

DAILY PROCEEDINGS

OPENING WORSHIP

Opening worship of the Great Plains Annual Conference was broadcast on the Conference website and on Facebook, Friday evening, May 29, 2020.

Amy Seifert opened the service playing, "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light." The Topeka United Methodist Women's president welcomed everyone and gave an opening prayer. Jenni Best and Dottie Hissong of the Oskaloosa United Methodist Church provided special music.

Bishop Saenz preached on Acts 1:1-5, the "gap stories" where we are invited by what is, into what is yet to come. "The church of tomorrow is already here today." Now is the time to tell our story and we have been given the opportunity to discover new ways to show world what the Good News is all about. It is an exciting time to discover where God is leading us.

Lilly and Lucy Stous closed the service by singing, "This Little Light of Mine."

BISHOP'S WELCOME:

At 9:08 a.m. Bishop Saenz welcomed everyone on the teleconference call to the Great Plains Annual Conference during these "unprecedented times" marked by state and local restrictions on crowd size and social distancing. He prayed for those negatively affected by the coronavirus outbreak.

The bishop explained the abbreviated process for the day, affirmed the crucial ministry being done by annual conference agencies and local churches, and confirmed that an ordination and memorial service will be held in October. A service fixing appointments and honoring those who are retiring will be broadcast following the close of the business session today.

An opening liturgy for spiritual centering was led by conference lay leader Lisa Maupin, Randall Hodgkinson, Dixie Brewster and Ross Baker.

Bishop Saenz reported the mail-in ballot results to amend the

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Conference standing rules, allowing the annual conference to meet and conduct business by telephone or online.* Vote Tally for 715, against 8. He then called the meeting to order and introduced our AT&T facilitator, Mary Beth.

A prayer followed for God to heal our nation in the midst of the pain and violence caused by the death of two black men and the racial brokenness that continues to fracture us and breed injustice.

The bishop announced that the Great Plains is the first Annual Conference to use phone conferencing to ensure every voting member can participate. He thanked Scott Brewer and the Communications team. He then prepared us for a practice vote. The outcome was successful with yes-1072, no-23, abstain-0. Conference Secretary, Nan Kaye-Skinner, moved the following Enabling Motions:

- The Secretarial team shall include Laura Gregory, Michelle Byerly, Ben Hanne and Lori Richey
- The Standing Rules, as amended, shall govern our process during this session
- The Standing Rule Article B3 concerning roll call be amended for this meeting only, to allow roll call to be taken electronically as clergy and lay members of Annual Conference join the teleconference.
- The bar of the Annual Conference shall include all lay and clergy members of the Great Plains Annual Conference who are registered members of this session and are participating in this teleconference. Eligibility to vote on individual matters shall be aligned with the criteria printed in the 2020 Conference Workbook. Seconded.

The bishop opened the floor to discussion. Hearing none, a ballot was taken. Votes did not tally correctly. A second and third vote was attempted with inaccurate tallies each time. A brief recess was called for AT&T to address technical difficulties. Following the break, two more votes were taken without results.

The bishop moved forward with reports and discussion on the action items, with the option of either voting on each item at the end of the meeting or having a mail vote following the annual conference session. With that he called on Tessa Zehring to give the Nominations Report.

Tessa Zehring presented the Nominations Report, making these updates to the printed copy in the workbook addendum: update the District Lay Leader of the Kansas City district from Greg Laaser to Debi Nixon; update the United Methodist Men chair from Charlie File to George Houle on the Connecting Council; remove Amanda Guitierrez and add Rae Drake to the class of 2022. Remove Judy Atterbury, who has stepped down. Her position is TBD. Administrative review committee, remove Alice Purvis.

Changes to the Committee on Investigation nominated by the Bishop: remove Rick Just and move Kennedy Mukwandize to voting member; remove Gary Main from the alternates and add Bridget Gately.

Vital Congregations team- add Evy Hoyt and Jeff Clinger to the 2022 class

On New Church Development add Denise Sherman to the 2023 class; Camps: remove Randy Quinn. This position is TBD. Sessions planning team class 2022, TBD is now Daekyoung Kim; Nominations Committee 2022 add Quentin Bennett. Archives and History, add co-chairs Doris Wills and Don Everhart. The Nebraska Archivist is Karrie Dvorak. Dustin Petz is added to GCFA and CFA.

Bishop Saenz opened the floor for discussion. Shannon Williams (Callaway/Morning Star NE, Great West district) asked for the Archives members to be repeated.

Charles File (Beloit, KS, Salina District) updated Camp Lakeside board member - Meg Anderson has been replaced by Ross Janovic.

The bishop called for a vote on the nominations report. The tally is unsuccessful, so he calls upon Craig Hauschild for the personnel committee report.

CRAIG HAUSCHILD: The recommendations for minimum clergy compensation for 2021 are Item #5, found on page 8 of the conference workbook:

Full Time Local Pastor	\$37,617;
Associate Member	\$40,051

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Provisional Member	\$42,486;
Full Member	\$44,921

MOTION by Craig: In light of the significant upheaval in our local churches and the economy as a result of the pandemic, the committee recommends no change in 2021 for the minimum salary amounts for clergy serving full-time appointments to local churches. On behalf of the committee, I move adoption of this recommendation. Should conditions change, we could make adjustments at our October special session. I so move.

The bishop opened the queue for questions or discussion. Seeing none, the bishop called upon Mike Shockley for the report of the Board of Pensions and Health Benefits.

Mike Shockley gave an overview of the three action items in the workbook pertaining to past service rate, retirement benefits, health grants, and the annual housing resolution. He then moved adoption of the items for action found on #4, "Pensions and Health Benefits Items for Action."

The bishop asked if there were any questions or discussion. No one wished to speak, so discussion was closed. The Bishop called upon Nancy Lambert.

Nancy Lambert gave an overview of the renewal leave proposal edited from the proposal referred to Clergy excellence by the 2019 Annual Conference session. She then moved approval of Item #6, "Renewal Leave Proposal."

The Bishop opened the queue for questions or discussion. Nancy Rezac (St. Mary's, Flint Hills District) raised questions about the impact on the local church and the way grants would be determined. Deann Smith, executive director, UMC Open Door, moved an amendment to include extension ministers on a case-by-case basis. Seconded.

Jesi Lipp, St. Paul's Lenexa, raised a parliamentary inquiry about how we could vote on an amendment when our voting process was not working.

Jeff Clinger, Topeka First, moved to postpone action on the

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resolution until the October gathering. Seconded.

Nancy Lambert withdrew her motion from the table and will place it on the October agenda.

Bishop Saenz called upon Mitch Reece, Wichita East/West districts and Dean of the Cabinet to bring the resolutions for church closures. Mitch Reece read the following resolutions for church closures and moved their adoption on behalf of the Cabinet:

#2 Long Pine United Methodist Church, Elkhorn Valley District

#3 Greeley United Methodist Church, Five Rivers District

#4 Iola Calvary United Methodist Church, Five Rivers District

#5 McGraw United Methodist Church, Hays District

#6 Carneiro United Methodist Church, Hutchinson District

#7 Topeka St. Peter's United Methodist Church, Topeka District

#8 Brookside United Methodist Church, Wichita East District

#9 Burns United Methodist Church, Wichita East District

#10 Cassoday United Methodist Church, Wichita East District

#11 Dawson United Methodist Church, Wichita West District

#12 Metropolitan Avenue United Methodist Church, Kansas City District

#14 Beemer United Methodist Church, Elkhorn Valley District

#15 Pomona United Methodist Church, Five Rivers District

#17 Walnut United Methodist Church, Parsons District

The bishop opened the queue for questions or discussion. William Williams, retired clergy expressed gratitude for local churches and their ministries, followed by a prayer given by the bishop.

He then returned to the matter of voting on the enabling motions needed to conduct our business. A successful vote was taken: Enabling motions: 585 yes, 3 no, 5 abstain.

The bishop called upon Bill Ritter to present Resolution #13, the sale of Camp Comeca.

Bill Ritter outlined the history of the sale and the proposal to sell the camp to Cozad Christian Ministries for \$20,000 and moved its adoption.

The Bishop opened the queue for questions and discussion. Questions were raised concerning the continuation of Comeca as a Christian camp. Bill and Scott Brewer shared further details

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concerning our agreement with CCM of Cozad, Nebraska. Their hope is to operate an ecumenical camp that can serve all of the faith communities in the area.

A pause was taken to announce the results of the vote on church closings.

Motion passed: 908 yes, 14 no, 28 abstain.

Bishop Saenz opened the lines for discussion on Camp Comeca. Dion Lefler (Wichita East Lay Servant director) asked whether the camp would remain a Christian camp. Scott Brewer clarified the agreement.

Spencer Johnson (Flint Hills Young Adult) asked for and received confirmation that CCM was still committed to the purchase. Several individuals with connection to Comeca spoke in support of the motion.

Bishop Saenz offered a prayer for the camp and a vote was taken. The bishop called for a 10-minute break.

Following the break, Tessa Zehring announced two further changes that had been pointed out to her during the break. Fort Hays State University campus minister Kathy Bannister is replaced by Troy Miller; Lynn Lamberty has stepped down from Mercy and Justice.

Bishop Saenz thanked Tessa and her committee for their hard work. Tessa Zehring will be rotating off at the end of the year. Esther Hay will be new chair.

The vote on the Nominations Report was then taken, followed by the Personnel Committee recommendations and the recommendations of the Board of Pensions.

We received the results of the closing of Camp Comeca: 879 yes, 33 no, 23 abstain. Passed.

The Bishop then called on Loyd Hamrick, chair of the Board of Trustees. Loyd outlined the process for disaffiliation that was adopted by the February 2019 General Conference. He then moved

the disaffiliation of the following churches:

Resolution #18: Abilene Emmanuel United Methodist Church

Resolution #19: Aulne United Methodist Church

Resolution #20: Bartlett United Methodist Church

Resolution #21: Benton United Methodist Church

Resolution #22: Esbon United Methodist Church

Resolution #23: Norcatur United Methodist Church

The motion was seconded. No questions or discussion were raised.

The bishop thanked Loyd for his service in leading the trustees and then offered a prayer for these churches and their ministry. A disaffiliation vote was then taken.

Several results were ready to be reported: Nominations: 835 yes, 7 no, 12 abstain. Passed.

Personnel action items: 814 yes, 17 no, 27 abstain. Passed.
Board of Pensions action items passed: 805 yes, 22 no, 43 abstain

The Bishop called upon Conference Secretary, Nan Kaye-Skinner. Nan thanked the secretarial team for their extra care taking minutes remotely. She then moved:

- The Conference Secretary be authorized to make editorial changes to the minutes in the Journal as needed for clarity.
- The record of the minutes printed in the 2020 Conference Journal shall be the official minutes of this Annual Conference session
- All reports presented in the workbook be accepted.
- And that the Annual Conference be authorized to print the total number of Journals required by the Book of Discipline and ordered by individuals.

The motion was seconded. There were no questions or discussion. The Bishop called for a vote on the closing motions. 882 yes, 2 no, 20 abstained

The Bishop thanked everyone involved in planning and producing the Annual Conference session for their flexibility and grace. He addressed the Oct. 1-4 special session in Grand Island, and the concern for protecting people's health. A final decision must wait

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to see what happens with the coronavirus. Appointments will proceed July 1.

He recognized the sessions team, conference secretary, lay leader, and Melinda Harwood who has created our worship experiences. He acknowledged the work of clergy and laity across the conference. The Bishop recognized retiring and outgoing DS's, incoming DS's and conference staff.

The results of the last two vote were ready to be announced:
Disaffiliation of churches – 770 yes, 69 no, 55 abstain
Closing motions – 882 yes, 2 no, 28 abstain

He gave a reminder of the recognition of retirees and fixing of appointments, and adjourned the 2020 Annual Conference session at 12:13 p.m.

CLOSING WORSHIP

The service opened with music by Jenni Best and Dottie Hissong, of the Oskaloosa United Methodist Church. Bishop Saenz began with the St. Anselm of Canterbury prayer. His message was titled, "Catch Fire for Justice, Mercy and Truth," based on Acts 6:1-7.

A video featuring Joseph Ogole, pastoral candidate in the Ushindi Mission Church in Kansas City, introduced his Congolese congregation, the newest congregation in our Conference.

The bishop fixed the appointments for the 2020-2021 year. He encouraged the laity to take to heart that the world is our parish. Pastoral leaders are sent to us so that we can serve the world.

The service closed with a video celebrating our 2020 retirees.

*The full text of the addition to the GPAC Standing Rules reads as follows:

C. Meeting by Telephone or Online Conference. When the Bishop, the Cabinet, and the Connecting Council are in agreement that circumstances prevent the members of the Annual Conference from meeting in person, the Bishop may call for a meeting of the Annual Conference by telephone or online conferencing.

Participation in a meeting in accordance with this section shall be equivalent to presence in person.

1. Notification of such meeting shall be subject to the requirements for Annual Conference meetings specified in The Book of Discipline.
2. The conferencing platform must ensure that all people participating in the meeting can hear each other, can vote (if so entitled), and can have their attendance recorded.
3. The Sessions Planning Team shall recommend the method of voting to the Bishop and the Conference Secretary. Balloting may be electronic, telephone, or written as per the procedure for between sessions.

THE BUSINESS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Clergy Session – October 2, 2020

Opened at 10:02am by Bishop Saenz.

531 clergy were present on the Zoom meeting

The bishop began with words of encouragement and a prayer. Jerry Brabac led the Conference in an opening song. Andrew Conard, chair of the Great Plains Board of Ordained Ministry, framed the Annual Conference business as a foundation for giving the gift of Christ to the world, and described the process of the day. A trial polling question was taken successfully. All information in this report represents the Great Plains conference as of July 1, 2020. All voting unless otherwise noted during the session is retroactive action with an effective date of July 1, 2020. The full report of the Business of the Annual Conference is located on page 108.

The following votes were then taken:

- Members of the Administrative Review Committee.
Approved
- Those who have completed the studies for license as a local pastor, but are not currently appointed. Approved.
- All local pastors who have been appointed to serve as full-time, part-time, or who have been reinstated to serve. Approved.

The bishop congratulated local pastors who completed their Course of Study education and offered a prayer for them.

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Clergy from other Christian denominations were approved to serve within the Annual Conference.

Candidates for provisional membership introduce themselves:
Provisional Elders: Kim Andrews, Marcee Binder, Leandra Esler, Bequi Flores, Grace Gichuru, Maddie Johnson, Young Je Kim, Soonil Park, Gregory Reffner, Alex Rossow, Tony Serbousek, Stephanie Seth, Ray Stone, Seungli You. Provisional Deacons: Jeffrey Smith, Nicholas Kaufmann-Mamasashvili

The Candidates were voted on individually and approved.

The Bishop congratulated them and offered a prayer for their ministry.

Candidates for full membership and ordination introduce themselves:

Elders: A.G. Turner, Younghwan Won, Soyeong Son, Jeff Potter, Christine Potter, Lori Aguilar, Libby Oberdorf, Daniel Norwood, Kayla Mangrich, Stefanie Hayes, Anne Gahn & Darryl Burton;
Deacons: Rachel Rigdon

The Candidates were voted on individually and approved.

The Bishop offered a prayer for their ministry, followed by the candidates answering the Historic Questions via video and a welcome by Bishop Saenz.

The following votes were taken:

- Those who have requested transfers from other annual conferences. Approved.
- Those requesting voluntary discontinuance. Approved.
- Those requesting voluntary withdrawal. Approved
- Those requesting leave of absence. Approved.
- Those seeking medical leave of absence. Approved

Clergy requesting retirement were introduced. The Bishop thanked them for their years of ministry and offered a prayer for them. A vote was taken and their retirement affirmed.

A vote was taken for those requesting less than full time service. Approved.

The next session of Annual Conference: May 26-29, 2021 in Grand Island, Nebraska.

The bishop reminded participants to attend the special services this weekend.

The session was closed at 11:30 a.m. with the John Wesley's Covenant prayer.

Adoption of the 2021 Annual Conference Budget

Bishop Saenz called for an electronic/mail-in ballot on the 2021 annual conference budget.

A copy of the proposed budget was mailed to lay and clergy members of the Annual Conference. Five listening sessions were held via Zoom for discussion and questions, followed by a 30-day period in which amendments could be submitted by Conference members. Receiving none, ballots were sent electronically and by mail on November 2nd, to be returned by December 2nd.

Ballots were counted and reviewed in accordance with the Standing Rules. The budget proposal received the necessary two-thirds affirmative votes from the annual conference members voting, with 631 yes, 8 no and 18 abstentions.

The 2021 budget is enacted by the Great Plains Annual Conference.