of its own should one be elected.

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