

## **DAILY PROCEEDINGS**

**THE BUSINESS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2021** via Zoom  
 Presenter

**Opening Words and Instructions:**

Bishop Ruben Saenz, Jr. opened the clergy session with encouragement and prayer. He lifted up the Selden, Kansas, United Methodist Church and community, which was hit by a tornado overnight.

Rev. Jerry Brabec led the annual conference in singing, “Great Is Thy Faithfulness.” The bishop reflected on the past year and spoke words of gratitude and assurance to the local church clergy and extension ministers who have done challenging, courageous work during the pandemic and stood for racial justice. He encouraged them to take care of themselves and invited the clergy to join the cabinet in reading “New Leadership Literacy” and “Full Spectrum Thinking” by Bob Johansen.

Rev. Andrew Conard, chair of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, introduced the meeting’s work and invited attendees to post selfies on social media. Bishop Saenz reviewed the criteria for voice and voting. A test vote was taken, and business began.

All items in the Business of the Annual Conference were addressed and voted on. All of the votes passed by the required percentages. The following persons were approved for their next step toward consecration or ordination and membership:

Bonnie Brock, Martin Leeper and Cyd Stein were approved as **Associate Members**.

Deborah Dahlke, Jeanne Koontz and Allison Marcus, Michael Marcus, Maria Penrod and Justin Schoolcraft were approved as **Provisional Deacons**

Caitlin Bentzinger, Andrew Finch, Jee Sook Gil, Sangyeop Han, Joshua Johnson, Spenser Johnson, Ryong Jae Jung, Kalaba Kapundu, Kuensik Lee, Karissa Miller, Helen Paus, Daniel Reffner, Blake Stanwood, Jay Stewart, Lauren Baker-Thomas, Lacey Wheeler and Matthew Wilke were approved as **Provisional Elders**

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Claire Clough was approved as a **deacon and full member**. Hyun Ju Gil, Martin Herrera, Hyemi Jones, Taejong Kim, Ann Rickers, and Sue Barham were approved as **elders and full members**.

Daekyong Kim, Ever Mudambanuki and Abiba Shomari had their elders' orders recognized and full membership transferred to the Great Plains.

The bishop offered a prayer for the work of the Board of Ordained Ministry and the ministry of the new deacon and elders.

The names of the elders and local pastors who died during the year were read and a prayer offered by the bishop.

The bishop thanked all of those who had worked on the presentation and the event today.

The next session of Annual Conference will be June 9-11, 2022, in LaVista, Nebraska (Omaha metro).

Rev. Jerry Brabac led the group in singing "Great is Thy Faithfulness," and closed with the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer and a Gaelic blessing. The session was closed at 11:06.

### **OPENING WORSHIP & MEMORIAL SERVICES**

Worship and Celebration services were recorded and/or broadcast in order to follow safety protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Memorial Service** – Thursday, May 27, 2021

The Memorial Service was recorded at First United Methodist Church of Lawrence. The theme of the message, "The Great Abide," delivered by Rev. Mitch Reece, was based on Psalm 91:14, "*Those who love me I will deliver; I will protect those who know my name.*"

Clergy and clergy spouses who died since the last Annual Conference session were each named in remembrance. Special music was provided by the Lawrence First UMC choir and musicians. Three clergy children were baptized by Bishop Saenz: Jean Eleanor Gager, and Brielle and Gaddiel Milosi.

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**Opening Worship & Table – Friday, May 28, 2021**

Opening worship was recorded at First United Methodist Church of Lawrence. Music was provided by the Lawrence First musicians. Rev. Ross Baker offered a message affirming the ministry of the church during the pandemic and asked how we will continue to be the church of Christ in the future, followed by a liturgical dance, “Hold on to Me” by Revs. Jeff and Christine Potter and family.

The bishop preached on Haggai 2:1-9, when the Jews must rebuild their lives after exile. He reminded us of God’s rebuilding Spirit as we become the post-pandemic church. Holy Communion followed.

**OPENING SESSION –**

Called to order at 1:30 p.m. Friday, 5/28/2021

Bishop Saenz called the session to order and began with prayer for unity. He introduced Conference Secretary Nan Kaye-Skinner, Assistant Secretary Lori Richey, and Parliamentarian Jesi Lipp. Kristi Kinney from V-Voter gave instructions for voting and a test vote was taken successfully.

**Enabling Motions Rev. Nan Kaye-Skinner, Conference Secretary**

Rev. Kaye-Skinner, moved the following Enabling Motions:

1. The Secretarial team shall include Lori Richey, Michelle Byerly, Ben Hanne, Jill Livingston Harman and Joan Highfill.
2. 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 session via Zoom and V-Voter. Eligibility to vote on individual motions shall follow the criteria printed in the 2021 Conference Workbook.
3. The V-Voter electronic attendance record shall serve as the roll call of lay and clergy members for this Conference.  
Jesi Lipp seconded. The bishop called for a vote. **693-3 approved.**

**Approval of Standing Rules**

**Rev. Eduardo Bousson**

Rev. Bousson moved to adopt the Standing Rules as amended to include procedures for electronic meetings of the Annual

Conference. Jesi Lipp seconds.

Andrea Paret requested information about the inclusion of the Peace With Justice Coordinator in the printed Lay Equalization Plan. The secretary will make any needed editorial corrections.

Bishop Saenz called for the vote to approve the amended Standing Rules. **717 – 7 approved.**

**Laity Address**

**Lay Leader, Lisa Maupin**

Lisa Maupin celebrated the many ways we have been the church without walls. We have learned how to do hard things in hard times. Every interaction matters. The call is to resist going back to things as they were, to learn and grow from this experience. The Bishop thanked Lisa and the Assistant Conference Lay Leaders.

**Episcopal Address**

**Bishop Ruben Saenz Jr.**

The bishop celebrated the work of the conference to address unique challenges of the pandemic, to address issues of racial justice, and for local churches to pay 99.13% of their mission shares. He noted that this is not his report, but the report of the people of the GPAC.

The hard work which has been accomplished this past year has not gone unnoticed. The Pandemic has given us the opportunity to reimagine the church for the next generation.

That is our challenge, now.

**Board of Ordained Ministry Report Rev. Andrew Conard, Chair**

Rev. Conard recognized work of board members, including executive team leaders, clergy excellence staff, and work connected with district committees. Rev. Jerry Brabec, chair of the Order of Deacons celebrated 25 years of the establishment of the Order of Deacons, including the eight provisional deacons and one deacon to be ordained to “a ministry of word, service, and compassion.”

Rev. Karen Jeffcoat, Registrar, introduced those who have been called to licensed or ordained ministry as Provisional Deacons, Provisional Elders, Associate Members, and Full Members. Karen then recognized local pastors who completed Course of Study during the past year.

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Rev. Conard recognized those celebrating milestone anniversaries under appointment.

Bishop Saenz added three additional names to those who completed Course of Study.

A recognition video of the 2021 retirees was shown, followed by congratulations from the bishop.

**Blessing of Global Mission Fellow      Bishop Ruben Saenz Jr.**

The bishop introduced Bryan Martinez, who has been accepted as a missionary in the Global Mission Fellow program and led the conference in a blessing for Bryan and his ministry.

**Commissioning of Interns**

**Rev. Ashlee Alley Crawford, Clergy Recruitment & Development**

Rev. Alley Crawford introduced the summer interns in these categories - Micah Corps, Pastoral Leadership, and Youth Ministry.

The bishop recognized Rev. Nancy Lambert, assistant to the bishop, for announcements prior to adjourning for break. She noted churches who had allowed the media team to record videos in their churches and for those sharing their musical talent with the Annual Conference.

**The Bishop announced a 30 minute Break from 3:15-3:45pm**

Bishop Saenz called the session to order with a video of the Lydia Patterson Institute. He recognized Larry Moffat for his extended leadership with LPI.

**Report from the General Conference Delegation**

**Rev. Adam Hamilton, chair**

Rev. Hamilton gave an update on General Conference 2022. There will be no Jurisdictional Conference until after GC in 2022. The Church continues to move forward amid divisions, blessing those who feel the need to leave, and continue to be Christ's light to the world.

**Conference Finance & Administration Report #1**

**Rev. Zach Anderson, chair**

Rev. Anderson thanked conference staff for their work and

support of GCFA. He highlighted the work of the Investment and the Audit committees, and reviewed the 2022 budget as printed in the Conference workbook, in preparation for the vote to take place on Saturday.

**Pensions and Health Benefits Report**    **Michael Schockley, chair**  
Shockley moved two resolutions proposed by the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits:

1. A 2% increase in the Past Service Rate for clergy
2. The annual Housing Exclusion motion for federal income taxes

Bishop Saenz called for a vote to approve the motion.

**677-6 – approved.**

**Personnel Committee Report**                      **Rev. Craig Hauschild, chair**

Rev. Hauschild moved a 3% increase in minimum compensation.

Bishop Saenz called for a vote to approve the motion.

**686-35 approved.**

**Nominations Report Introduction**                      **Esther Hay, chair**

Esther Hay introduced the Nominations report and celebrated the calling of all United Methodists to serve. The Bishop expressed his gratitude for the committee's extensive work. The Conference Secretary made an addition to the report on behalf of the Nominations Chair. On page 94 of the Nominations report, after the list of conference chancellors, add a new category "Conference Statistician," which will be filled by Sabrina Aubuchon. Final action on the report will take place on Saturday.

**Trustee Report**    **Rev. Stephanie Ahlschwede, chair**

Rev. Ahlschwede summarized the intent to purchase a permanent home for the conference offices in Topeka by 2023 and moved its endorsement. She then discussed the proposal to change the conference policy on local church insurance, giving all local churches the option to choose their provider and moved the adoption of the new policy. She thanked those on the committee and Conference Staff for their help.

Bishop Saenz called for a vote to endorse the purchase of a Conference Office.

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Andrea Paret, St. Paul UMC, South Sioux City, Nebraska, was recognized and asked, "What are the financial implications for purchasing conference office"? Rev. Ahlschwede answered that rental savings and funds already on-hand make this a financial benefit.

The vote was taken. **693-22 - approved.**

Bishop Saenz then called for a vote for the change in Conference policy regarding a mandatory insurance provider for local churches. **641-69 - approved.**

**Commission on Archives & History**

**Doris Wills and Don Everhart, co-chairs**

The co-chairs presented each of the congregations who are celebrating 150 years of ministry during 2021.

**150 Year Church Anniversary Celebrations**

Axtell UMC	Axtell, KS
Kemper Memorial	Bartley, NE
Beloit First UMC	Beloit, KS
Blue Rapids UMC	Blue Rapids, KS
Cherokee UMC	Cherokee, KS
Concordia First UMC	Concordia, KS
Central City UMC	Central City, NE
Elk City UMC	Elk City, KS
Fairmont Community	Fairmont, NE
Highland UMC	Highland, KS
Humboldt UMC	Humboldt, NE
Jamestown First UMC	Jamestown, KS
Leonardville UMC	Leonardville, KS
Lincoln UMC	Lincoln, KS
Mayetta UMC	Mayetta, KS
Morrill UMC	Morrill, NE
Norfolk First UMC	Norfolk, NE
Oxford UMC	Oxford, KS
St. Paul's UMC	Papillion, NE
Peabody UMC	Peabody, KS
Pleasant Dale UMC	Pleasant Dale, NE
Red Cloud First UMC	Red Cloud, NE
Rising City UMC	Rising City, NE
Sedan UMC	Sedan, KS

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Solomon Yoked Parish	Solomon, KS
St. Paul UMC	South Sioux City NE
Sterling First UMC	Sterling, KS
Talmage UMC	Talmage, KS
Thayer UMC	Thayer, KS
Trinity UMC	Madison, NE
Waterville First UMC	Waterville, KS
York First UMC	York, NE

The bishop thanked the presenters and offered a prayer for the anniversary congregations.

### Resolutions

**#11 Zimbabwe Chabadza Covenant:** Rev. Sarah Marsh introduced a resolution on behalf of the Mercy and Justice Team to renew the Great Plains Covenant with the Zimbabwe Annual Conference and emphasize scholarships for students in the Mutare & Mutasa-Nyanga districts.

Bishop Saenz called for a vote on the resolution.

**645-24 - approved.**

### Session Closing

The bishop invited Rev. Nancy Lambert to make closing announcements. She also thanked the Conference Planning Team for their dedication and hard work.

Bishop Saenz gave concluding remarks and announced the Retiree celebration and Festival of Booths. Annual Conference will resume at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, May 29. The session was adjourned at 4:45p.m.

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### Retirement Service – Friday evening, May 28, 2021

The Retirement Service was recorded in local churches throughout the Great Plains Conference and then woven together for the presentation. Retirees were symbolically “presented” with their retired clergy pin. Each retiree was remembered on-screen, with several speakers among the retirees. Music was provided by organists from St. Paul UMC, Lincoln, and First UMC, Wichita, the Nebraska Wesleyan University Choir and organist Tom Trenney,

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and the Asbury UMC praise band in Prairie Village.

**SATURDAY SESSION – called to order at 8:30 a.m. May 29**

Bishop Saenz called the Annual Conference to order and began with a word of prayer. Kristi Kinney of V-Voter gave instructions on voting for those who were not present yesterday.

**Church Closings                      Rev. Mitch Reece, Dean of the Cabinet**

Rev. Mitch Reece, moved the adoption of the following church closing resolutions. He thanked the churches for their presence, service, and witness and prayed for the congregations :

Almena UMC, Hays District  
 Auburn UMC, Topeka District  
 Beeler UMC, Dodge City District  
 Burrton UMC, Hutchinson District  
 Countryside UMC, Salina District  
 Craig UMC, Elkhorn Valley District  
 Grinter Chapel UMC, Kansas City District  
 Hiawatha Trinity UMC, Topeka District  
 Kenesaw UMC, Prairie Rivers District  
 Waco UMC, Prairie Rivers District  
 Otis UMC, Hays District  
 Rozel UMC, Dodge City District  
 Woodston UMC, Hays District

Bishop Saenz called for a vote, praying for and thanking each congregation for their ministry.

**720-9 approved.**

**Church Disaffiliations**

**Rev. Stephanie Ahlschwede, Board of Trustees Chair**

Rev. Ahlschwede summarized the process for disaffiliation that was updated in 2019. Since the last session, four churches have voted to disaffiliate under the terms of disaffiliation. She then moved adoption of the following disaffiliation resolutions:

Canton UMC  
 Galva UMC  
 Jamestown UMC  
 Worden UMC

Bishop Saenz prayed for these churches and called for a vote.  
**724-30 approved.**

**Conference Finance & Administration Report #2**

**Rev. Zach Anderson, Chair**

Rev. Anderson shared two questions submitted following the previous day's report. The first related to use of investment funds for grants or other purposes "for the transformation of the world." The second one relates to the lack of funding for the Fellowship and Faith mission agency.

Rev. Sarah Marsh, Mercy & Justice team, was recognized by Bishop Saenz. She clarified that Faith & Fellowship did not submit a request for funding. After two attempts to contact them, they were omitted from the budget.

Rev. Anderson moved the 2022 budget be adopted.

The bishop recognized pastor Lorna Boden, Tecumseh, KS, UMC who moved to amend the budget so that 0.33% of the Mission Agency Support in the Ministries with the Poor section be put into Fellowship & Faith (Topeka, KS). By decreasing the 5 Colleges/ Universities from 8.04% to 8.00% each & reducing each of the other 13 agencies by .01%, this is possible. Jesi Lipp seconded.

Bishop Saenz recognized Robert Resenik, Shawnee Heights UMC, who asked why the Committee did not respond to Sarah's team when the request was made. Bishop Saenz recognized Rev. Dr. Kalaba Chali, Mercy & Justice Coordinator, who assured Lorna that Mercy & Justice has other funds which can be used to support Fellowship & Faith upon receiving an application.

The Bishop asked if Lorna Boden wanted to withdraw her motion and she declined.

The Chair recognizes Robert Rezenik, Shawnee Heights UMC, Topeka District to speak. He made an amendment to the amendment, adding the words, "... upon receiving the application," to the end of the first sentence. Seconded by Jesi Lipp.

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The bishop called for the vote on the amendment-to-the-amendment. **504-235 approved.**

Discussion followed.

Brad Kirk, Kingman UMC, Wichita West District called the question. Jesi Lipp seconded.

The Bishop called for a vote to close debate. **690-72 Approved.** He then called for the vote on the amendment to fund Faith & Fellowship. **138-643 Failed.**

The vote to adopt the 2022 Budget as printed in the conference workbook followed.

**770-18 Approved.**

The Bishop thanked the Committee on Finance & Administration, and chair Zach Anderson, who completing his term.

**Nominations Report #2**

**Esther Hay, chair**

Esther Hay reported the following changes to the Nominations report: On page 86 of the Workbook Addendum, remove the names listed as District Lay Leader for the Dodge City, Salina and Topeka Districts. The report should now read TBA for those Districts. The listing of TBA as shown for Parsons District is correct. She then moved the approval of the updated Nominations Report.

The Bishop called for a vote on the Nominations report. **757-10 approved.**

The Bishop expressed appreciation for the work of the committee and those who have agreed to serve.

Closing motions      **Rev. Nan Kaye-Skinner, Conference Secretary**

The Secretary thanked those who served on the secretarial team during the last five years, affirmed Lori Richey as she becomes Conference Secretary, and thanked the Conference support staff, Sabrina Aubuchon, Lisa Soukup and Julie Kohr for their support and assistance.

She then offered the following motions:

1.           The conference secretary be authorized to make editorial changes to the minutes in the journal as needed

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- for clarity
2. The record of the minutes printed in the 2021 conference journal shall be the official minutes of the annual conference session
  3. That all reports presented in the workbook be accepted as presented or edited by the annual conference
  4. The annual conference be authorized to print the total number of journals required by the book of Discipline and ordered by individuals

The next regular session of GP Annual Conference will be held at LaVista, Nebraska Conference Center June 9-11, 2022.

Bishop Saenz called for a vote on the closing motions.

**744-3 approved.**

**Final Announcements    Rev. Nancy Lambert, Asst. to the Bishop**

Rev. Lambert thanked the Church of the Resurrection production team, and Kathy Carter from the program team.

Bishop Saenz thanked the team and wished Nan well. He recognized the work of the Annual Conference over the past two days and encouraged and blessed the body for the coming year.

**Closing Worship / Fixing of Appointments Bishop Ruben Saenz Jr.**

Heather Clinger provided special music. Bishop Ruben Saenz fixed the appointments for 2021-2022 year. He called the Annual Conference to connect with each other and our communities. He prayed for these appointments and introduced the 2021-2022 District Superintendents and Cabinet members. The service was closed with a Gaelic Benediction.

**The 2021 Annual Conference was adjourned at 10:07 a.m.**

**Service of Recognition, Commissioning, and Ordination  
Saturday, June 12, 2021**

The Service of Recognition, Commissioning, and Ordination was held at the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas. Seventeen new local pastors, three associate members, and three elders transferring to the Great Plains were recognized; 17 provisional elders and six provisional deacons were

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commissioned; and one deacon and seven elders were ordained. Bishop W. Earl Bledsoe, New Mexico and Northwest Texas conferences, preached on "Created for the Greater Good" from Ephesians 2:1-10.