

Episcopal areas set for 2024-28

BY JESSICA BRODIE
SOUTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE

The 2024 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference kicked off Wednesday morning with delegates approving a new structural plan for episcopal leadership.

The plan reduces the number of episcopal areas to 10 from 13, including sharing a bishop with another jurisdiction.

Presiding Bishop L. Jonathan Holston of the South Carolina Conference opened the business session as the body joined voices for “And Are We Yet Alive?” Bishop Holston lifted up those on the dais with him: Julie Hager Love, conference secretary, and Kathy James, secretary-designate.

New Conference Pairings:

- Alabama-West Florida and North Alabama
- North Georgia and South Georgia
- Kentucky, Central Appalachian Missionary and Tennessee-Western Kentucky

— STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 3

Today: COE to announce Episcopal Assignments

The SEJ Committee on Episcopacy will announce the assignments of bishops for 2024-28 during today’s evening business session, which begins at 7:15 p.m. Area receptions will follow at various locations.



Bishop Leonard Fairley and Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett celebrate communion during the Opening Worship Service Wednesday morning. Read the full story on Page 4. — BEN SMITH | Holston Conference

“Too often on the wrong side of history”

BY SYBIL DAVIDSON | NORTH GEORGIA CONFERENCE

In the Wednesday afternoon session, delegates to the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference received the report of the Racial Bias Task Force and began important conversations. Presiding Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson, of the Virginia Conference, called the session to order.

To begin, Jennifer Davis, of the Western North Carolina Conference and assistant secretary for monitoring, guided delegates through a self-monitoring evaluation.

— STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 18



TODAY @ SEJ

All sessions in Stuart Auditorium unless noted

9 a.m. — MORNING BUSINESS SESSION

Bishop Tom Berlin presiding

10:30 a.m. — BREAK

11 a.m. — SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

Bishop Bill McAilly preaching

Noon — LUNCH BREAK

2 p.m. — AFTERNOON BUSINESS SESSION

Bishop Connie Shelton presiding

5:30 p.m. — DINNER BREAK

7:15 p.m. — EVENING BUSINESS SESSION

Bishop Robin Dease presiding
Committee on Episcopacy
Episcopal Assignments

8 p.m. — AREA RECEPTIONS
Various venues





Jazz at Junaluska

Delegates enjoyed a night of “Jazz at Lake Junaluska” Wednesday evening at Memorial Chapel, presented by Africa University and the Central South District of the North Georgia Conference and featuring the renowned Milkshake Mayfield and the Milkshake Quintet.

PHOTO BY DEREK LEEK
North Carolina Conference

Offering for volunteers

Throughout our time together, a dedicated group has selflessly enriched our experience with their warm hospitality. Their unwavering service, friendly assistance, and embodiment of Christ's kindness have truly blessed our time here at Lake Junaluska. These compassionate leaders have journeyed from various corners of the Southeastern Jurisdiction to extend this generosity at their own expense.

We can express our gratitude by contributing to this Love Offering through cash, check, or by scanning the QR code.



THURSDAY

TODAY@SEJ | FULL AGENDA

JULY 11

All sessions in Stuart Auditorium unless noted

9 a.m. – MORNING BUSINESS SESSION

Bishop Tom Berlin presiding

- Reports from SEJ Agencies
- Report of Committee on Coordination and Accountability
- Committee on Finance and Administration

10:30 a.m. – BREAK

11 a.m. – SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

Bishop Bill McAlilly preaching
Reception to greet families following in tent outside Stuart Auditorium

Noon – LUNCH BREAK

- “The Gulfside Assembly Story” documentary
Lambuth Inn, International Room

2 p.m. – AFTERNOON BUSINESS SESSION

Bishop Connie Shelton presiding

- Report from Nominations
- Reports from SEJ Agencies
- Nominations from College of Bishops
- Monitoring Report

Small Group Session 2
“3 Practices”

Breakout Rooms to be Assigned

5:30 p.m. – DINNER BREAK

- Committee on Investigation Organized
Terrace 319
- Committee on Appeals Organized
Terrace 316

7:15 p.m. – EVENING BUSINESS SESSION

Bishop Robin Dease presiding

- Additional Business as Needed
- Committee on Episcopacy
- Episcopal Assignments for 2024-2028

8 p.m. – AREA RECEPTIONS

Various venues



Realignment of conferences within episcopal areas

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Next, he called upon retired Bishop Ken Carder, who offered an opening prayer encouraging the church to be a living and visible sign of our new creation in Jesus Christ.

After a host of organizational motions – centering time, elections to jurisdictional conference leadership, adoption of the agenda, a welcome from Lake Junaluska Executive Director Ken Howle, ballot testing, and the presentation of the conference’s organizational plan – delegates heard from the Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy (COE) on the main business of this year’s gathering: a realignment of annual conferences within SEJ episcopal areas.

The Rev. Kim Ingram, Committee on Episcopacy chair, joined by Vice Chair Christine Dodson and Secretary Alex Shanks, shared their committee’s recommendation on the new boundaries for episcopal areas and the number of bishops available for assignment within the SEJ.

In January, the COE recommended reducing the number of episcopal areas within the jurisdiction to 10 from the current 13. This would involve several formerly separate episcopal areas joining to become episcopal areas containing more than one annual conference..

However, given the funding decrease in the wake of disaffiliations, the recent General Conference reduced the number of bishops serving across all five United States jurisdictions to 32 from the current 39. The Southeastern Jurisdiction will get nine bishops, Northeastern six, North Central six, South Central six, and Western Jurisdiction five.

The COE’s revised plan for the Southeastern Jurisdiction, approved Wednesday by the body, includes nine episcopal areas plus a 10th whose bishop will be shared between the SEJ and the NEJ.

The breakdown of the 10 episcopal areas for 2024-2028 will be:

- Alabama-West Florida and North Alabama
- North Georgia and South Georgia
- Kentucky, Central Appalachian Missionary, and Tennessee-Western Kentucky
- Virginia
- North Carolina
- Western North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Mississippi
- Florida
- Holston (sharing a bishop with NEJ)

Because of the change, no new episcopal elections will be held at this year’s conference. With the retirement of Bishop Bill McAlilly from the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference, that leaves 10 bishops to be assigned this year – three to in-jurisdiction, multi-conference episcopal areas, six to single-conference areas and one to be shared between two jurisdictions.

The dual-jurisdictional sharing means the SEJ will get some help toward its reduced budget.

As the COE told the body, delegates will consider a 2025-2028 budget that reflects a decrease of \$359,000 (24.7 percent) from the last quadrennium, but sharing a bishop with NEJ means the SEJ will split expenses, receiving \$194,186 to cover half of the bishop’s office expenses.

The body approved these changes, and now the COE will focus its work on the assignment and discernment process, which Ingram said will incorporate data and missional needs from each area to accommodate both shared and unique circumstances. “Praise to the amazing spirit and discernment that happens with the guidance of the Holy Spirit,” Rev. Ingram said.

Bishop Kenneth Carter of the Western North Carolina Conference closed the morning session with a hope-filled, Christ-centered reflection on the state of the church amid the harsh realities of a changing denomination. (See Page 6 for full story.)

Jessica Brodie is the editor of The South Carolina United Methodist Advocate.



Opening Worship: “From Burnout to Burning Hearts”

BY REV. DR. TIM JONES
HOLSTON ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 2024 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference opened Wednesday morning, July 10, with worship and communion. Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett, episcopal leader of the North Alabama and Holston conferences, delivered the sermon, and Bishop Leonard Fairley, episcopal leader of the Kentucky and Central Appalachian Missionary conferences, served as celebrant.

The Rev. Dr. Sam Parkes, SEJ Worship Coordinator from the Alabama West Florida Conference, opened worship by acknowledging the historical pain that was caused to Native Americans and slaves on this land where we gather for holy conferencing.

“We offer our respect and are thankful for the gifts and dreams of the people of this land,” Dr. Parkes said.

He continued by explaining that the 2024 SEJ theme is “Forward in Faith” and that the sermons and devotions throughout the week would focus on some of the hard times Jesus’ disciples faced throughout their ministry.

Marlene Spencer, lay person from South Carolina, led the invocation with a call and response prayer. “We come in our burnout,” said Spence. The congregation responded with, “Hoping you’ll give us new burning hearts.”

This set the stage for Bishop Wallace-Padgett to preach on the passage from John 21:1-19 in which the disciples were found returning to their former trade of fishing after Jesus’ death on the cross.

The Scripture reading was divided into four sections, and members of the congregation were asked to close their eyes during the reading. Once the section was completed, eyes were opened to find a group of people on stage in a frozen reenactment of that portion of Scripture. The scenarios began with the disciples moving backward as they were fishing, and the final scenario showed the disciples serving others as Jesus called them to move forward by tending to and feeding his lambs and sheep.

Bishop Wallace-Padgett began her sermon acknowledging the tough times churches, clergy, laity, and bishops have gone through over the past few years.

“When was the last time you felt ‘done’?” she asked as she acknowledged that during this season of division and disaffiliation many of us have felt like throwing in the towel since the last time we were together. She then compared this pain and disappointment with what the disciples must have felt after Jesus’ crucifixion.

“Excruciating is the best adjective I know to describe the kind of pain we have experienced,” Bishop Wallace-Padgett said. “Our future ministry as individuals and The United Methodist Church has the potential to be more significant than anything in our past,” she reminded us after walking through the rest of the story and Jesus’ remaining belief in his disciples. “The best thing we can do is to follow Jesus wherever he leads us.”

Bishop Fairley presided over communion as he led The Great Thanksgiving.

“The table has been set, and all are welcome,” said Bishop Fairley once the bread and juice had been consecrated. “There were tables in my life that I was not welcome to, but not this one.” Bishop Fairley is African American and a native of rural North Carolina.

As worship concluded, proof of the connectional system could be seen as members from delegations saw friends and colleagues from other conferences and shared hugs, handshakes, and conversations to catch up. While many are tired coming into the conference, this morning went a long way in helping us prepare to move “Forward in Faith.”



Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett preaches during Opening Worship.
– BEN SMITH | Holston Conference

Rev. Dr. Tim Jones is the director of communications for the Holston Conference.



RETIREMENT CELEBRATION: BISHOP WILLIAM T. MCALILLY

“Your mark of 12 years cannot be undone”

BY TYLER SPROUSE

TENNESSEE-WESTERN KENTUCKY ANNUAL CONFERENCE

On Wednesday evening, the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference held a retirement celebration for the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference Episcopal Leader, Bishop William T. McAlilly, this year's sole retiring bishop.

Bishop McAlilly was elected to the episcopacy at the SEJ Conference in 2012 and was assigned as the resident bishop of the Memphis and Tennessee Annual Conferences beginning Sept. 1, 2012. He was given the task of merging these two conferences to form what is now the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church. This new conference was overwhelmingly adopted on Dec. 4, 2021.

Over the course of his career, Bishop McAlilly served in a wide variety of ministry settings in Georgia and Mississippi – a small membership church, a new congregation, a county seat church, a newly organized congregation, and a large membership congregation. Likewise, he has served in a variety of roles in the local church, including youth minister, associate minister, and lead pastor.

He was ordained as a deacon in 1979 and as an elder in 1982. During the celebration, the Rev. Jefferson Furtado enumerated Bishop McAlilly's ministry appointments, which are as follows: student pastor during his M.Div. at Candler School of Theology (1978-1981); New Albany First UMC (1981-84); Lambert UMC (1984-86); Getwell Road UMC (1986-90); Philadelphia First UMC (1990-94); St. Matthews UMC (1994-2000); Tupelo First UMC (2000-06); and he served as the district superintendent of the Seashore District of the Mississippi Annual Conference (2006-12).

Bishop McAlilly's son, the Rev. Chris McAlilly, read Hebrews 12:1-2, a significant biblical passage throughout Bishop McAlilly's ministry. It was also a foundational text for the McAlilly family throughout the many transitions they experienced together.

“Each time we were preparing to move to a different town for one of Dad's new appointments,” began Rev. McAlilly, “he would say to us: ‘We are a family that walks by faith.’”

His son, Chris, his daughter, Laura, and his wife and lifelong ministry partner, Lynn, joined Bishop McAlilly onstage. His five grandchildren, daughter-in-law, and son-in-law also were in attendance.

The Tennessee-Western Kentucky Connectional Ministries Officer, the Rev. Melinda Young Britt, offered remarks of acknowledgment and honor on behalf of Bishop McAlilly. Rev. Britt underscored the abiding impact of Bishop McAlilly's 12-year tenure, one that will run deep for years to come.

“You have taught us that we are better together and that we can do it right or we can do it right now,” said Rev. Britt. “You showed us that the wisdom in us is greater than the wisdom in each of us.

“It's the greater things you taught and showed us that will remain because they are now in the DNA of our conference,” continued Rev. Britt. “So we thank you, Bishop McAlilly, for the opportunity to serve alongside you and for the way that you empowered us to seek the greater things. You have helped make us who we are. Your mark of 12 years cannot be undone – its imprint is in our hearts.”

Tyler Sprouse is the communications specialist for the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference.



Bishop Bill McAlilly's family joined him onstage for the Retirement Celebration on Wednesday. Pictured from left: Laura McAlilly Paulk, Rev. Chris McAlilly, Lynn McAlilly, and Bishop McAlilly. – DEREK LEEK | North Carolina Conference



State of the Church: “Much to build upon”

BY JESSICA BRODIE

SOUTH CAROLINA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Southeastern Jurisdiction embodies a paradox, but one that offers an opportunity for God’s church to live into a bold, vital, and hopeful future.

That’s the word on the state of the church offered by Bishop Ken Carter, resident bishop of the Western North Carolina Conference, before a crowd of 400 delegates and guests at the 2024 SEJ Conference Wednesday morning.

“We’re in the midst of profound change,” Carter said, noting how the SEJ has the strongest core of local churches in the United States yet the most severe human problems, many impacting society’s most vulnerable people.

“We have the highest rate of infant mortality, the greatest degree of anger, the highest amount of domestic violence, the most severe poverty, the lowest access to medical care, and the shortest life span of people,” Carter noted, ticking off what he called a “humbling” list that also includes the largest percentage of losses in the denomination to disaffiliation at 42 percent.

As God’s people consider the state of the church amid these realities and a changing denomination, Carter reflected on both the challenges and opportunities facing The United Methodist Church in this jurisdiction.

While some of the news seems dire, it’s important to understand the SEJ has an opportunity to become stronger.

“We have tremendous assets, strong churches, strong institutions, and deep long-term relationships,” Carter said. “Even with losses, we have much to build upon.”

He lifted up four key marks unique to the SEJ, urging delegates to contemplate these as they work to move forward to the next phase of what God calls us to do in God’s church.

First, he noted that the SEJ is blessed with vital congregations. We must acknowledge this and truly begin to see these churches, name them, invest in them, and multiply them so real growth can occur.

Second, he said the SEJ is marked by a commitment to racial justice, discipleship, and justification, important work that we must continue no matter what.

“This is our language to reckon with,” Carter said, calling it “a lifelong journey” that must endure.

“There cannot be a crisis followed by a catharsis followed by the status quo,” Carter said, urging United Methodists to learn from the civil rights museums scattered across the region. “We can pay attention to the racism within us and among us by working on three things—metrics, public witness, and the beloved community—and doing it from the ground up.”

Third, Carter acknowledged the importance of considering the well-being of our spiritual leaders, both lay and clergy.

“We’re asking more of people at a time when they’re telling us they have no time left to give,” he said, noting our people are exhausted, demoralized, and traumatized.

Finally, he lifted up the core United Methodist identity we share, which is marked by grace, connection, and holiness. We have come to model a flawed definition of holiness, often seeming to believe we can function as heroic solo leaders.

“But holiness is the love of God and neighbor,” Carter said.

Jessica Brodie is the editor of The South Carolina United Methodist Advocate.



Bishop Kenneth Carter delivers the State of the Church Address on Wednesday. – DEREK LEEK | North Carolina Conference



Daily Minutes | Wednesday | July 10, 2024

MINUTES ARE UNOFFICIAL

Daily Minutes
Wednesday, July 10, 2024
Opening Worship
9:00 a.m.

Delegates and guests gathered in Stuart Auditorium on the campus of Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center for an opening worship service of Word and Table. Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett, Birmingham and Holston Episcopal Areas, was the preacher, and Bishop Leonard Fairley, Louisville Episcopal Area, was the celebrant. Active and retired Bishops served the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Opening Session
10:30 a.m.
Bishop L. Jonathan Holston, Presiding

Gathering Hymn: The conference joined in singing “And Are We Yet Alive” for the opening business session.

Presiding: Bishop Holston presided.

Call to Order: Bishop Holston called the 2024 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference session to order at 10:35 a.m.

Centering Time: Rev. Melinda Britt led the delegates and other attendees through a centering time.

Opening Prayer: Bishop Kenneth Carder, Retired, offered the opening prayer.

Roll Call, Quorum Certification, Setting Bar of Conference: Bishop Holston called on Rev. Julie Hager Love, Conference Secretary, to lead the conference through roll call.

Rev. Love recognized Bishops as well as delegates who have passed since the 2022 Conference. This was followed by a roll call of Bishops and delegations.

Those Bishops who have died since our last gathering in 2022 are Marshall “Jack” Meadors, Jr., Thomas Stockton, Timothy Whitaker, and Carlton Minnick, Jr.

The following SEJ Bishops were present:

Richard C. Looney (1988) Retired
Robert E. Fannin (1992) Retired
Kenneth L. Carder (1992) Retired
Joe E. Pennel, Jr. (1996) Retired
Charlene P. Kammerer (1996) Retired
Larry M. Goodpaster (2000) Retired
B. Michael Watson (2000) Retired
Hope Morgan Ward (2004) Retired
James E. Swanson, Sr. (2004) Retired
Alfred W. Gwinn, Jr. (2004) Retired
Paul L. Leeland (2008) Retired
L. Jonathan Holston (2012) Columbia
Kenneth H. Carter (2012) Charlotte
William T. McAlilly (2012) Nashville
Debra Wallace-Padgett (2012) Birmingham
Sharma D. Lewis (2016) Mississippi
David Graves (2016) Alabama-West Florida
Leonard E. Fairley (2016) Louisville



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R. Lawson Bryan (2016) Retired
Sue Hauptert-Johnson (2016) Richmond
Thomas Berlin (2022) Florida
Connie Mitchell Shelton (2022) Raleigh
Robin Dease (2022) Atlanta

24 Bishops were present.

Delegation leaders reported the delegate count from each of their Annual Conferences:

Alabama-West Florida – 16
Central Appalachian - 4
Florida – 32
Holston – 21
Kentucky – 17
Memphis – 7
Mississippi – 20
North Alabama – 14
North Carolina – 31
North Georgia – 40
South Carolina – 28
South Georgia – 16
Tennessee – 14
Virginia – 44
Western North Carolina – 35

Rev. Julie Hager Love certified the presence of a quorum.

Rev. Julie Hager Love moved that the bar of the conference be set as sections 2, 4, 6, and 8, Sections 5 (rows A-D), 7 (rows A-E), and 9 (rows A-E).

The motion passed. Bishop Holston expressed that the bar was set.

Secretarial Staff: Rev. Julie Hager Love nominated the following persons to serve as members of the secretarial staff: Rev. Kathy James (Secretary Designee), Deaconess Celeste Eubanks (Recording Secretary), Rev. Ashley Davis (Recording Secretary Assistant), Rev. Otto Harris (Elections/Voting), Rev. Sharon Austin (Nominations), Rev. Vickie White (Nominations), Ashlee Hand (Elections/Voting Assistant), Rev. Susan Arnold (Hospitality and Prayer Room), Jasmine Haynes (Media Relations), Jennifer Davis (Monitoring), Rev. Kim Ingram (Committee on Episcopacy), Rev. Dr. Sam Parkes (Worship), Rev. Shannon Boaz (Worship Assistant), Dan O'Mara (DCA Editor), Becky Hall (Stage Manager), Melinda Britt (Centering Time), Dawn Fairley (Lake Junaluska Logistics), Ben Smith (Photographer), Derek Leek (Photo/Video Coordinator), Liz Roberts (Youth/Young Adults), David Dommissie (Treasurer), and Tina Gudiel (Treasurer's Assistant).

The nominees for secretarial staff were elected.

Adoption of Agenda: Bishop Holston called on Rev. Julie Hager Love to present the projected agenda for adoption. The agenda as presented was adopted by the conference. Rev. Love reminded everyone that worship services, State of the Church, and the retirement service are orders of the day.

Rev. Julie Hager Love reminded delegates to look at the SEJ website each night for updates. The DCA will be posted on the SEJ website daily. A scannable QR code for the DCA will be posted on the wall in the rear of Stuart Auditorium.

Committee on Plan of Organization and Rules of Order: Rev. Jasmine Smothers, filling in for Chairperson Jonathan LeMaster-Smith who was ill and unable to attend, presented the written report of the Committee on Plan of Organization and Rules of Order, which included recommended changes.



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Rev. Smothers drew the conference's attention to Advance Daily Christian Advocate (ADCA) page 14 to review the conference plan of organization. She shared there were no changes to the rules or organization. Rev. Smothers reminded the conference of proposed changes found on page 34 of the ADCA. Rev. Smothers shared that the committee recommends there be a comprehensive review of the plan of organization and rules of order. This review is needed to make changes that reflect the evolving nature of our church, pending updates, and regionalization changes.

The conference accepted the report.

Welcome to Lake Junaluska: Ken Howle, Executive Director of Lake Junaluska, came and brought a welcome to Lake Junaluska.

Nominations from Bishops for Secretary, Secretary Designate, Journal Committee, and Agenda Committee: Bishop Thomas Berlin, President of the College of Bishops, Florida Episcopal Area, presented the slate of nominations originating from the College of Bishops, in accordance with The Book of Discipline and our Conference Plan of Organization and Rules of Order. The nominees were elected. (See Nominations Report, page two of the Daily Christian Advocate, Volume 21, Number 1.)

Instructions for Balloting and Testing: Bishop Holston called on Rev. Julie Hager Love to lead the delegates through balloting and testing using their smartphone, tablet, or devices. Rev. Julie Hager Love offered the orientation, including testing on several sample ballots. GNTV facilitated the voting.

Committee on Episcopacy: Rev. Kim Ingram, chair of the Committee on Episcopacy, presented the report on behalf of the committee. Joining her were Christine Dodson and Rev. Alex Shanks. Rev. Ingram expressed thanks to the SEJ Episcopal Leaders with special thanks expressed to Bishops who served more than one episcopal area at one point. Rev. Ingram shared the role and duties of the Committee on Episcopacy.

The SEJ will have 10 bishops serving with one also serving an area in the Northeastern Jurisdiction (NEJ).

Rev. Alex Shanks presented a recommendation from the Committee on Episcopacy: Rev. Shanks shared that there is a change in the recommendation to nine episcopal areas and presented this to the conference. There will be ten bishops eligible for assignment and no election of bishops at this jurisdictional conference. The proposed 2024-2028 episcopal areas are Alabama-West Florida and North Alabama, North Georgia and South Georgia, Kentucky, Central Appalachian Missionary Conference, and Tennessee-Western Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina, Western North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, and Holston (sharing a bishop with NEJ).

Bishop Holston shared that the recommendation was before the body. The motion was approved.

Christine Dodson presented an additional recommendation:

“The SEJ COE moves that an additional \$48,546 be added to the jurisdictional budget per year (\$194,186 for the quadrennium) to cover half of the episcopal office grant and half of the episcopal housing grant for the Holston Conference. This assumes a 3% increase in office grant per year, with the final amount set by GCFA. This allows us to more equitably share a bishop with the NEJ and live into the allocations of bishops set by General Conference.”

Rev. Ingram shared additional matters discussed by the Committee on Episcopacy.

The recommendation and the COE report were accepted by the Conference.

State of the Church: Bishop Ken Carter shared the State of the Church address. Bishop Carter stressed the need to prioritize the jurisdiction's work around racial equity and equality, care for the well-being of our clergy and laity, and being more clear about our United Methodist identity.

Bishop Holston expressed thanks to Bishop Carter for his address.



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MINUTES ARE UNOFFICIAL

Announcements: Rev. Julie Hager Love gave announcements.

Bishop Holston gave thanks to Bishop Swanson and Bishop Gwinn for serving as assistants to the president.

Lunch Recess: The conference was in recess.

Afternoon Session

2:00 p.m.

Bishop Hauptert-Johnson, Presiding

Presiding: Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson, Richmond Episcopal Area.

Call to Order: Bishop Hauptert-Johnson called the session to order at 2:03 p.m.

Centering Time: Rev. Melinda Britt led the conference in a centering moment.

Monitoring Report: Jennifer Davis presented a monitoring report. She guided the group through a self-monitoring process.

Racial Bias Task Force Report: Members of the Racial Bias Task Force, (Rev. Lindsey Baynham Freeman, Ms. Molly McEntire, Rev. Ken Nelson, Rev. Dr. Yvette Massey, Rev. Darryl Dayson, Rev. Lisa Yebuah, and Rev. Emily Duett Kincaid), gave a report on their work. This task force was formed as the result of a motion brought to the floor of the 2022 SEJ Conference requesting a task force be formed to do work around the implications of racial bias. (See full report on page 45 in the ADCA.)

Bishop Hauptert-Johnson asked the conference to affirm the work of the Task Force and their report.

Dr. Sharon Austin asked for a point of privilege and Bishop Hauptert-Johnson granted it. Dr. Austin expressed the pain she is still experiencing and the trauma she endured as an episcopal candidate at the 2022 SEJ Conference. She expressed that this report could not capture the hurt and feelings of those six persons of color who were episcopal nominees in 2022 - Byron Thomas, Sharon Austin, Ken Nelson, Sharon Bowers, Edie Gleaves, and Isomar Alvarez. She emphasized again that "people are more than a report."

Bishop Hauptert-Johnson called for a moment to pray for those six candidates and for the conference to have deep reflection. Following the moment of silence, Bishop Hauptert-Johnson shared a prayer.

3 Practice Circles Keynote: Claire Bowen and Rev. Nathan Malone did a presentation on 3 Practice Circles. They presented the group with two questions to be discussed in their circles: 1) How can our Jurisdiction prepare and develop our next leaders, intentionally providing inclusion for all? OR 2) Which of the recommendations from the [Racial Bias] Task Force do you feel are most critical?

Announcements: Rev. Love reminded the body about an offering for volunteers to take place on Thursday, the retirement celebration for Bishop McAlilly at 7:30 p.m., and the jazz concert in Memorial Chapel at 8:15.

Bishop Hauptert-Johnson adjourned the session at 3:54 p.m.

Retirement Celebration

7:30 p.m.

There was celebration for Bishop McAlilly that included singing his favorite hymn, the reading of all of his appointments, scripture reading by his son (Rev. Chris McAlilly), a video, and words of acknowledgement.

Recess: Conference was in recess until 9:00 a.m.



Report of the Nominations Committee

Southeast Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church Nominations Committee Report – July 10, 2024

Connectional Table

Byron Thomas – NGA; Clergy; African American; Male

General Board of Church and Society

Sharon Austin – FL; Clergy; African American; Female*

Helen Ryde – WNC; Laity; White; Nonbinary

Sam England – HOL; Laity; White; Male; Young Adult*

General Board of Pension and Health Benefits

David Stotts – MS; Laity; White; Male*

Grace Han – VA; Clergy; Asian American; Female

Mathew Pinson – NGA; Laity; White; Male*

General Commission on Religion and Race

Clara Ester – AWF; Laity; African American; Female

Marcus Singleton – WNC; Clergy; African American; Male

General Commission on Status and Role of Women

Samantha McGlothlin – TWK; Clergy; White; Female

General Board of Global Ministries

Caleb Parker – NC; Laity; White; Male

Elizabeth Corrie – NGA; Laity; White; Female*

Molly McIntyre – FL; Laity; White; Female*

Marian Royston – NAL; Clergy; African American; Female

General Commission on Communications

Ashlee Hand – WNC; Laity; African American; Female; Young Adult

Kelly Roberson – SGA; Laity; White; Female*

General Board of Discipleship

Esther Jadhav – KY; Clergy; Asian American; Female

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

Lindsey Baynham Freeman – VA; Clergy; Multiracial; Female

AC Ecumenical and Interreligious Relationships

Constance Barnes – SC; Clergy; African American; Female

Whitley Henson – CAMC; Laity; White; Female

* *incumbent*



Report of the Nominations Committee

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Southeast Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church Nominations Committee Report – July 10, 2024

United Methodist Publishing House

Anne Travis – HOL; Laity; White; Female*
Laura Wittman – NC; Clergy; White; Female
Erin Beasley – TWK; Clergy; African American; Female
Neil Wise – VA; Laity; White; Male
James Salley – SC; Laity; African American; Male
Michael Watts – KY; Clergy; White; Adult*

Committee on Coordination and Accountability – Southeast Jurisdiction

Bishops

Bishop Sharma Lewis – MS; Clergy; African American; Female
Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson – VA; Clergy; White; Female

Lay Leaders

Lisa Keys-Mathews – NAL; Laity; White; Female
Derrick Scott, III – FL; Laity; African American; Male

Directors of Connectional Ministries

Mike Sluder – HOL; Clergy; White; Male
Lory Beth Huffman – WNC; Clergy; White; Female

Treasurers

David Garvin – KY; Clergy; White; Male
Allison Berg – NGA; Lay; White; Female

At-large Members

Richard Williams – AWF; Clergy; African American; Male
Charlie Hatch – NC; Laity; Hispanic/Latino/Native American; Female; Young Adult
Tom Lee – TWK; Laity; White; Male
Whitley Henson – CAMC; Laity; White; Female; Young Adult
Michael Culbreth – SGA; Clergy; African American; Male
Emily Sutton – SC; Clergy; White; Female

* *incumbent*



Nominations from the College of Bishops

Nominations from the SEJ College of Bishops Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference – July 2024

Conference Secretary

Kathy L. James, (SC; clergy; white; female)

Secretary Designate

Yvette Massey, (NGA; clergy; African American; female)

Committee on Investigation

Effective January 1, 2025

Book of Discipline ¶2703.1)

There shall be a Committee on Investigation elected in accordance with ¶2703 of *The Discipline* 2016.

Chairperson: *ELECTED BY COMMITTEE AT ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING*

Vice-Chairperson:

Secretary: To Be Elected

(7 Clergy in Full Connection)

Beth Hood (NGA; elder; white; female)

Sherill Clontz (NAL; elder; white; female)

Joe May (MS; elder; African American; male)

Beth Sanders (NGA; elder; white; female)

Robert Gardner (TWK; elder; African American; male)

Latricia Scriven (FL; elder; African American; female)

Meredith Martin (WNC; deacon; white; female)

(2 Professing Members)

Lyn Taylor (TWK; white; female)

Christy Crow (AWF; white; female)

(6 Alternate Members) (5 Clergy in Full Connection and 1 Professing Member)

Alternates: Clergy

Raigan Miskelly (MS; elder; white; female)

Michelle Kim (VA; elder; African American; female)

Susan Groseclose (HOL; deacon; white; female)

Jae Lee (WNC; elder; Asian; male)

Jeremy Pridgeon (AWF; elder; white; male)

Alternate: Professing Member

Tom Jordan (WNC; white; male)



Nominations from the College of Bishops

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Nominations from the SEJ College of Bishops Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference – July 2024

Committee on Appeals

New group will be effective January 1, 2025

(Book of Discipline ¶2716.1)

There shall be a Committee on Appeals elected in accordance with ¶2716.1 of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* 2016.

Chairperson: *NOTE ELECTED BY COMMITTEE AT ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING*

Vice-Chairperson:

Secretary:

Primary Members

(4 Clergy in Full Connection)

Emily Kincaid (AWF; deacon; white; female)

Joy Melton (NGA; deacon; white; female)

Magrey deVega (FL; elder;

Morris Waymer (SC; elder; African America; male)

(1 Diaconal Minister)

To be named

(1 Full-Time Local Pastor)

Emma Ward (MS; African American; female)

(3 Laity) (At least 6 years successively members of UMC)

Malcolm White (VA; African American; male)

Celeste Eubanks (AWF; African American; male)

David Salter (SC; white; male)

Alternate Members

(4 Clergy in Full Connection)

Kevin Burney (KY; elder; white; male)

Ron Schultz (NAL; elder; white; male)

Kary Sue McCaleb (MS; deacon; white; female)

Angela Hardy Cross (HOL; elder; African American; female)

Robert King (NGA; elder; African American; male)

(1 Diaconal Minister)

Joy Carr (MS; diaconal; white; female)

(1 Full-Time Local Pastor)

Jimmy Carter (TWK; African American; male)

(3 Laity)

Alice Williams (FL; white; female)

Cathy Thompson (NC; white; female)

Nate Abrams (NGA; African American; male)



Nominations from the College of Bishops

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Nominations from the SEJ College of Bishops Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference – July 2024

Committee on Plan of Organization and Rules of Order

Jasmine Smothers (NGA; clergy; African American; female)

Chris Brown (HOL; clergy; white; male)

Trey Harper (MS; clergy; white; male)

Jonathan LeMaster Smith (WNC; lay; African American; male)

Candace Lewis (FL; clergy; African American; female)

Ex Officio

David Dommissie Conference Treasurer (VA)

Julie Hager Love 2024 Conference Secretary (KY)/*Kathy James (SC) 2028*

Committee on Program and Arrangements

Senior Effective Bishop: *Bishop L. Jonathan Holston*

Conference Secretary: *Kathy James (SC)*

Conference Treasurer: David Dommissie (V)

District Superintendent: To Be Named by College of Bishops

Chair, Committee on Coordination and Accountability: *Bishop William McAilly*

President, SEJ United Methodist Men: Andrew Kissell (VA)

President, SEJ United Women in Faith: Sue Owens (SC)

Chair, SEJ Association of Conference Lay Leaders: _____ (____)

Chair, SEJ Committee on Episcopacy (or designee): _____ (____)

At-Large Members (five):

Judith Pierre-Okerson (FL; deaconess; Haitian American; female)

Solomon Christian (TWK; lay; Asian; male)

Sherry Reynolds (NAL; clergy; white; female)

Liz Roberts (NC; clergy; white; female)

Haywood Hammer (MS; clergy; African American)



Report of the Council on Finance and Administration

SEJ Proposed 2025-2028 Budget

	2025-2028			
	2021-2024 Budget	Proposed Budget	Increase (Decrease)	Pct. Change
Income				
Apportioned	1,500,000	1,315,000	(185,000)	-12.3%
Less: Allowance for uncollected apportionments	(75,000)	(75,000)	-	0.0%
	1,425,000	1,240,000	(185,000)	-13.0%
Interest income		26,000	26,000	
Total Income	1,425,000	1,266,000	(159,000)	-11.2%
Expenses				
Jurisdictional Conference Session	450,000	525,000	75,000	16.7%
Called Sessions, Operations and Contingency	100,000	-	(100,000)	-100.0%
CCA Committee				
Board expenses	60,000	35,000	(25,000)	-41.7%
Conference Secretary, taxes and travel	100,000	135,000	35,000	35.0%
Pre-GC Educational program for SEJ Delegates	10,000	-	(10,000)	-100.0%
SEJ Treasurer, taxes and travel	80,000	85,000	5,000	6.3%
Audit	60,000	65,000	5,000	8.3%
Insurance	15,000	15,000	-	0.0%
Legal fees	10,000	10,000	-	0.0%
Agency audit support/reimbursement	110,000	-	(110,000)	-100.0%
Young People's Global Convocation	5,000	5,000	-	0.0%
Additional Episcopal area support	-	195,000	195,000	100.0%
Committee on Episcopacy	125,000	130,000	5,000	4.0%
Committee on Appeals	25,000	20,000	(5,000)	-20.0%
Commission on Archives and History	260,000	36,000	(224,000)	-86.2%
Committee on Program and Arrangements	25,000	15,000	(10,000)	-40.0%
Other administrative expenses	20,000	20,000	-	0.0%
Total Expenses	1,455,000	1,291,000	(164,000)	-11.3%
Net Revenues/(Expenses)	(30,000)	(25,000)	5,000	-16.7%
Beginning fund balance	1,048,426	1,025,000		
Total Fund Balance	1,018,426	1,000,000		



Report of the Council on Finance and Administration

SEJ 2025-2028 Apportionment Projection

Total proposed apportionment **1,315,000**

	GC Apportionments	Pct.	Quadrennial Apportionment	Annual Apportionment
Alabama- West Florida Conf	1,384,765	4.579%	60,200	15,050
Florida Conference	3,205,726	10.601%	139,400	34,850
Holston Conference	2,101,879	6.950%	91,400	22,850
Kentucky Conference	1,168,277	3.863%	50,800	12,700
Mississippi Conference	1,167,621	3.861%	50,800	12,700
North Alabama Conference	1,571,190	5.196%	68,300	17,075
North Carolina Conference	2,279,078	7.536%	99,100	24,775
North Georgia Conference	3,623,200	11.981%	157,600	39,400
Central Appalachian	9,972	0.033%	400	100
South Carolina Conference	2,941,271	9.726%	127,900	31,975
South Georgia Conference	970,835	3.210%	42,200	10,550
Tennessee-West Kentucky	2,421,419	8.007%	105,300	26,325
Virginia Conference	3,897,029	12.887%	169,500	42,375
Western North Carolina	3,498,612	11.569%	152,100	38,025
Total	30,240,874	100.000%	1,315,000	328,750



“Holy work to undertake with strangers, new friends”

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Then, Bishop Haupt-Johnson called on the first of the two key reports before the delegates this afternoon.

Report of the Task Force on Racial Bias

The Task Force on Racial Bias presented its report and recommendations. Bringing the report were the Rev. Lindsey Baynham Freeman (co-convener) from the Virginia Conference, Molly McEntire (co-convener) from the Florida Conference, the Rev. Dr. Yvette Massey of the North Georgia Conference, the Rev. Ken Nelson of the South Carolina Conference, the Rev. Lisa Yebuah of North Carolina Conference, the Rev. Darryl Dayson of the Western North Carolina Conference, and Rev. Emily Kincade of the Alabama-West Florida Conference.

Nelson opened the report reminding the delegates why we're engaged in this conversation.

The 2022 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference called for the establishment of a task force to study the impact of racial bias during selection of episcopal candidates and to recommend to the Committee on Episcopacy potential reforms to the process.

“Those who do not know their history are doomed to repeat it,” said Nelson. “Racial segregation has been a part of the Methodist Church since its inception. All are not valued the same and therefore are not treated the same. We have too often been on the wrong side of history.”

Among the most painful parts of our church's history is the establishment of the racially segregated Central Jurisdiction.

But, Nelson offered, “We can do what the people of God do best – we can confess.”

“Racism exists in systems and in people,” he explained. “Dismantling racism is the unfinished work of the church. If we can confess, we can repent. And if we can repent, we can be forgiven, reconcile, and move toward sanctification. Let us pause at confession until our hearts break like God's heart breaks. We have a triune God on our side.”

The task force began meeting soon after the 2022 SEJ Conference. Their conversations were fruitful, challenging, convicting, hopeful and cultivated even more questions. The members worked for more than a year before presenting their report to the Committee on Episcopacy in early 2024.

Baynham Freeman shared the findings.

“This was holy work to undertake with strangers and new friends,” she said, thanking the task force members for their willingness to serve. “We will share with you our major findings. Please receive them with grace, and remember we do this work together.”

She began with positive findings. For instance, several candidates interviewed made a covenant to walk through the process together in 2022. Caucus endorsements have allowed for a greater diversity of candidates. And overall, the process has become more uniform, setting the expectation for a fair and discerning election.

The areas of concern include the lack of follow-up once a candidate had withdrawn from the process, a need for greater transparency and honesty across conferences, and the painful revelation that persons of color felt pitted against one another.



The Rev. Ken Nelson helped deliver the report of the Task Force on Racial Bias. – CONNIE OFFUTT | Kentucky Conference



Call their names: “Nelson, Austin, Thomas, Gleaves, Alvarez, Bowers”

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

The work continues into phase two following this week’s Jurisdictional Conference.

Massey, Dayson, and Kincade offered direction for the next steps that will bridge the time between the every-four-year rhythm of jurisdictional conferences.

The task force will work to identify training for the delegates to take back to their annual conferences. They are developing a lexicon to use to assess racial bias. And they continue to look back over the past 30 years for insight into trends that have shaped our leadership.

The task force asks that you share your questions to help shape this ongoing work. [Click here to share your questions.](#)

The members of the Racial Bias Task Force are the Rev. Lindsey Baynham Freeman (co-convener) from the Virginia Conference, Molly McEntire (co-convener) from the Florida Conference, the Rev. Dan Kim of the Virginia Conference, the Rev. Dr. Yvette Massey of the North Georgia Conference, Jan Brown-Thompson of the Kentucky Conference, and the Rev. Lisa Yebuah of the North Carolina Conference.

At the conclusion of and adoption of the report, the Rev. Dr. Sharon Austin of the Florida Annual Conference asked for a moment of personal privilege.

She shared firsthand the pain she and others experienced in the episcopal election process in 2022. People are more than a report, she emphasized. She called the names of the six episcopal candidates of color in 2022: Ken Nelson, Sharon Austin, Byron Thomas, Edith Gleaves, Iosmar Alvarez, Sharon Bowers.

Bishop Hauptert-Johnson called on the conference to pause for a moment of deep prayer and reflection.

3 Practices for Crossing the Difference Divide

The task force report and the moment of personal privilege gave increased purpose to the keynote address on the “3 Practices for Crossing the Difference Divide,” by Jim Henderson and Jim Hancock.

Claire Bowen and the Rev. Nathan Malone formally introduced this transformative tool to the delegates before they put it into practice in breakout sessions this afternoon. The 3 Practices are:

- I will be unusually interested in others.
- I’ll stay in the room with differences.
- I’ll stop comparing my best with your worst.

The process includes clear guidelines for discussion, all moderated by a referee—an impartial moderator. The goal is not agreement but clarity.

The delegates were dismissed from the session into small groups to participate in the 3 Practices process.

The delegates considered framing questions based on the afternoon’s reports. The questions included: “How can our Jurisdiction prepare and develop our next leaders by intentionally providing inclusion for all?” and “Which recommendations from the task force are most critical?”

On Thursday, Bowen will present with Celeste Eubanks, director of the newly formed Candler Center for Christian Leadership, where she and Bowen oversee processes helpful to UMC pastors and leaders. The focus will be on how to implement the 3 Practices in our churches and communities.

Sybil Davidson is the director of communications for the North Georgia Conference.



Delegates participated in circle discussions using the “3 Practices” process. – DEREK LEEK | North Carolina Conference



Recommendations from the Task Force on Racial Bias

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

The Task Force on Racial Bias presented seven recommendations to delegates to the 2024 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference on Wednesday:

1. Assess and align how episcopal candidates are named across annual conferences. (ongoing)
2. Assess the spoken and unspoken requirements for episcopal candidacy in the SEJ. (ongoing)
3. Further standardize the process by which candidates make themselves available to be elected. (ongoing)
4. Address the need for mental, emotional and spiritual support for episcopal nominees following conferences. (to begin with phase two of the task force)
5. Deploy a task force to assess the implicit bias and racism inherent in the jurisdictional model as a whole. (to begin with phase two of the task force)
6. Provide resources for delegation heads and caucus groups about best practices for the discernment of episcopal nominees that would include qualities that are necessary to fulfill the requirements of the episcopal office stated in The Book of Discipline. (to begin with phase two of the task force)
7. Make resources available for training on implicit bias for delegations and caucus groups. (to begin with phase two of the task force)



Delegates participated in circle discussions using the “3 Practices” process.

PHOTO BY
DEREK LEEK
North Carolina
Conference