

In Support of Creating a U.S. Regional Conference

A resolution submitted to the 2023 Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference

Whereas, the seven Central Conferences and five U.S. Jurisdictions of The United Methodist Church engage in mission together in 136 countries; and

Whereas, the connectional ties between the church in the United States and the Central Conferences are significant and vital to the continued mission and ministry of the worldwide United Methodist Church; and

Whereas, the existing structure of The United Methodist Church at the general church level has historically impeded each region from effectively tailoring its ministry to its specific contexts; and

Whereas, the existing structure of The United Methodist Church at the general church level diminishes our ability to be a vital and effective church and needs to be re-envisioned to achieve more fair and equitable church governance; and

Whereas, the Apostle Paul offered a beautiful example making clear the value of a church established in diverse places with shared beliefs, alongside local and regional differences in structure, worship, and style best suited to particular contexts; and

Whereas, the creation of a U.S. Regional Conference and the conversion of the Central Conferences to Regional Conferences, as outlined in the [Christmas Covenant](#), developed by Central Conference leaders in Africa and the Philippines, would establish structural parity throughout the worldwide church; and

Whereas, the creation of a U.S. Regional Conference, as outlined in legislation put forward by [the Connectional Table](#) will establish the governance necessary to allow each region to design ministry for its particular contexts, and thus more effectively make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world; and

Whereas, the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference aspires to vital, thriving, multicultural, and diverse ministries that are open to all people and can be a beacon of hope for the worldwide United Methodist Church, and

Whereas, in November of 2022, and in historic fashion, a resolution in support of a U.S. Regional Conference was adopted at all five Jurisdictional Conferences.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference supports the expressed intents of the Christmas Covenant and Connectional Table legislation, including the creation of Regional Conferences in Africa, Europe, the Philippines, and the U.S., respectively; and

Be it further resolved that the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference recognizes and supports the leadership of our Central Conferences in the creation and furtherance of the Christmas Covenant as well the Connectional Table's future visioning on behalf of our worldwide fellowship; and

Be it further resolved that the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference urges the Council of Bishops to expedite the process of voting on the constitutional amendments necessary to enact the regional conferences legislation, calling special sessions of annual conferences where necessary; and

Be it further resolved that in line with the intent of the non-disciplinary petition submitted by the Connectional Table, the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference requests the Council of Bishops to immediately appoint a 20-25 member Interim Committee on Organization for a US Regional Conference to develop and propose to the 2024 general conference the structure and organization of a US Regional Conference. In line with the CT's legislation, this body would organize and plan for the establishment and functioning of a new United States Regional Conference comprising the five jurisdictions of the United States. Committee membership should have a minimum of 3 members of each US jurisdiction, 3 central conference members and shall meet standards of racial and gender diversity. The Committee should recommend a structure for the US Regional Conference including considerations such as its membership, committee structure, meeting time, agency, and function; and

Be it further resolved that the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference secretary shall send copies of this resolution to all delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences, including alternates, to the Commission on the General Conference, and to the Council of Bishops.

Submitted by:

From Belmont UMC:

- Rev. Paul Purdue, Sr. Pastor
- Rev. Heather Harriss, Pastor
- John Pearce, Delegate to Annual Conference
- Emma Bushong, Delegate to Annual Conference
- Alisa Bradford, Chair, Belmonsters for Inclusion
- Jeff Sheehan, Chair, Administrative Board
- Louis Jordan, Lay Leader

From Blakemore UMC:

- Rev. Dr. Sandy Shawhan,
- Zachary Lalor
- Michael Friddell

From Briensburg UMC:

- William Lawson
- Cheryl Lawson
- Gregory Waldrop
- Steve Milam
- Ginalee Wyatt
- Jerry Wyatt
- Bob Gooud
- Jeanne Gooud
- Mitch Clark
- David Sprinkle
- Peg Riley
- Karen Heise
- Betsy McClain
- Becky Blanchard
- Steve Rayburn
- Jeri Lake

From Calvary UMC:

- Rev. Eric Mayle
- Youth Group
- Covenant Class

- Horizons Class
- Encounter Class

From East End UMC:

- Ginny Tacker, Reconciling Minister Chair
- Rev. Brandon Baxter, Pastor
- Rev. Keri Cress, Associate Pastor

From Edgehill UMC:

- Lindsey Dye
- Deen Thompson
- Rev. John Feldhacker

From Erin UMC:

- Ann Hagler
- Beth Flynt
- Mary Beth Childs
- Charles Lee Childs
- Mary Douglas
- Tammy Smith
- Chad Smith
- Mark Churness
- Pam Churness
- Amy Phy Jernigan
- Mary Phy
- Charles Phy

From First UMC Humboldt:

- Joyce Lynn Kole

From First UMC Jackson:

- Scott Murray
- Rhonda Murray
- Olivia Murray
- Gary Lackey
- Adam Johnson
- Brian Taylor
- J. V. Thompson
- Erin Thompson
- Mona Miller
- David Eblen II
- Jacob Hamilton
- Mitzi Hamilton
- JoLeigh Sutton

From Glendale UMC:

- Rev. Steph Dodge

From St. John's UMC:

- Rev. Judi Hoffman

From Trinity UMC:

- Kay Jordan
- Craig Jordan
- Amy Moritz

- Brad Moritz
- Sam Goff
- Sara Goff
- Sara Corum
- Chris Glover
- Mike Potter
- Rosemary Potter
- Joey Hopper
- Charles Abraham
- Melba Abraham
- Sandy Guntharp
- Irene B. Dycus
- Robert Landrigan