



Southeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church Committee on Episcopacy

January 8, 2024

Dear SEJ Delegates:

Grace and peace to you from our Lord Jesus Christ as we begin the new year of 2024 with great confidence that God is with us.

The Southeastern Jurisdiction (SEJ) Committee on Episcopacy (COE) and SEJ College of Bishops met in Charleston, South Carolina on January 3rd and 4th. During the meeting, the SEJ COE received and acted on a report on episcopal leadership and episcopal area alignment. Delegates from around the SEJ received a previous communication from the SEJ COE in August 2023 on this important topic and this communication continues along that same path. Throughout the work, the SEJ COE received input from every annual conference and each bishop about the future needs for episcopal leadership in the SEJ.

As The United Methodist Church prepares for the next six months bringing a General Conference in Charlotte, annual conference sessions, and an SEJ Conference at Lake Junaluska, the SEJ COE would like all SEJ delegates to know the following information:

- 1). The SEJ COE voted to recommend to the SEJ Conference that there be no elections of bishops in 2024. This recommendation is in consideration of the conversations around the connection and a prayerful response to the impact of disaffiliations in our areas. The SEJ COE recommendation to have no episcopal elections will be voted on by the delegates at the beginning of the SEJ Conference in July.
- 2). The SEJ COE noted that Bishop Bill McAlilly will retire under mandatory retirement, effective August 31, 2024. As a result, ten remaining active bishops from the SEJ will be available for assignment using the process outlined in the *Discipline*. Although a myriad of changes could take place at General Conference 2024 that could further impact the work of the Jurisdictional Conferences in July, the SEJ COE focused on the information that is known at this time.
- 3). After detailed analysis, robust discussion, prayer, and discernment, the SEJ COE recommends the following ten episcopal areas for the next quadrennium (if approved, will be effective September 1, 2024):
 1. Alabama-West Florida / North Alabama / South Georgia Area
 2. Central Appalachian Missionary (CAMC)/ Holston / Kentucky Area
 3. Florida Area
 4. Mississippi Area
 5. North Carolina Area
 6. North Georgia Area
 7. South Carolina Area
 8. Tennessee-Western Kentucky Area
 9. Virginia Area
 10. Western North Carolina Area

The SEJ COE met with the SEJ College of Bishops who received the report and supported the recommendations. We know that these recommendations will require additional conversation among delegates so that delegates can be prepared to vote on them in July. We have asked heads of delegations to work with the SEJ COE on providing resources related to these recommendations. Additionally, we recognize that every jurisdiction within The United Methodist Church is having similar conversations, and we commit to continued collaboration as we journey together into God's preferred future for our connection. We strongly encourage delegates to keep these recommendations in prayer as we prepare to gather for our General Conference in April and for our Jurisdictional Conference in July.

The Peace of the Lord,

The SEJ Committee on Episcopacy