

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

- \$6,442,270 Budget total remains the same, although money has been shifted around.
- Church mission covenant remains at 10% of local church operating expenses
- Clergy retirements: 31; clergy deaths: 22; New ordained elders: 5
What do these numbers say about the future of our denomination?
- Judicial Council rulings: #1444: no annual conference can disaffiliate (churches still can); #1445: jurisdictional conferences can still take place in the fall to elect bishops
- A Special Session will be called later this year to vote on disaffiliating churches. Process promises to be done with grace.
- All were admonished to maintain a holy conferencing attitude and avoid disparaging remarks when discussing issues with those who disagree with us. Christians should avoid negative posts on social media; non-Christians will be judging us.
- Old Business: a new conference position was created to monitor racial justice issues
- The Isaiah Project provides a way for college-age students to “try” ministry with local churches prior to choosing ministry as a career. Three IP interns were present.
- Nominations to conference committees were presented and approved.
- A spiritual discernment tool should be available in mid-August* to help churches work through the decision-making process to determine where God is calling us into ministry in the kingdom of God, and would that ministry be best served by staying or leaving the UMC.
**Our church has signed up to be a test case for the tool, so we should get to work through the process earlier!*
- Decision process includes forming team, knowing right questions, knowing all options, filtering those options, reaching a healthy decision, implementing the decision.
- Disaffiliation per ¶2553 requires a financial obligation to pay two years of apportionments, cost to transfer titles (church gets to keep its property without penalty), share of unfunded pensions & health benefits for retirees and spouses, and payoff of any outstanding Conference loans. *This financial amount will be provided to church prior to disaffiliation decision making process.*
- Disaffiliated churches totals: 15 - last year; 8 this year. *These eight were ratified by AC vote of approximately 95% in favor. A simple majority was required.*
- Disaffiliation may be requested by a formal written letter to the District Superintendent, signed by two church leaders. The DS will guide church through the process, culminating in a called Church Conference in which 2/3 of the members present must vote to approve disaffiliation. This process must be completed no later than December 31, 2023*, as church law currently stands. **There is no guarantee that this deadline will be extended, although it is likely to be extended at GC 2024.*
- Disaffiliation is official when ratified at the next special or regular Annual Conference.
- Churches would need to disaffiliate with the UMC before joining another denomination. Such churches could also choose to remain independent, forming their own protocols for calling and supporting pastors.
- Pastors can choose to stay with UMC or not. Those clergy staying would be reappointed elsewhere if church votes to disaffiliate. Those clergy leaving the UMC would surrender credentials. *Career pastors need to consider all consequences of leaving, such as retirement benefits.*
- *Kavanaugh Camp* was closed in the past year and its assets were distributed among the two remaining camps, *Loucon* and *Aldersgate*, as well as *Methodist Mountain Mission*.
- Summer camps will be in full operation this summer. Send those teenagers!

- Disaster relief teams are still needed in tornado damaged areas of Conference. Local church members will house any volunteers who come to help.
- Already 1.1 million dollars have been contributed to KY tornado relief from all over the Methodist connection – 916 separate gifts.
- *Yoshimer Alvarez*, Lexington District Superintendent, was selected as our candidate for bishop at the fall Jurisdictional Conference.
- This year's mission offering supports tornado relief efforts and the United Methodist Children's Home. A total of \$72,233 was collected from local churches.
- Encouraging podcasts are available at ResourceUMC.org or at #BeUMC.
- Clergy retirees will get a 3% COLA increase.
- A motion was passed to have CFA review all funding sources for help with unfunded pensions liabilities. *This could potentially reduce amount churches must contribute.*
- New Church Development ministry is shifting to include alternate worship settings, such as the *Fresh Expressions* program and dinner churches, not just physical buildings.
- The Bishop's Operational Team recommends reflection and discernment in making decisions. They are aware of the nagging concerns of congregations, such as:
 - Will another window open after 12/31/23 if we don't act soon?
 - Will remaining ministers be forced to perform ceremonies against their will?
 - Is asking folks to be patient a stalling tactic by progressives?
 - Is there yet another way to resolve this issue?
- The Methodist Church and UMCOR are active in Ukraine and Poland helping orphans and refugees, trying to be an instrument of hope and peace. A special moment occurred when a Polish Methodist pastor shared his Ukrainian ministry stories via live Zoom.
- The Boy Scout bankruptcy settlement for sexual abuse will require our Conference to pay \$520,240 (out of 30 million total), based on the number of Boy Scout Troops chartered by the KYUMC over the years. This settlement will not require financial payment from church, but Safe Sanctuary policies will be reviewed and updated as needed. A Zoom meeting is scheduled for June 16 at 3:30 p.m. to discuss this issue.
- CFA has \$1000 ministry grants available in the areas of stewardship, technology, leadership, and development.
- A new on-line portal is available to make electronic payments to Conference. Contact *Heather Duvall* to set up payment account.
- A motion to send a petition to the Council of Bishops to have them still call a General Conference for 2022 failed. *Note: This motion would have been impossible logistically to enact at this point and would have shown a lack of trust in the Council of Bishop who are delegated the responsibility to decide when and where a General Conference is held.*
- Retiring clergy and spouses were recognized. A total of 31 retirees with a combined experience of 551 years of service!
- The 2023 Annual Conference will again return to Owensboro on June 5-7.
- A conference summary video link will be added to our website.