

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2023  
WRAP-UP

Thursday,  
June 15, 2023

### Conference Rules Discussion

Rules Committee chair, Danny Peck, presented the committee's work, which can be found on pages 13-30 in the Conference Workbook.



A number of the revisions involved correcting grammatical errors. Further, certain date references were removed as there may be General Conference, Jurisdictional Conference, and Annual Conference meetings outside of the typical scheduling cycles. In addition to the above revisions and changes, the

body approved a change that the "bar of the annual conference shall be the floor of the Greenville Convention Center, except those spaces designated for guests and visitors within the marked partitions. Guests, annual conference staff, and Convention Center staff necessary for the work of the annual conference shall have access to the bar as do conference members."

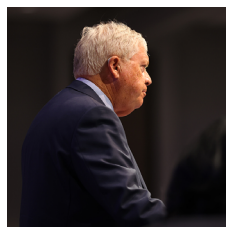
While the Rules Committee suggested the body not entertain resolutions this year in an effort to promote unity, that recommendation was not accepted by the body. Resolutions were to be submitted to the Conference Secretary by Thursday at 5 pm. Lastly, the NC Conference will no longer offer printing of the Conference Journal. The ability of a third party to produce copies of the Conference Journal was accepted.

### Trustees Report Will Continue Into Friday

David Peele, Board of Trustees Chair, gave the Trustees Report on Thursday afternoon. A motion was passed to ratify the disaffiliation agreements of 59 churches listed in the addendum of the Trustees report in the Conference Workbook.

A motion was passed to adjourn and resume the discussions and voting on the motions presented in the Trustees Report on Friday.

The report of the Board of Trustees can be found in the Conference Workbook on page 89.



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Annual Conference 2023 called to order, with 1,109 attendees
- Clergy Executive Session recessed after initial meeting, met for 1 additional hour at 6:30 pm to close business
- Reports shared from the Committee on Conference Rules, Judicial Council, Laity & Connectional Ministries, and Conference Board of Trustees
- Trustees Report tabled to Friday, June 16, 2023
- An Ice Cream Social, featuring a book signing with Rev. Adam Hamilton, closed out the day

For all news and photos, visit [nccumc.org/ac2023](http://nccumc.org/ac2023)

### Opening Worship and Welcoming Bishop Shelton to North Carolina Annual Conference

Dr. Christine Dodson and Rev. Dr. Belton Joyner gave an official welcome to North Carolina and our annual conference to Bishop Connie Mitchell Shelton and her husband, Rev. Dr. Joey Shelton, along with their daughters, Bailey and Jessica.



Worship and song was woven into our work Thursday afternoon. We are grateful for the music ministry of Paul Saik of Centenary UMC in New Bern, as well as choir members and musicians from churches around the Conference.

Rev. Sam Kiley, associate pastor from Church on Morgan, shared a spoken word that challenged us to think about church membership as being someone who welcomes. Jesus invites us to be where He is and to share God's goodness and welcome with others.

Bishop Shelton picked up on this theme of welcome in her sermon, focused on John 17, and shared a story of when she and Joey had their car break down on I-40. Someone drove by with a speaker attached to their vehicle and yelled, "Jesus loves you" to them. The bishop said, "We already knew that Jesus loves us. We needed someone who loves Jesus to come and help us." The bishop asked us, "How do people know Jesus through us?"

As this section of the day drew to a close, Josiah Curry, a young man from Piney Grove UMC, joined the bishop in signing, "I Just Want To Be Where You Are." We are invited to be where people are in our communities because that is where we find God already at work.

**Scavenger Hunt at AC 2023.** You're invited to participate in a Scavenger Hunt at Annual Conference! Find out more information outside of the Gallery Rooms, next to the Displays. The Scavenger Hunt runs until 5 pm on Friday.

## Laity Executive Session

The Annual Conference 2023 Laity Executive Session opened with worship, prayer, and introductions of the Board of Laity by Conference Lay Leader, John Hall.



Will Rouse, Conference Youth

President, invited Conference Laity to ponder and learn about youth involvement at the local, district, and conference levels. The conference youth also led the laity in “Christian Calisthenics.”

Additionally, Laity across the conference shared stories of engaging, celebrating, connecting, equipping, and sending with the group. After their stories, session members were invited to discuss their answers to, “What do you and your church family need to fulfill God’s vision of engaging, connecting, equipping, and sending?” with their neighbors.

- Cherry Point UMC member Michelle Pierce shared their Broken Shells Ministry.
- Aldersgate UMC members shared their “Undie Sunday” ministry.
- The Beacon District Anti-Racism team shared their joint community picnic, Ash Wednesday, and Trinity Sunday Block Party with their local AME Zion church.
- Queen St. UMC shared their Hand in Hand ministry partnership with Southeast Elementary School.

Dr. Christine Dodson, Conference Treasurer, instructed the laity on the logistics of Annual Conference. Lay Servant Ministry classes were highlighted by Conference Lay Servant Ministries Chair, Ann Davis.

Roxie Lee-Floyd presented about United Women in Faith and announced the election of their new General Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, Sally Vonner. Bill Huggins presented on United Methodist Men and their efforts to try and reach younger men in ministry.

To conclude the session, the laity were led in a song and prayer.

## Celebrating Laity and Connectional Ministries

During the Thursday afternoon session, we celebrated Laity and Connectional Ministries.

Conference Lay Leader John Hall shared stories of thriving lay ministries that are making disciples throughout our Conference.

Rev. Sunny Limm brought greetings from the Connectional Table and spoke a word of hope about our future and the birth of new ministries.

In the first Connectional Ministries report, Rev. Joseph Park spoke about ministries with Asian countries around the world through the sharing of resources and English tutoring.

From the Creation Care Committee, Rev. Jarrod Davis shared about their work this year and his new role as Creation Ministries Coordinator for the North Carolina and Western North Carolina Conferences.

Sara Cortes shared the Hispanic-Latinx Ministries Committee’s work with Lay Missionaries, clergy in the ordination process, disaffiliating churches, and refugees from South and Central America.

Rev. Larry Bowden, Deaconess Brenda Brown and Rev. Jaye White shared a report from the Mission Team and Board of Missions featuring missional giving through the Advance Specials and Rainbow Covenant, church loans they offer, and ministries that have received funds from The Gary Locklear Mission Endowment.

Rev. Kennedy Gray explained how the Strengthening the Black Church Committee reimagined the Comprehensive Plan of Inclusiveness and the birth of their mentoring and scholarship support of young Black clergy.

Rev. Lindsay Collins highlighted the many health offerings available at Annual Conference. Native American Ministries showed a video with pictures from their programs and outreach.

Leah Wiebe-Smith announced changes to the Leadership Fellows program and a new opportunity for online small groups through the Center for Leadership Excellence.

Rev. Molly White, chair of the Board of Church & Society, shared about the grants and awards they give to support ministries for justice. She also announced the formation of the Bishop’s Task Force on Gun Violence Prevention as she shared the memory of how her husband, Patrick White, was the victim of workplace gun violence.

Safe Sanctuaries is vital to graceful hospitality in our churches. Rev. Mamie Alley reminded us why each church needs a Safe Sanctuaries policy and announced an upcoming class on best practices.

As Al Miller reminded us, Disaster Ministries is the hands and feet of Jesus. He encouraged more involvement through ERT training and other opportunities.

The Commission on the Status and Role of Women has monitors at Annual Conference to assess the session. Rev. Laura Dunlap also introduced a video that gave thanks for eight women elected as bishops, including our own Bishop Shelton.

Rev. Grayson Dye from the Commission for Christian Unity and Inter-Religious Relationships shared about their investment in the Methodist Tent at the Wild Goose Festival and Dr. Edgardo Colón-Emeric’s meeting with Pope Francis. They are also hosting ecumenical events to build relationships with other denominations.

Rev. Tom Greener shared how the Financial Discipleship team offers stewardship and donor development training.

Rev. Ben Wolf of the new Evangelism & Discipleship Committee highlighted their Messy Church event and introduced a video showing the Denman Award recipients. The One Matters Award was given by Rev. David Kim of Discipleship Ministries to Rev. Terry Williams.

Rev. Ernesto Barriguete explained the Conference’s anti-racism strategy and our progress in meeting those goals.

David Rockefeller led us in celebrating ten years of Congregations for Children! He shared the history of this ministry and the focus areas going forward. A special offering was taken to support Congregations for Children.