



Annual Conference 2021

Wisconsin Conference of the United Methodist Church

### **2021 Virtual Annual Conference Summary Report**

The 2021 Annual Conference of the Wisconsin Conference of The United Methodist Church was once again held virtually this year. Planning for the conference began last November immediately following the 2020 Annual Conference, Due to the unknown nature of the pandemic, it was decided to plan for a virtual conference in June 2021. GNTV was the host provider for the event.

Clergy Session was held virtually on Monday, June 14, where 20 retirees were recognized, 6 persons were approved for commissioning as provisional members, 2 were approved for ordination as deacons, and 2 were approved for ordination as elders, as well as one was received as Elder in Full Connection by Transfer and Recognition of his Orders from the Korean Methodist Church.

The Laity session was held virtually on Tuesday, June 15<sup>th</sup> and was led by Conference Lay Leader Deanna Shimko. Laity session included a welcome message from Bishop Hee-Soo Jung, Conference Board of Laity introductions, a delegation report, and a special message from Dr. Javier Viera. Music was provided by Hmong Choir, Sugar River Praise band, and Christway Women's Choir.

Annual Conference began Friday morning with opening music featuring Native American flute music and drumming with a call to honor the heritage of the land, followed by opening worship. Bishop Hee-Soo Jung presided live over the Annual Conference from the Conference Center in Sun Prairie. He was assisted by Conference Secretary, Rev. Kevin Rice Myers; Assistant to the Bishop, Rev. Dan Dick; incoming Assistant to the Bishop; Rev. Dan Schwerin; Conference Chancellor, Bill White, incoming Chancellor, Marshall Schmitt; and parliamentarian, Rev. Steve Zekoff.

Materials and links to pre-recorded videos were available on the conference website. The Annual Conference was also livestreamed to YouTube for viewing both Friday and Saturday. There were 685 registrants for Annual Conference.

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung called the session to order on Friday morning following the opening worship service. Bishop Jung offered greetings and thanks to those present and those who had worked to make this conference possible. Administrative votes were taken to authorize holding the conference virtually and to set special rules and procedures to guide the business of the session.

Following a short break, Bishop Jung offered the State of the Church address which was pre-recorded. In his address he recognized the difficulty of being the church during the pandemic and provided hope and grace as we move forward, knowing the challenges we face but also knowing that God is with us through it all.

Business continued with Rev. Krysta Deede, chairperson of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, introducing the 2021 Class of Ordinands and Commissioned Provisional Members. A pre-recorded video introducing each person was played.

The morning session closed with the viewing of the Retiree Recognition service.

Following the lunch break, we gathered for a Bible study from Bishop Tracy Malone of the East Ohio Conference. The theme for the study was “Building Beloved Community: Creating Healthy Eco-Systems of Radical Inclusion and Racial Justice”. The videos for both session one and two can be found on the conference website.

Business continued throughout the afternoon with approval of the Consent Agenda, approval of the new Chancellor, Marshall Schmitt, Statistician’s Report, presentation of the 2022 Budget, and a presentation from Rev. Cheryl Weaver, chair of the Joint Board of Pensions, Insurance and Equitable Compensation, on their action items relating to Clergy Compensation and proposed changes to current conference policies as it relates to equitable compensation. Detail on both action items can be found in the Conference Workbook on the website. All action items passed.

Rev. Dan Dick presented the Years of Service Recognitions on behalf of the Commission on Archives and History. Rev. Lori Lossie and Rev. Jorge Mayorga presented a report on the New Ministries Strategy Board and Congregational Development. Deanna Shimko offered the Laity Address during the afternoon session.

Paul Scott, Lay Member from Trinity UMC in Waldo presented Action Item wc106, Disaffiliation of Waldo UMC. After presentation, Barbara Dick presented a motion to postpone Action Item wc106, seconded. Discussion “for” and “against” were presented. Motion to postpone Action Item wc106 passed.

Rev. Kerri Parker from the Wisconsin Council of Churches shared about the work of the Council. Rev. Dawn Jeffers Ramstad presented a report from the Board of Global Ministries followed by Rev. Roland Fernandes, General Secretary of the General Board presented “Answering God’s Call to Mission” video. The afternoon session concluded with a video promoting the “Breakthrough Prayer Initiative”.

One final action item was presented by Rev. Kevin Dembinski to suspend rule 2.3.4 so that a new resolution regarding “Culture of the Call” could be brought forward during Saturday’s session. Action item passed. Bishop Jung ended the Friday session with closing remarks, announcements, and prayer.

Saturday’s session opened with a video by Rev. Lamarr Gibson celebrating Juneteenth followed by an opening worship service.

Rev. Kate Croskery Jones, Dean of the Cabinet, gave the Cabinet Address. District Superintendents, Rev. Tsuker Yang and Rev. Scott Carlson presented Action Item wc107 Closing/Discontinuance of Local Churches. Action Item wc107 passed.

The reading of appointments was pre-recorded over Zoom and shown during the morning session followed by a presentation by Dr. Javier Viera, President of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. A video presentation on Prayers for Myanmar was shown and the conference was asked to stand in solidarity with those who suffer in the region by offering a three-finger salute. The video can be found on the conference website.

Presentations by Rick Churan and Rev. Krystal Goodger from the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation, shared that through the New Way Grant they were able to help 364 churches with \$494,000 to support them during the pandemic with new technology, cleaning supplies, and resources. They also supported 23 churches with grants through the new ministry start program with a total \$46,000.

Rev, Dan Schwerin, chair of the Episcopacy Committee, gave the Episcopacy Report. Primary work of the committee is to support the Bishop and help the conference make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The report shared that the committee is grateful for the work Bishop Jung and the Cabinet are doing within our conference to support clergy, provide devotionals, provide online worship so clergy can take a day of respite, and the work of the quadrennial theme of Radical Inclusion and Racial Justice, including work with the Anti-Racism Task Force and the Bishop's Task Force.

The Service of Remembrance was presented. Every year the conference pauses to remember and honor those from our conference who have passed away since the previous Annual Conference session.

Following a lunch break, the session began with Bishop Tracy Malone offering Day 2 of the Bible Study.

Pre-recorded videos from Hispanic Emergence-Encuentro and the Anti-Racism Task Force and Black Methodists for Church Renewal, explaining their vital ministries, were presented.

Action Item wc110: Anti-Hate Crimes Resolution was presented by Dr. Don Kim on behalf of the Commission on Religion and Race. Action item passed.

Recognition of the Dong Bu Conference and our partnership with them goes back decades. After a video of Wisconsin Korean choir in honor of this relationship, a pre-recorded video from the DongBu Conference bishop was presented.

Action Item wc109, approval of the 2022 budget, was presented by Rev. Steve Miller, Interim Chair for the Council on Finance and Administration. With no discussion, action item passed.

Rev. Sue D'Alessio presented Action Item wc108: Nominations Report. A copy of the nominations report can be found on the conference website. There you will also find a Nominations Sign Up Form where you can submit your name or the name of someone you would like to nominate for a committee. There was no discussion, action item passed.

Action Item wc111, Culture of Call, was presented by Rev. Kevin Dembinski. Detail of this action item can be found on the conference website. The action item intent is to be intentional about creating a cultural of call to ministry withing the Wisconsin Conference. Rev. Angela Utter made a motion to amend the action item to include a clear appointment opening system, similar to the Pacific Northwest Conference. The amendment was accepted as a friendly amendment. Rev. Peace Kim moved to amend the motion to add "Board of Ordained Ministry" to the new amendment. This was accepted as a friendly amendment. The main action item with added friendly amendments passed.

Rev. Sue D'Alessio, Director of Connectional Ministries, provided words of thanks to those who helped make Annual Conference so successful and closing announcements.

Following closing remarks by Bishop Hee-Soo Jung, the Service of Commissioning and Ordination was played. The Wisconsin Annual Conference adjourned upon the conclusion of the worship service.

Throughout the Conference, short videos were presented during vote collation times, promoting Pine Lake and Lake Lucerne Camp and Retreat Ministries, six different awards, Campus Ministries, the Groat Grant, and Harbor House. All of the videos from both days and conference materials can be found on the Annual Conference website at [www.wisconsinumc.org](http://www.wisconsinumc.org).

Offerings were collected to support our Bolivia Mission Partnership, raising funds to purchase much needed motorcycles for pastors to travel to remote locations; Rising Sun Camp, offering Christian support and adventures in nature at Lake Lucerne camp, for children whose parents are incarcerated; and the Clergy in Transition Fund, providing financial assistance for clergy in a variety of transitional needs.

May God continue to bless the work of the Wisconsin Conference and guide us in our work on radical inclusion and racial justice.

