

THE COMMITTEE ON THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The work of the Committee on the Annual Conference entails planning, implementing, and evaluating the annual conference. The committee always works to be relevant and responsive. The global pandemic not only required the team to be innovative and adaptable in the face of uncertainty, but also gave us the opportunity to look at our work in a new light.

Key moments from the previous year:

We were finally able to gather in person for the first time since the 2019 Conference. We applied some of the conferencing lessons learned during the pandemic to our conference planning. The biggest changes were seen in the agenda. The recognition of retirees became part of the Commissioning and Ordination Service. This allowed us as a body to give thanks to our retirees and their spouses in what many consider to be one of our most visible and worshipful services at Annual Conference. It also created the opportunity to celebrate the continuity of ministry when the new retirees and their spouses circled the newly commissioned and ordained clergy and prayed for them. The service was moved to Sunday evening, following positive feedback from COVID year participants who found it easier for their families and guests to attend. Our daily Business agenda also saw changes. Worship and business ended each day by 6:00 pm creating the opportunity for members of the conference to reconnect with each other and rest. Each day had a significant worship service and a time of Prayer and Praise led by a newly commissioned or ordained clergy. It was also an emotional year as one hundred thirteen congregations separated from the United Methodist Church.

The theme chosen for the 2024 Annual Conference is “Seeking A More Excellent Way: On the Leading Edge of Ministry.” This theme acknowledges the changing landscape of ministry and our commitment to know Christ and make Christ known.

Action(s) required from the 2024 Annual Conference:

¶603 of *Book of Discipline* provides that the Annual Conference sets the place of the meeting for the sessions of the annual conference, and the presiding bishop sets the date. Under the leadership of Bishop Holston, we project June 8-11, 2025 as the dates for the next Annual Conference. The standing rules of the conference provide that the Committee on the Annual Conference recommend the site of the annual conference two years in advance. Last year the Committee recommended that the 2024 Annual Conference session be held in the Greenville Convention Center. The Committee on the Annual Conference recommends that the 2025 and 2026 sessions also be held in the Greenville Convention Center.

If you take away nothing from this report, know this:

The committee expresses its gratitude to the 2024 host team under the leadership of the Rev. Jim Dennis, Greenville District Superintendent, for their spirit of adaptability. This team has done tremendous work under some of the most trying circumstances. They have helped care for many of the important details along the way. We owe them a tremendous level of thanks. We also express gratitude to our host church, St. Matthews United Methodist Church and its team under the leadership of the Rev. Kurt McPherson. We are most grateful to our Bishop and the Committee on the Annual Conference for their faithfulness in this season. A special word of gratitude expressed to Pat Mack and Sharome Henry for going above and beyond the call of duty this season.

Respectfully submitted:

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