



Dear Clergy and Lay Members of the Alabama Emerald Coast Provisional Conference,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Clergy and Laity of our Conference are living in the excitement of what God is doing in The AEC and GMC. When we gather together, there is a powerful presence of the Holy Spirit in our worship and business sessions. Therefore, we look forward to gathering together again as an Annual Conference in Niceville, FL at the Crosspoint GMC Church on May 5-7, 2024.

We will once again experience lively worship and great fellowship. One added item will be the privilege of electing clergy and laity to represent us as delegates to the inaugural General Conference to be held in San Jose, Costa Rica on September 20-26, 2024.

With this in mind, as we approach the selection of our delegation, we have the opportunity to live into a new day. Let's begin now to pray and ask God to guide us, and for the Spirit to give us discernment and unity. The following information will help us to better understand the process:

Who Can Vote?

Clergy:

The following persons are able to vote for clergy delegates to the convening General Conference.

- Elders and Deacons under appointment
- Transitional local pastors under appointment
- Senior clergy whether or not they are under an appointment provided that the requirements of Paragraph 418 of the TBDD are met. (See attached portion of TBDD)
- Those to be ordained and approved at the Clergy Session at Annual Conference

The following persons are not able to vote for clergy delegates to the convening General Conference.

- Supply Pastors (Paragraph 412 of the TBDD)
- Valid Elders and Valid Deacons (Paragraph 416.2 of the TBDD) (Clergy from other denominations serving a GMC appointment)
- Candidates for ministry as they are laity

Laity:

¶ 418, states: "as well as at least an equal number of lay members elected by each charge or by the district or annual conference. Each charge shall be entitled to as many lay members as it has appointed clergy. The annual conference may add lay members of the annual conference who are serving in conference leadership positions. The annual conference shall determine the method of electing additional lay members to equalize the number of clergy members. Only laity shall vote in the election of equaling laity. Such members may be elected by a charge conference, district conference, or the annual conference, but they must be elected and not appointed."

"When at any time a lay member is unable to attend the session, the alternate lay member, if present, shall be seated. The lay member or the alternate, whichever is seated, has the responsibility of the lay member to report to the local church on actions of the annual conference."

Who Can Be Elected?

The following persons can be elected as clergy delegates to the convening General Conference.

- Elders and Deacons, including Senior clergy, regardless of whether they are under appointment.
- Transitional Local Pastors who have been approved by the Transitional Leadership Council for ordination as an elder or deacon, regardless of whether they are under appointment.

The following persons can not be elected as clergy delegates to the convening General Conference.

- Transitional local pastors licensed under Paragraph 419.2 of the TBDD
- Valid Elders and Valid Deacons
- Supply Pastors
- Candidates for ministry as they are laity

Additional Eligibility for Election

Clergy

As required by The Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline (Paragraph 611.6) ... "Clergy delegates shall be members in full connection in good standing of the Global Methodist Church, or its predecessors (previous denomination), who have served a minimum of two years preceding their election."

Laity

"Lay delegates shall have been professing members of the Global Methodist Church, or its predecessors, for at least two years."

How Will We Vote?

We will vote electronically. We are still in the process of researching options, but probably with our own devices/smart phones/I-Pads/Laptops.

How Many Delegates Will We Elect?

This is yet to be determined, but we will know a minimum number by the time our AEC Annual Conference meets. In June, we may be allotted more delegates. The number may go up, but not down. Therefore, we have decided to elect more than enough people in May to cover both the lay and clergy delegation without having to call another conference.

Responsibility of Expenses

No expense allowance will be available from the Global Methodist Church or The Alabama Emerald Coast Conference. Delegates should expect to supply or raise funding for their own expenses to the General Conference, which will be approximately \$3,000-\$4,000. Many options exist to raise funds in a fashion similar to seeking funding for a mission trip: e.g. Requesting support from one's local church, relatives, friends, or circuit.

Self-Nominations

Eligible clergy and laity interested in standing for election to the Convening Annual Conference shall self-nominate, by submitting a nomination form and photo. Self-nominations shall be received no later than April 5th. Nomination form can be found at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VSFD9F8>.

Campaigning

It is our hope that this experience will be spiritual as opposed to political. Therefore, persons standing for election shall not engage in campaigning (including but not limited to production and distribution of campaign materials such as letters, brochures, leaflets, video or audio materials, advertisements, or requests for support on social media). The Conference Leadership Team (or its designated task force) will distribute the nominee forms and photographs and determine any other forums or avenues for introduction of nominees. The list of nominees with bio, picture and forms will be available online at aecgmc.org.

Balloting and Election

Balloting and Election: “Both clergy and lay delegates shall be elected by a minimum of fifty percent of votes cast plus one, with clergy voting for clergy delegates and laity voting for lay delegates.” (TTBDD, Paragraph 611.6)
Clergy and lay members of the Alabama Emerald Coast Conference must be present to vote for delegates to General Conference. Voting shall be by electronic ballot with material for paper ballots available in case of electronic failure.

Election Design Team:

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