

The Central Conference Council – report to the 2021 annual conferences

Receive the Holy Spirit John 20:23

Was, according to John, Jesus' words and gift to his followers, when he sent us to the world. Regardless of a global pandemic and a potential separation in the United Methodist Church, Jesus' sending and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit remains the same. The present report is written out of this understanding.

General Conference Postponed to 2022

The anticipated General Conference was once again postponed due to Covid19, the new dates are 29. August to 6. September 2022. How our experiences during the current crisis will impact the decisions at General Conference remains to be seen. What we do know is that we will have an additional 15 months to reflect, pray and discern – Let us use the time well.

In addition, the decision to postpone general conference also implies that the legislation passed at the 2019 called session of the General Conference will not come into effect in the Central Conferences until September 6. 2023.

Central Conference Postponed to 2023

Due to the further postponement of General Conference the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference originally scheduled for March 2021 has again been rescheduled to 15-19. March 2023 in Tallinn, Estonia (central conferences must take place within a year after the adjournment of general conference).

The theme of the conference will be: "Receive the Holy Spirit" John 20:23

The Central Conference Council, which includes the two committees on episcopacy, has decided to extend the terms of Bishop Khegay and bishop Alsted until election can take place at the Central Conference. Bishop Eduard Khegay's first term as bishop comes to an end, and he can be re-elected for a four-year term. Bishop Christian Alsted's second term comes to an end, and there will be episcopal election.

Further information regarding the deadlines for submitting petitions and resolutions to the re-scheduled central conference and for making nominations for the episcopacy will be announced after the spring meeting of the central conference council in 2022.

Europe

The four European bishops meet frequently to discuss the development in the denomination and in the central conferences. We have ongoing conversations thinking proactively about the future development of European United Methodism, which may include the re-drawing of the map of European United Methodism. This spring each of the three European Central Conference executive committees have met with all four bishops to discuss a document outlining a process to study the future of the United Methodist Church in Europe as well as a document to prepare for an informed decision by the different levels of conferences on remaining or departing from The United Methodist Church.

The three central conferences will form a task force after General Conference to study and make proposals for the future of the post-separation UMC in all of Europe, its central conference structure and its episcopal supervision. Each annual conference that decides to remain in The United Methodist Church, shall elect their member(s) to the task force.

The Standing Committee and Central Conference Matters has decided to initiate an assessment process in the 2020-2024 quadrennium regarding the need for bishops in Europe. As some annual conferences and local churches have already announced that they will leave the UMC, if the church's current polity changes, we can foresee reductions in annual conferences, clergy and members across Europe, which will imply changes in the number and borders of central conferences and of the number of bishops.

Finances

We came out of the fiscal year 2020 with a surplus of 124.517 DKK / 16.826 Euro. The Central Conference Council has decided to allocate 8.000 DKK / 1.081 Euro to the Eurasia Area Fund, 70.000 DKK / 9.459 Euro to the Nordic and Baltic Area Fund and finally 35.000 DKK / 4.739 Euro for travel grants for participants in the World Methodist Conference in Gothenburg I 2022.

The World Methodist Conference 10-13. August 2022 in Gothenburg Sweden

In August 2022 the world wide Methodist, Wesleyan and United church family will gather in Gothenburg, Sweden. The overarching theme is "On the Move" with sub-themes, Migration, Pilgrimage and Illumination. The conference will offer the unique opportunity to connect with Methodists from across the world, to be inspired and challenged, and together share the heart-warming experience of the presence of the Holy Spirit. The conference is hosted by the Uniting Church of Sweden (Equmeniakyrkan) supported by the Norway and the Denmark annual conferences.

Much more information can be found on www.worldmethodistconference.com All United Methodists in the Nordic, Baltic and Eurasian countries are encouraged to consider going to Gothenburg in Sweden in August in 2022.

Christian Alsted
chair