Indiana General Conference Delegation
Meeting Minutes
October 5, 2019
Zanesville UMC

Present: Albert Hidalgo, Meg Lassiat, Adriane Curtis, Russ Abel, Mary Fridlund, Duane Carlisle, Chris Tiedeman, Aleze Fulbright, Matt Landry, Nancy Stauffer, Rob Fuquay, Chris Nunley, Kim Arnott, Brett Lloyd, Ian Hall, RC Muhlbaiyer, Chiyona Borne, Chris Hancock, Shirley Dominick, Ken Einselen, Amy Land, Jill Howard, Marcus Jennings

On ZOOM: John Shive, Dennis Adams, Derek Weber, Leah Padgett, Lisa Schubert-Nowling, John Lomperis, Greg Pimlott, Ronnie Bell

The General Conference and Jurisdictional delegates held their third meeting at Zanesville UMC on October 5, 2019. Chris Tiedeman led the worship service with Chris Hancock delivering the message.

Knowing one another:
After worship, Chris Hancock led the group in the team connection activity.

The group reviewed our covenant by reading the Christian Conferencing Guidelines together. Russ posed the question to all “How are we living this?” The group was encouraged to know another’s position so well to speak it yourself, and reminded to be kind and honest with one another, communicating with humility and grace yet speaking genuine opinions. On accountability, all should be willing to hold one another accountable within context of meetings; that does not just fall to the chair or just one person.

Knowing our work:
Ian discussed the budget for the Jurisdictional Gathering in November. If anyone has financial challenges in attending, they may contact Ian or Russ to work something out - we do not have budgeted funds enough to pay for everyone to go. Travel will be reimbursed 14 cents per mile, but hotels are the responsibility of those attending. The agenda for the gathering will be finalized by Oct. 15

Meeting Schedule/Location/Plans:
Russ concluded that based on the lack of external congregation participation to date and no interest from anyone wanting to organize the town hall meetings, the plan for conducting these type meetings after our delegatioin meetings are no longer planned. Russ mentioned that perhaps the communication team will work to organize other methods or gatherings later in the process to engage IN congregations and share outwardly.

Adriane Curtis motioned to move all future meetings (starting in December) to Indianapolis area: Central and North Central Districts with a second from Marcus Jennings. Discussions were made including these points:

- John Shive - Keep in mind our initial desire to hold meetings in each district to show we represent the entire conference
- Adriane - Look to expand locations to more theologically diverse; Centralizing will make technical setup easier and consistent
- Mike Womack - Host churches have been honored to host and feel part of the process
- Adriane - Indianapolis roads are more reliable in winter; Clarified that locations could move around Indianapolis; If lunches are an issue, offer to bring our own lunches or bring $5 to have catered lunch; NC or Central districts would have plenty of hosting opportunities
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The vote passed (Yes: 25; No: 3; Abstain: 2) to move all meetings to Indianapolis area/Central/North Central. Options for meeting include Carmel UMC, conference office, Rosedale Hills, Old Bethel. The meeting schedule will be revised and published.

Episcopacy Committee
Brett Lloyd opened discussions on how many nominees will be interviewed. Russ mentioned that he had received several personal communications asking that he and Aleze stay during this session. The group voted with a majority "yes" to have them remain in the room. Brett presented that three candidates have been nominated - Aleze Fulbright, Russ Abel, and Tony Alstott.

Mary Fridlund motioned to interview all 3 nominees. The floor opened to discussion:
• Meg Lassiat spoke against interviewing all 3 stating we should stick to just those candidates on the delegation since Indiana has spoken on who to nominate from that pool of clergy; she feels the Conference has expressed its confidence by votes of delegates and those are the ones we should vote for.
• Mike Womack proposed the fair thing to do is to interview all 3 qualified candidates, we have time for 3; this would show our due diligence and not appear of favoring delegation team.
• Since the only the clergy voted for clergy delegates, the hope is for the laity to have a voice by allowing all three to be interviewed.

Question of would it be a waste of time to interview someone who is not a delegate?
• The weight of this decision would be so large that local church persons would appreciate the chance to have more of a voice by demonstrating this via our process of interviewing all three.
• Meg: If the delegation would not endorse a candidate that was not a delegate, then why waste the person's time. It would be difficult for a non-delegate to get elected bishop. There is credibility in the conference vote of clergy they feel best represents them.

Meg raised a call to question; Do we interview all 3 nominees or not? The vote was taken with the results: YES: 15; NO: 19. RESULT: DOES NOT PASS.

Meg moved that we interview 2 and do a written ballot now to decide which 2 to interview; Marti Landry seconded. The vote was taken with the results: YES: 21, NO: 4; ABSTAIN: 1.

Delegates wrote names on sticky notes of 1-2 candidates, counted by Duane and Brett. The two nominees voted to be interviewed by the delegation are Russ Abel and Aleze Fulbright. Results of the vote were: Russ: 32, Aleze: 22, Tony: 12.

Disappointment in the process was expressed in limiting, as it appears through the voting, to only progressive candidates for interview. There was hope of giving laity more of a voice. It was reminded that during the Jursidictional process delegates will get to vote their choice of bishop after reviewing all candidates and that Tony could still submit his name as a nomination, but he just would not be endorsed by our delegation.

Duane Carlisle made a motion asking someone in our delegation to work with the Episcopacy Committee to guide the interview process. Albert Hidalgo seconded. Speaking to the motion, the intent is to add Meg Lassiat to the team in order for her to help guide the process base on her.
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experience. The current team is Chris Nunley, Lisa Schubert-Nowling, Brett Lloyd, and Ronnie Bell. A question was raised “Do we have a process in place for December interviews?” The answer is yes; each candidate would get 3 questions and an hour/hour and a half interview timeslot with delegation as was reviewed, voted and approved at the last meeting. A point of clarification was made that on-site questions be fresh so that candidates have not seen them and can respond spontaneously. The team recognizes the clarification and will consider this. The motion was withdrawn.

A new motion was made by Rob Fuquay that given we have a team, that they are free to consult any member of our delegation. Mike Womack seconded. The vote was taken, and the results were: YES: 27, NO: 0, ABSTAIN: 1. The motion passed.

A question was raised, “Will all delegates have a vote regardless of whether or not someone is present at the meeting or not?” Following some discussion and deferral to the Episcopacy Committee, Albert Hidalgo made a motion that voting to occur within 48 hours after the interview after all delegates have viewed the interviews. Mary Fridlund seconded. A friendly amendment was made that voting could occur then or within 48 hours. Motion was voted on and passed with 1 abstention.

A question was raised about how abstentions would work in our voting of candidates. Russ will bring an answer back to the group about how abstentions will impact future votes according to Robert’s Rules of Order.

Strategy Team
Aleze Fulbright and team, Mike Womack, Kim Arnott, Albert Hidalgo, Meg Lassiat gave an update from the Strategy Committee. Aleze reminded that the team was formed primarily to help the delegation think about how to strategically work with other delegations; the team has expanded that to how we will work within our own delegation and developed 4 pillars: Education, Collaboration, Communication, and Advocation. The Education pillar represents how we will work to understand as a group, learn about the legislation being presented, open dialogue amongst different viewpoints. The Collaboration pillar represents our work with other conferences. Ideas are to pull from their websites outcomes regarding petitions and items presented; another was to keep abreast of blogs and other media. Greg Pimlott volunteered be a contact person through the Board of Ordained Ministry “Over the Fence” group to give questions and get answers from other conferences. The Communication pillar aligns with the Communication team in how we provide information outwardly to the conference. The Advocation pillar speaks to leveraging our voting power. The committee is asking, “What would be helpful for you to know from other Annual Conferences?” Responses included:

- Knowing what legislation, other than human sexuality, is coming before the GC?,
- Determining what can we do well together? What can the Indiana delegates do/propose that we agree upon and that we could take the lead on.

The Strategy also requested to take a straw poll to understand the delegation’s alignment with the definitions (taken from the UMC News Service) on these labels: Traditional Incompatible, Traditional Compatible, Moderate Compatible, Progressive Compatible, Progressive Incompatible. Discussions surrounding the definitions were raised. Traditionalist did not feel the items represented their perspectives – concern that it reads as a person to person issue rather than that of a policy difference. For the purpose of the straw poll, the group agreed that the
definitions stand, and delegates are to vote as close to what they feel they can align given the definitions presented. The votes were taken, and the results were:

- Traditional Incompatible: 25%
- Traditional Compatible: 0%
- Moderate Compatible: 14%
- Progressive Compatible: 61%
- Progressive Incompatible: 0%.

**Jurisdictional Gathering, November 8, 1:00 - November 9, 12:00, Chicago area (Barrington)**

Russ and Aleze conducted a group activity to help prepare for the upcoming gathering. Teams discussed and provided items of commonality – items that we can support as a group regardless of a position on issues. Russ will use these to provide input as requested prior to the gathering.

The meeting ended with the group sharing their feelings.

**Delegates to write reflections to send to John Shive for next week:**

Chiyona  
Mary F.  
Aleze