

## **A REPORT OF THE SEJ COMMITTEE ON EPISCOPACY**

Dear Delegates to the Jurisdictional Conference:

Greetings!

As you prepare for the upcoming virtual Special Session of the Jurisdictional Conference, we offer this report from the SEJ Committee on Episcopacy (COE), in accordance with Paragraph 524.3.i.

Since the postponement of the General and Jurisdictional Conferences in 2020, the Committee on Episcopacy has done the following work:

- We formed a joint task force with the College of Bishops to assess the future of Episcopal Leadership and the sustainability of the Episcopal Fund. This task force originally recommended electing no bishops in 2021. They shared their report with all SEJ delegates in January and February of 2021. A future decision on how many bishops to elect in 2022 will be made by the Jurisdictional delegates.
- We were informed of the intention to retire on September 1, 2021, according to Paragraph 408 by the following Bishops:
  - Bishop Lawson Bryan
  - Bishop Paul Leeland
  - Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor
  - Bishop Hope Morgan Ward
- At a regular session of a Jurisdictional Conference, the assignments of bishops are the work of the Committee on Episcopacy, who recommends assignments to be approved by the Jurisdictional Conference (see Par. 524). When a vacancy in the office of bishop occurs due to retirement between regular sessions of Jurisdictional Conference, the vacancy “is filled by the Council of Bishops on nomination of the active bishops of the College of Bishops of the jurisdiction after consultation with the jurisdictional and annual conference committees on episcopacy and the cabinet(s).” (Par. 407)
- In this spirit of consultation, the Committee on Episcopacy was asked by the College of Bishops to provide to the College a recommendation regarding a plan of coverage beginning September 1, 2021. A joint task force with members from the Committee on Episcopacy and the College of Bishops received extensive input from each annual conference and interviewed each episcopal leader. The Committee on Episcopacy reviewed the reports from the annual conferences and approved the recommendation from the Task Force. The Committee on Episcopacy sent the College a recommendation for an interim plan of coverage. The reports from the annual conferences were not read by the College.

After considering the recommendation from the Committee on Episcopacy, the College of Bishops accepted the plan of coverage with modifications and sent it to the Council of Bishops for their approval. The Council of Bishops approved the College’s recommendation and announced the plan for coverage on May 14<sup>th</sup>.

We continue to pray for our connection and look forward to the work ahead.

Respectfully submitted:

Steve Furr, Tom Berlin, and Kim Ingram (Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary of the SEJ COE)