

Committee on Episcopacy
Randy Cooper, Lynn Hill, Co-Chair

We have been blessed by the leadership of Bishop William T. McAlilly for eleven years. Time has passed quickly. So much has happened: much to be celebrated and much to grieve, though we do not grieve without hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13-16). Through it all, our bishop has walked beside us. His witness and non-anxious presence have been signs of God's faithfulness to us.

In the past year, our bishop has continued to lay the gospel's challenges and joys before us through his blogs, teaching, preaching, and oversight. We are all the more thankful for his efforts when we remember that he suffered a serious car accident on August 25 last summer. A time for the healing of broken bones and convalescing from surgeries was necessary. Our Committee on Episcopacy fully supported him in his decision to ask for a leave of absence. We were happy for him and our annual conference when he was able to return to his ministry as our bishop on January 1st of this year.

We note with special gratitude that Bishop Joe Pennel stepped out of retirement to help our conference during Bishop McAlilly's recuperation. The Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference has always been the home of Bishop Pennel. His assistance was a labor of love for us all.

Even with the car accident and leave of absence, our bishop's ministry has been noteworthy in the past year. We highlight the Visioning Summit that took place in Nashville March 1st. As we look to the future, our bishop encouraged the conference leaders to persevere and to walk humbly with God.

Bishop McAlilly's time with us will soon come to an end. He will retire August 31, 2024. We will surely be suggesting ways to celebrate his ministry among us in the next year and to bid him Godspeed when that day comes. For now, though, we will be true to Bishop McAlilly's own witness if we keep our hands to the plow and continue our ministries in our churches and throughout our conference.

No such report would be complete without mentioning Mrs. Lynn McAilly. Her leadership in Project Transformation and Miriam's Promise continues. Her presence and support to our bishop as his wife, friend, and sister in Christ during his leave of absence cannot be measured.

We remind you that the role of the Conference Episcopacy Committee is given in paragraph 637 of the **2016 Book of Discipline**. In part this committee is to "support the bishop of the area in the oversight of the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church, with special reference to the area where the bishop has presidential responsibility and to be available to the bishop for counsel." The members of the Conference Episcopacy Committee are grateful for the opportunity we have had to work with Bishop McAlilly and Rev. Dr. Rob Martin. We note the departure of H.G. Stovall July 5, 2022 from our bishop's office, who felt called to another ministry in Nashville. We were glad to learn that Brandi Galbreath came onboard as Bishop McAlilly's Administrative Assistant on August 1, 2022.

We invite you to pray at least weekly for our bishop. Place his name in your bulletins and on your churches' prayer lists. Petition God to give him strength to share his greatest gift—his willingness to be present among us, to stand in the midst of the fray, and to reach out to all people within our churches. As our "chief pastor," may he help us all to "find ways to love one another," which is his own deepest hope.

Let us encourage one another.