

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

about Annual, Jurisdictional, & General Conferences

## **Essential Business Only**

This session will consider only “essential business” of the Annual Conference, which Bishop Stanovsky will determine in consultation with the cabinet, conference officers, and those charged with planning the Annual Conference session. Included as essential business will be adoption of the conference budget for 2021.

## **What about ordination, retirements and other clergy business?**

A special Clergy Session was held in June to approve clergy for election to provisional membership and to full membership and ordination. While it is unusual for more than a day or two to pass between election to full membership and ordination, it has happened when circumstances prevent ordination as part of the annual conference session. This year, COVID-19 necessitates postponing the commissioning and ordination service, with its laying on of hands, until we can gather again. In the interim, the persons elected to provisional or full membership at the clergy session last month were granted all the rights and privileges of full or provisional membership. We plan to celebrate this threshold in their ministries with the historic questions and laying-on of hands in June 2021, at a time when the conference is gathered and family and friends can be present.

## **What does a Remote Annual Conference look like?**

In September we will meet online from remote locations. One of the first actions of the Annual Conference will be to authorize such an online meeting, which we have not done before. In June the Clergy Session was conducted on Zoom (<https://zoom.us/>), with production and balloting services by GNTV. Conference leadership is learning from this experience, as well as the experience of other annual conferences that met remotely in June, to design an experience that is as participatory, and as smooth as possible. More information will become available as plans are finalized.

## **Who is a member of the Annual Conference?**

If you received an email invitation, the conference office believes that you are a member or authorized participant of the Annual Conference with certain “rights and privileges,” depending on your relationship. Attached you will find a more detailed definition of membership. If you believe you have received this letter in error – that you are not either a lay member from a local church, or a member by virtue of the lay equalization plan of the annual conference, or a clergy person in one of the categories described in the attachment – please contact your district office immediately (see information below) so records can be corrected, and an invitation extended to the correct people.

- *Alaska* – Crystal Feaster – [alaskaumc@gmail.com](mailto:alaskaumc@gmail.com)
- *Oregon-Idaho* – <https://www.umi.org/districts>
- *Pacific Northwest* – <https://www.pnwumc.org/district-service-center/>

### **When will new leaders be Nominated and take office?**

The Annual Conference is asking persons currently serving in leadership roles within the Conference to continue in those positions through December 31, 2021, or whenever the new quadrennium is determined to begin. We know that this is not possible in every case. If you must resign your position before the end of 2021, please do so by sending your resignation to your Director of Connectional Ministries (their contact info is listed below). If vacancies occur for any reason before this date, we will follow normal procedures to fill vacancies between sessions of the Annual Conference.

- *Alaska* – Rev. Carlo Rapanut – [carlorapanut@gmail.com](mailto:carlorapanut@gmail.com)
- *Oregon-Idaho* – Laurie Day – [laurie@umoi.org](mailto:laurie@umoi.org)
- *Pacific Northwest* – Rev. David Valera – [dvalera@pnwumc.org](mailto:dvalera@pnwumc.org)

### **What is planned for 2021 Annual Conference?**

When the June 2020 Shared Greater Northwest Conference was cancelled, negotiations began to reschedule it for June 2021. Our hope and expectation is that travel and gathering restrictions will be lifted by then to allow the shared annual conference to take place at the Washington State Fair Grounds in Puyallup, Wash. Funds given to help members traveling long distances with travel and housing costs are being held for 2021.

Non-essential business and important community events that we want to witness in-person will be postponed until the Greater Northwest Shared Annual Conference, scheduled for June 2021, in Puyallup. These include ordination and commissioning, memorials, and celebrations of retirements.

### **What about General and Jurisdictional Conferences, and the new quadrennium?**

**General Conference**, originally scheduled for May 2020, has been postponed until August 29 – September 7, 2021 in Minneapolis, Minn. This is when proposals for division within The United Methodist Church will be considered, including the Protocol for Graceful Separation issued last January. In addition, the deadline for submission of new petitions and legislation for consideration at General Conference will likely be extended until the summer of 2021.

**Western Jurisdictional Conference**, originally scheduled for July 2020, has been rescheduled to November 10-12, 2021 and will be hosted by the Mountain Sky Conference. New bishops will be elected to fill vacancies left by those who are retiring, and members of governing boards of General Church agencies will be elected. Active bishops in the Western Jurisdiction have agreed to continue in their present assignments through the end of 2021.

**When will the new quadrennium end?** It is not clear when one quadrennium will end and a new one begins. This may need to be decided by the General Conference or the Judicial Council (supreme court of the UMC). Bishops, generally, assume that the current quadrennium is extended through December 2021, and that the new quadrennium will begin January 1, 2022.