

Upcoming Survey from the Connectional Table

The Connectional Table of The UMC, in cooperation with the Commission on General Conference, is conducting a survey about the delegates to the postponed 2020 General Conference. **The purpose of this survey is to gather descriptive information on the delegates to the General Conference.** The Connectional Table welcomes your thoughts and opinions as elected delegates to the General Conference. The survey data will be compiled into a summary and

shared with delegates to provide an overview of the responses. The data will be made available to delegates who request it, and to United Methodist Researchers at our UM agencies.

Please watch your email for this survey and complete it in a timely manner. This information will help us better understand where we are as a denomination. Thank you!

GCORR Equity Monitoring Report No. 8

*“For all who share life, a place at the table,
revising the roles, deciding the share,*

*With wisdom and grace, dividing the power, for all
who share life, a system’s that fair.*

*And God will delight when we are creators of
justice, and joy, compassion, and peace,*

*Yes, God will delight when we are creators of
justice...justice and joy.”*

***For Everyone Born, UM Worship and Song
Hymnal, #3149.***

Consideration of petitions directly related to our budget started on Tuesday morning and will continue through Friday. Budgetary documents may appear as technical presentations of numbers, percentages, and columns. They present funds based on income and expenses, and this year they reflect significant reductions in projected available funds secondary to church disaffiliations and/or closures in the United States.

While numbers and calculations are prominent in these reports and petitions, our budgets are, in fact, moral documents imbued with human stories of worldwide ministries, missions, visions, and

aspirations, best viewed through an equity lens.

Who will gain or lose resources? When viewing the proposed budgets for programs, agencies, missions, etc., think about the ministries that are provided by each. Think about who they are serving. Are their mission fields local, regional, and in what region worldwide? How many people depend on these programs for education, health, community building? How many staff members are in place and/or are required to maintain effective ministries that can respond to needs as they arise?

Whom and what do we prioritize in a proposed budget? In the Rev. Dr. Jerry Pillay’s sermon on Tuesday morning, he repeatedly asked, “What is the church to do?” He goes on to say, “The church must stand with God, not the rich and the powerful,” and as a prophetic voice in the world, “correct political, legal, economical, and ecological imbalances” through “justice, reconciliation, and unity.” When deliberating on our budget, we are compelled to examine the recommended funds to identify what items are funded fully, partially, or not at all. We are inspired to gather our strength to speak with courage to “economic imbalances” that

compromise ministry and missions, including those that are among our stated denominational priorities.

This brings to mind a verse from the late Bishop William Boyd Grove's hymn "Christ, the Church You Gave is Broken:"

Holy Spirit, come and bless us, give us a vision for our day. Give a vision large and mighty to your people now, we pray. Make us one now, make us one now, Spirit, come and make us whole, Spirit, come and make us whole.

The delegates engaged openly and respectfully, if not passionately, about petitions having possible financial impact. One presenter helpfully reminded all that we can hold two truths in tension. The United States base of the UMC is facing financial

pressures and would benefit from some relief. At the same time, all regions of the denomination value connexionalism, connectional ministries, the partnership of the general agencies, and the blessings of special funds, such as Africa University and the Historic Black Colleges and Universities.

As Bishop David Bard concluded the afternoon plenary, he celebrated that the delegation is actively working to build God's beloved community and moving beyond many barriers.

The Rev. Dr. Pillay ended his morning message with this challenge: "The unity of the Church (United Methodist Church) is in your hands!" We will add: The strength and impact of the worldwide living connection is in your very capable hands.