

The United Methodist Church

Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe



Reports

**of the 75th - 77th meeting of the
Executive Committee**

&

**of the 19th (extraordinary) meeting
of the Central Conference**

from November 16 to 20, 2022

«The Fruit of the Spirit is...»

Reformiertes Zentrum Zwinglihaus, Basel, Switzerland



The United Methodist Church

Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

Report of the 75th - 77th Meeting of the Executive Committee
from August 27, October 27, and November 16 + 19, 2022

Report of the 19th meeting of the Central Conference
from November 16 to 20, 2022 in Basel, Switzerland

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Facts of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

General Information

Annual Conferences of the Central Conference

Provisional Annual Conference Austria
Annual Conference Poland
Annual Conference Switzerland-France-North Africa
Provisional Annual Conference Serbia-North-Macedonia-Albania
Annual Conference Czech Republic
Provisional Annual Conference Hungary

Episcopal Supervision since May 1st, 2006

Bishop Dr. Patrick Streiff

New elected bishop to take office from February 1, 2023

Bishop Dr. Stefan Zürcher

Bishop retired

Bishop Heinrich Bolleter

The agents of the Central Conference

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The »Geneva Area«

The "Geneva Area" was founded in 1936 and assigned to the Southeastern Jurisdiction Conference in the United States. His first bishop, Dr. John Louis Nuelsen, chose Geneva as residence. Since it is customary in the United Methodist Church to name the parish according to the respective residence of the bishop, the new parish was given the name "Geneva Area". Until 1954, all bishops resided in Geneva. In these eighteen years, the "Geneva Area" became a household name. To preserve this connection, the Central Conference in Brussels decided in 1954 to "keep the name of the Genevan Area and let the bishop have a free hand, to choose his residence, where he considers him right according to the circumstances."

The bishops of the Geneva Area

John Louis Nuelsen	1936 - 1940
William W. Peele	1940 - 1941
Arthur J. Moore	1941 - 1944 and 1952 - 1954
Paul N. Garber	1944 - 1952 and 1965 - 1966
Ferdinand Sigg	1954 - 1965
Ralph E. Dodge	1965 - 1966
Franz W. Schäfer	1966 - 1989
Heinrich Bolleter	1989 - 2006
Patrick Streiff	2006 - 2023
Stefan Zürcher	2023 -

The Central Conference of Central- and Southern Europe

The "Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe" was founded in 1954. It was formed from those Annual Conferences, Provisional Annual Conferences, and Missions left over after the dissolution of the "Central Conference of Central Europe" and the "Central Conference of Southern Europe" and summed up in the "Geneva Area".

The Meetings of the Central Conference

- 1st Meeting from October 14 to 17, 1954 in Brussels, Belgium
- 2nd Meeting from February 7 to 10, 1954 in Geneva, Switzerland
- 3rd Meeting from October 13 to 16, 1960 in Linz, Austria
- 4th Meeting from September 22 to 27, 1964 in Strasbourg, France
- 5th Meeting extraordinary from September 2 to 4, 1966 in Lausanne, Switzerland
- 6th Meeting from March 5 to 9, 1969 in Berne, Switzerland
Theme: »Die Kirche lebt«
- 7th Meeting from March 21 to 25, 1973 in Schaffhausen, Switzerland
Thema: »Es ist in keinem anderen Heil«
- 8th Meeting from March 15 to 20, 1977 in Zofingen, Switzerland
Theme: »Seid dankbar in allen Dingen; denn es ist der Wille Gottes in Jesus Christus an euch.«
- 9th Meeting from March 18 to 22, 1981 in Niederuzwil, Switzerland
Theme: »Dienet einander, ein jeder mit der Gabe, die er empfangen hat, als die guten Haushalter der vielfältigen Gnade Gottes.«
- 10th Meeting from March, 13 to 17, 1985 in Zurich-Zelthof, Switzerland
Theme: »Gott dienen - ein Leben lang.«
- 11th Meeting from March 15 to 19, 1989 in Baden, Switzerland
Theme: »Christus der Weinstock - wir die Reben.«
- 12th Meeting from March 10 to 14, 1993 in Berne-Bümpliz, Switzerland
Theme: »Wo der Geist des Herrn ist, da ist Freiheit«
- 13th Meeting from March 12 to 16, 1997 in Aarau, Switzerland
Theme: »Mit Grenzen leben - in Christus überwinden«
- 14th Meeting from March 14 to 18, 2001 in Bülach, Switzerland
Theme: »Lasst uns aber Gutes tun und nicht müde werden« (Gal. 6,9)
- 15th Meeting from April 13 to 17, 2005 in Berne-Altstadt, Switzerland
Theme: »Furcht ist nicht in der Liebe« (1. Joh. 4, 18)
- 16th Meeting from March 11 to 15, 2009 in Bülach, Switzerland
Theme: »Seek God and Live - the Methodist Way
- 17th Meeting from March 13 to 17, 2013 in Winterthur, Switzerland
Theme: »Faith, Hope and Love - these three«
- 18th Meeting from March 8 to 12, 2017 in Zurich-Zelthof, Switzerland
Theme: »Jesus is Lord«
- 19th Meeting extraordinary from November 16 - 20, 2023 in Basel, Switzerland
Theme: »The fruit of the Spirit is...«

Rules of Order of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

Paragraph 1 - Foundation

1. The United Methodist Church (Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche) in Central and Southern Europe is part of the United Methodist Church.
2. The United Methodist Church in Central and Southern Europe is issuing for its area a *Discipline* in accordance with *the Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church.
3. The United Methodist Church in Central and Southern Europe is made up of all annual and provisional annual conferences as laid out by the General Conference of The United Methodist Church.
4. The United Methodist Church in Central and Southern Europe is organized in accordance with the powers granted by the 1952 General Conference of the former Methodist Conference and in accordance with the *Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church as the "Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe". (See Constitutional Document from October 14, 1954 in the Minutes of the Central Conference 1954 in Brussels, pp. 39 - 40.)
5. The "Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe" has its office in Switzerland, Badenerstrasse 69, 8004 Zürich. In the following it will be referred to in short as "Central Conference".

Paragraph 2 - The Central Conference

1. The Central Conference shall be composed of the Bishop, of voting delegates, delegates with advisory voice as well as guests, who have received an invitation from the conference chair or secretary. Guests may be restricted to public sessions.
2. Central Conference members with voting rights are the delegates of the annual and provisional annual conferences elected according to the provisions of the *Discipline* and the rules of order. Only regular members have voting rights.
3. Members with advisory voice are:
 - Retired Bishops;
 - Delegates of the associated Churches within the Central Conference borders;
 - The secretary, treasurer, chairperson of the judicial court, chairpersons of the working groups, if they are not already voting members.Advisory members may participate at all sessions of the Central Conference and submit motions to the Central Conference.
4. The delegates of the annual and the provisional annual conferences shall be elected according to the proportion determined by the executive committee. The provisions of the *Discipline* are to be observed.
5. The Central Conference shall convene once every four years within the twelve months following the General Conference. The Central Conference shall be convened by the Bishop in agreement with the executive committee. If the Bishop is prevented from doing this, the secretary may make notice of the conference session. If the Central Conference has not already decided otherwise, time

and place of the upcoming session, the executive committee shall determine time and venue of the upcoming session. If necessary a special session of the Central Conference may be called.

6. The Bishop shall lead the meetings and is chairperson. If he or she is unable to lead the conference, the conference shall elect from the clergy members an interim chairperson.

7. A quorum shall be established when notice of the conference is extended at least one month prior to the conference and at least half of the members with voting rights are present. If there are too few members, the conference shall be postponed from day to day. If on the second day there are still too few members, on the third day without regard to the number of members in attendance the Central Conference shall have a quorum.

8. Without prejudice to specific provisions, the Central Conferences decides with a simple majority of the votes cast. Abstentions are to be ignored.

9. The official languages of the Central Conference shall be German and English. The Central Conference minutes shall be published in one of the two languages only.

10. The rights and responsibilities, which the Central Conference has received from the General Conference, are laid out in the *Discipline*. In the area of the Central Conference it shall have the sole legislative power.

11. Further tasks of the Central Conference shall be:

- To promote the work which has been entrusted to the conference;
- To establish all necessary rules and regulations for administration and supervision;
- To install necessary organs and to elect their representatives;
- To assign the tasks to the organs and to supervise their work;
- To approve the budget for the quadrennium.

12. The Central Conference, where the laws of the land permit, can organize and incorporate itself and its institutions in order to acquire legal status and apply the appropriate legal provisions.

Paragraph 3 - Agents and Organs of the Central Conference

1. The agents of the Central Conference are:

- The Bishop;
- The secretary;
- The treasurer.

Through nomination the Bishop can petition that a voting member of the executive committee be elected vice chair of the executive committee.

2. The Organs of the Central Conference are:

- The Executive Committee;
- The Office;
- The Council on Finances and Administration;
- The Judicial Court;
- The Committee on Investigation;
- The Committee on Appeals;
- The Working Group on Episcopacy;
- Other Working Groups.

Paragraph 4 - The Bishop

1. The Bishop embodies the unity of the Central Conference with the entire United Methodist Church. He or she is supervisor (proctor) of the entire work within the Central Conference (geographical) boundaries. He or she shall represent the Central Conference outside of the conference and determines, if he or she is prevented and deems it to be prudent, a deputy. The Bishop may *ex officio* participate in all meetings of the Central Conference.
2. The Bishop shall be elected through secret ballot with a three-fifths majority of the voting delegates present who take part in that ballot and cast valid votes. Empty ballots shall also count among valid votes. The Executive Committee may establish a preparatory process for the election of a bishop. All ordained elders in full connection, who belong to an annual or provisional annual conference of the Central Conference, may be elected.
3. The newly elected Bishop has a term of four years. When the Bishop's first term of office is closing, the executive committee shall determine whether a re-election for life or an election of a new Bishop shall take place and makes the appropriate motion to the Central Conference. For a re-election for life a three-fifth majority is required.
4. If the office of Bishop becomes vacant (due to death, retirement or resignation) the executive committee in accordance with the *Discipline* shall determine the necessary steps. The executive committee shall decide whether an extraordinary session of the Central Conference shall be announced and makes the motion to elect a new Bishop.
5. A retired Bishop shall be an advisory member of the Central Conference and the executive committee. He or she shall remain member as long as his or her residency is within the Central Conference borders. He or she is to be invited to all meetings of these organs.

Paragraph 5 - The Secretary

1. Based upon the nomination of the executive committee the Central Conference shall elect a secretary for a four-year term. The candidate does not need to be a voting member of the Central Conference. Re-election is possible.
2. The term of office shall begin with the adjournment of the session during which the election occurred and continues until the closing of the next regular session of the Central Conference. The secretary shall *ex officio* be member and secretary of the executive committee and the office.
3. The secretary shall write the minutes of the Central Conference, the executive committee and the office and shall publish and mail these as required through their by-laws. In consultation with the Bishop, he or she shall manage as need dictates the correspondence for these organs and shall administer to the tasks which the *Discipline* places on him or her. The Central Conference, the executive committee, and the office may name additional tasks.
4. If the office of secretary becomes vacant during the quadrennium, an interim secretary may be appointed by the executive committee or by the Bishop.

Paragraph 6 - The Treasurer

1. The Central Conference shall elect following nomination by the executive committee a treasurer for a four-year term. The candidate does not need to be a voting delegate of the Central Conference. Re-election is possible.
2. The term of office of the treasurer shall begin with the adjournment of the Central Conference session, during which the election took place, and continues until the conclusion of the next regular Central Conference session. He or she shall be *ex officio* a member of the executive committee.
3. The treasurer shall manage the finances following the framework of the approved budget. He or she shall annually prepare a fiscal report of all transactions, which is given to the executive committee for review. He or she shall submit motions regarding the budget of the current year as needed. He or she shall write and in consultation with the executive committee submit a budget proposal for the quadrennium to the Central Conference for approval.
4. If the office of treasurer becomes vacant during the quadrennium, an interim treasurer shall be appointed by the executive committee or by the Bishop.

Paragraph 7 - The Executive Committee

1. The executive committee shall be composed of the following members with voting rights: the Bishop, the secretary and the treasurer, as well as one superintendent and one lay delegate from each annual and provisional annual conference, as well as the chairperson of the working group on episcopacy. Lay representatives must be elected members of the Central Conference.

Retired Bishops are members with advisory voice. If a conference consists of more than one country, then beyond the two voting delegates the superintendent of each additional country shall be a member of the executive committee with advisory voice.

Through invitation the Bishop may also invite the chairpersons of the working groups.

2. The representatives of the annual and the provisional annual conferences shall be nominated for election for the executive committee by the Bishop after consultation with the elected delegates of those annual and provisional annual conferences. Vacancies in the interim shall be filled by election of the executive committee upon nomination of the Bishop. If needed, an Annual Conference may elect additional alternate delegates.
3. The term of office for the executive committee shall be four years. It shall begin with the adjournment of the Central Conference session, during which the election took place and continues until the conclusion of the next regular session of the Central Conference.
4. Chairperson of the executive committee shall *ex officio* be the Bishop.
5. The executive committee shall meet at least once a year. The meetings shall be announced by the Bishop, if he or she is prevented in doing this, by the vice-chairperson or the secretary. There is a quorum if half of the voting delegates are present. The executive committee shall decide through majority vote of the voting members present.
6. The executive committee shall manage the business of the Central Conference between sessions. Most particularly:

- To attend to the completion of its resolutions and decisions and to do what is necessary to further the standing and development of the work;
 - To receive the financial statement of the treasurer and to discharge him or her on the basis of the audit report;
 - To make the necessary adjustments and extensions to the Central Conference financial budget;
 - To attend to the preparation of the Central Conference sessions.
7. The executive committee elects through the nomination of the Office the persons who shall represent the Central Conference in the worldwide church bodies, as long as no other voting regulations exist.
8. The executive committee shall report to the Central Conference on its work and make the necessary motions.

Paragraph 8 - The Office

1. The office shall be composed of the Bishop, the vice-chairperson, the secretary, and the treasurer. Chairperson shall be the Bishop.
2. The office can through a motion of the Bishop include a fifth person, who is elected by the executive committee from among its members.
3. The office shall have the following responsibilities:
 - Preparation of the executive committee meetings and supervision or administration of its decisions;
 - The determination of the language, in which the minutes of the Central Conference shall be written;
 - Administration of all financial and personnel matters for the office of Bishop and the secretariat of the Bishop, which are not otherwise supervised;
 - Nomination of members to the Council on Finances and Administration passed on to the executive committee, which confirms the nominations;
4. In pressing situations, for which the Central Conference or the executive committee have not made any provisions, the office can act for the interim on behalf of the executive committee.

Paragraph 9 - The Council on Finance and Administration

1. The Council on Finance and Administration shall be composed of three persons to be nominated by the office and confirmed by the executive committee.
2. The council shall annually examine the disbursement of funds of the Central Conference and shall submit the written report of the review to the executive committee.
3. The council shall resolve the budget issues of the Bishop and his or her office with the appropriate bodies of the General Conference. The accounting is done through the association "Hilfe im Sprengel". The council supports the Bishop and the Bishop's office in advisory capacity.
4. The members of the council are also members of the pension board of the Central Conference. The executive committee can elect further members to the pension board.

Paragraph 10 – The Committee on Investigation

1. The Central Conference shall elect a committee on investigation in accordance with the disciplinary and arbitration regulation of the Central Conference, consisting of seven clergy members in full connection (if possible not more than one pastor per annual or provisional annual conference), two laity with advisory voice, and six substitutes (five clergy members in full connection and one layperson). The election takes place upon nomination by the Bishop.
2. The committee on investigation is responsible for any complaint against the Bishop.
3. The committee on investigation constitutes itself and gives itself rules of procedure and by-laws. Seven clergy members in full connection respectively their substitutes build the quorum. Members of the committee on investigation, who might be party to the dispute, are to be replaced by substitutes.

Paragraph 11 - The Committee on Appeals

1. The Central Conference shall vote for a committee on appeals in accordance with the disciplinary and arbitration regulation of the Central Council, made up of five pastoral members (four in full connection and a full-time local pastor) as well as four laity, who have at least six continuous years as a professing member of the United Methodist Church, also as many substitutes. The election takes place after the recommendation of the Bishop.
2. The committee on appeals of the Central Conference is responsible for appeals in disciplinary proceedings against pastoral members.
3. The committee on appeals shall constitute itself and choose its rules of order and bylaws. Committee members, who might be party to a dispute or feel biased, shall be replaced by a substitute.

Paragraph 12 - The Judicial Court

1. The judicial court shall be composed of five persons of which at least two must be clergy members in full connection. At the same time four substitutes shall be elected, two of which shall be clergy members in full connection and two lay members. The candidates shall be persons of integrity and qualified for this task. They must not for the same period of time be members of the Central Conference, the executive committee, the working groups or the organs of the disciplinary and arbitration regulation. Their election follows the nomination prepared by the executive committee.
2. The judicial court shall constitute itself and shall provide its own procedural and working rules. A quorum shall be established by the presence of three members. A tie decision shall be decided by the vote of the chairperson. A member shall be excluded from a judicial process if he or she is a member of a church body, which is party to the case.
3. The judicial court shall meet as necessity calls at a place, which the chairperson shall name. The chairperson or a substitute shall be invited to the meeting of the Central Conference.
4. The judicial court shall make all judicial decisions in accordance with the constitution, excluding the jurisdiction of the Judicial Council of the General Conference.

5. The Central Conference may charge the judicial court with additional tasks.
6. The decisions of the judicial court shall have immediate effect. The option to invoke the judicial council of the General Conference in accordance with the constitution is hereby not affected.
7. The decisions of the judicial court shall briefly outline the facts and points of controversy as well as the rationale for the decision. All parties shall receive this document as well as the secretary of the Central Conference. It shall be published in the minutes of the following Central Conference session.
8. Petitions to the judicial court may be made by:
 - The Bishop of the Central Conference;
 - At least one-third of the voting members of the executive committee;
 - At least one-fifth of the delegates with voting rights present at the Central Conference;
 - At least one-fifth of the voting members present at the annual or provisional annual conference; in provisional annual conferences, which have fewer than 25 members, half of the voting members present.

Paragraph 13 - The Working Group on Episcopacy

1. The Central Conference shall elect a working group on episcopacy, which consists of one executive committee member from each annual and provisional annual conference. The nomination shall be suggested by the office. The Bishop shall choose one fifth of the members.
2. The working group meets at least once a year. It fulfills the tasks in accordance with the *Discipline* and reports directly to the Central Conference and the executive committee.

Paragraph 14 - Other Working Groups

1. The Central Conference can elect further working groups and authorize them to undertake specific tasks. The members of the working groups need not be members of the Central Conference.
2. In general, the working groups shall be comprised of three members. Vacancies shall be filled by the executive committee.
3. The chairperson of the working group shall be determined by the Central Conference. Otherwise the working group shall constitute itself.
4. The chairperson shall report annually to the executive committee on the activities of the working group. The reporting has to take place in writing and in the official languages of the Central Conference.

Paragraph 15 - The Session of the Central Conference

1. The session committee of the Central Committee consists of the chairperson, the secretary, the treasurer, the chairperson of the ushers (counters of votes), and the conference host. This committee shall make all decisions in all procedural or organizational questions, which are not

disciplinary question or which are not otherwise regulated in these rules of order. All members of the Central Conference have the right to appeal a decision made by this committee.

2. The approved program prepared by the preparations committee of the Central Conference is the official program of the session.
3. At the beginning of the first meeting the executive committee shall place a motion for election of the following persons:
 - 6 ushers (vote counters) (3 clergy delegates and three lay delegates) and a chairperson;
 - Two auditors of the conference minutes;
 - The reporters;
4. The Office lays the to do list before the conference for acceptance.

Paragraph 16 - The business meetings

1. No member of the Central Conference may be absent from the business meetings without permission, unless it is due to illness or other legitimate reason. In this case a written note indicating the reasons shall be given to the secretary in a timely manner.
2. The chairperson shall announce the presence of a quorum. The times of opening the meetings, recess, and conclusion of the day's deliberations shall be the decision of the chairperson. He or she shall preside over the deliberations.
3. The meetings of the Central Conference shall generally be public. Visitors shall sit in the area designated to them.
4. The chairperson may for selected business call for a closed meeting. He or she must announce a closed session when at least one-fifth of the members require it. Before the closed meeting begins all guests shall leave the conference room. The business of the closed meeting shall be confidential. The decisions of the closed session shall recorded in writing.

Paragraph 17 - Deliberations

1. Business may reach the Central Conference:
 - By motion of the chairperson
 - Through the reports of the organs of the Central Conference named under paragraph 3;
 - By motion of the annual and provisional annual conferences;
 - By motion of members of the Central Conference.
2. For the business meetings the following rules shall apply:
 - All motions and amendments shall be submitted by a member of the Central Conference and be supported by another member;
 - All motions and amendments shall be written in one of the official languages of the Central Conference and given to the secretary;
 - When an amendment is proposed and has been supported, the chairperson may limit debate to the proposed amendment. The same shall apply to amendments to the amendment. The discussion shall follow the reverse order of the submitted amendments;
 - A motion for reconsideration after the concluding vote on a petition may be made by a member of the majority vote fraction only.

- The following motions must be voted on immediately after consideration of the list of speakers: close of debate and motion to vote, motion to recess and postpone the meeting, point of order, matter regarding the agenda, commit to refer the matter for consideration to a Central Conference organ.

Paragraph 18 - Voting Procedure and Elections

1. Unless otherwise designated, voting is public. Elections may be public or by ballot.
2. Prior to the vote the chairperson shall offer a brief review of the amendments, which are on the table. Amendments to the amendment shall be voted on prior to the vote on the amendment and the vote on the motion itself, which is voted on a last.
3. Voting shall generally be a showing of hands. Only the votes of the delegates present at the time of the vote shall be counted. Abstentions shall be ignored. When there is a tie vote the motion is defeated.
4. When elections are open, the candidates shall be voted on in the order of their nominations.
5. Ballots shall be used for secret elections. Empty and invalid ballots shall not be considered in determining the majority. The ushers shall see that each voting ballot has a different color, format or print. They shall also count the number of voting ballots passed out. If the number of voting ballots turned in to be counted is higher than the number passed out, the vote is invalid and must be repeated. The ushers shall record the result of the election as follows: number of voting members, number of invalid voting ballots, and number of empty voting ballots and distribution of valid ballots.
6. If the election is to take place without nominations, the first two votes shall be open. After the second vote no further candidates must be included. As of the third vote the Central Conference may, following a motion of a member, declare in an open vote that the candidate with the highest number of votes below the absolute majority is elected. For the election of a Bishop paragraph 4 applies.

Paragraph 19 - Thematic Events

1. In regard to the tasks of the Central Conference as defined in the *Discipline* thematic events can be organized in connection with the meetings of the executive committee. The theme is selected by either the Central Conference or the executive committee.
2. Further persons who in their country work in this area or may offer further impulses to the annual and provisional annual conferences may be invited to the thematic events taking place in connection with the meeting of the executive committee. Generally not more than one person per country may be invited in addition to the executive committee members. The additional persons will be invited by the Bishop after consultation with the respective superintendent.
3. At the Central Conference the themes may be taken up again for consolidation and continuation or new themes can be initiated.

Paragraph 20 - The Conference Minutes

1. All Central Conference accepted reports, petitions and decisions shall be integral parts of the conference minutes and shall be included in the minutes in full.
2. After the revision through both of the auditors of the minutes and through the chairperson the minutes are valid and will be published.

Paragraph 21 - Final Provisions

1. Petitions to change these Rules of Order of the Central Conference require a two-thirds majority to pass.
2. These Rules of Order were adopted by the 2013 Central Conference and replace the previous Organizational Structure and Rules of Order from 2009. They shall take effect on March 16, 2013.
3. On March 10, 2017, the Central Conference amended the second sentence of Paragraph 4, point 2. The amendment takes effect immediately.
4. On March 8, 2019, the Executive Committee approves the deletion of the invalid postal address of Paragraph 1, point 5. The amendment takes effect immediately.
5. On November 17, 2022, the Central Conference replaced the first sentence in Article 4, point 2. The amendment takes effect immediately.
6. On November 17, 2022, the Central Conference added a sentence to the end of Article 7, point 2. The amendment takes effect immediately.

Procedural and working rules of the Judicial Court

General provisions

Article 1: Jurisdiction of the Judicial Court

The competences of the Judicial Court shall be those listed in Article 12 of the Rules Order of the CC CSE.

Article 2: Working mode in general

1 Wherever possible, the Judicial Court shall do its work in writing, in particular with the help of electronic communication (e-mail).

2 If special circumstances require so, the Judicial Court shall hold a meeting. In such a case it shall be able to take decisions if at least three members are present. The president shall decide on the order of the day. In principle, meetings of the Judicial Court shall not be public.

Article 3: Procedure

Without prejudice to the present rules, the Judicial Court shall proceed based on its free decision, provided that equality of treatment and fair hearing are guaranteed.

Article 4: Decision-making

The Judicial Court shall decide with the simple majority of the votes cast. Abstentions shall not be taken into account for these purposes. In the case of equal votes, the president of the Judicial Court shall decide.

Article 5: Working languages and languages of procedure

The working languages and the languages of procedure of the Judicial Court shall be German and English.

Procedure for formal decisions of the Judicial Court

Article 6: Standing

Applications for a formal legal decision to be taken by the Judicial Court within the meaning of Article 12(4) of the Rules or Order of the CC CSE shall be brought by the persons and groups of persons listed in Article 12(8) of the same Rules of Order.

Article 7: Written submissions

1 Applications for a formal procedure before the Judicial Court shall be made in writing. The written application is to be sent to the secretary of the CC CSE. An application by e-mail shall be deemed to have been received where the secretary has confirmed its receipt within 7 days after the application was sent.

2 The written application shall in any case contain the following information:

- a) Names of the parties

- b) Addresses, telephone numbers, fax numbers and (where applicable) e-mail addresses of the parties
- c) The application
- d) The grounds on which the application is founded.

3 The Judicial Court shall forthwith send to the defendant a copy of the written application. Within 30 days after the receipt of the application the defendant shall to the Judicial Court send a reasoned answer to the application in writing.

4 The Judicial Court shall forthwith send to the applicant a copy of the written submissions of the defendant.

Article 8: Oral procedure and procedure in writing

1 The formal procedure before the Judicial Court shall be conducted in writing. In special cases, the president shall be entitled to decide in favour of an oral procedure.

2 In the case of an oral procedure, the president shall decide on the place of the session and on the order of the day. At the beginning of the meeting, the Judicial Court shall appoint one of its members as secretary.

Article 9: Communication with the parties

1 Without prejudice to section 3 of the present article, the communication of the Judicial Court with the parties to the procedure shall, wherever possible, be carried out by e-mail.

2 Parties who receive e-mail messages shall immediately confirm their receipt. Absent such a receipt, the sending party shall repeat the sending of the message in an appropriate manner. Without prejudice to registered mail, the communication shall be deemed to have been received once its receipt has been confirmed.

- 3 The following documents shall be sent by registered mail as well, where applicable, by e-mail:
- a) The written submissions by the application (to be sent to the defendant)
 - b) The written submissions by the defendant (to be sent to the applicant)
 - c) The setting of any additional dates for action by the parties by the president of the Judicial Court
 - d) The formal decision by the Judicial Court.

Article 10: Participation of experts

The president of the Judicial Court shall be entitled to appoint experts, in particular from among the members of the United Methodist Church who may be experts in the relevant field.

Article 11: Decisions of the Judicial Court

1 The decisions of the Judicial Court shall contain information about possibilities of appeal. They shall be sent in writing to the parties, the secretary of the CC CSE and to the Bishop of the CC CSE.

2 The decisions of the Judicial Court shall numbered consecutively and shall be published according to Article 12(7) of the Rules of Order of the CC CSE in the next protocol of the CC CSE.

Further procedures

Article 12: Further tasks and informal requests

1 Where the CC CSE assigns further tasks to the Judicial Court based on Article 12(5) of the Rules of Order of the CC CSE, the president of the Judicial Court shall decide on the procedure.

2 The president of the Judicial Court shall decide on informal requests put to it by the Bishop or by other leaders of the church.

Entry into force

Article 13

The present procedural and working rules shall enter into force on 1 January 2009.

Done by the Judicial Court on 21 December 2008 and adapted on 30 March 2013 to the terminology of the Rules revised by the Central Conference 2013.

For the Judicial Court:

The president: Prof. Dr. Christa Tobler, LL.M.

I. Minutes

of the 75th meeting of the Executive Committee of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

Unauthorized translation - Original in German

Minutes of the Executive Committee of Saturday, August 27, 2022

Saturday, August 27, 2022, 9.00 a.m.

Online session via Zoom

Bishop Streiff welcomes all members of the Executive Committee. He reads us the sermon text of the coming Sunday from Jeremiah 2, 4-13 and points out that something like a summary follows at the end, in which what has been said is compared to a living spring and a cracked cistern that cannot hold the water.

⁴ Hear the word of the Lord, you descendants of Jacob, all you clans of Israel.

⁵ This is what the Lord says: 'What fault did your ancestors find in me, that they strayed so far from me? They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves.

⁶ They did not ask, "Where is the Lord, who brought us up out of Egypt and led us through the barren wilderness, through a land of deserts and ravines, a land of drought and utter darkness, a land where no-one travels and no-one lives?"

⁷ I brought you into a fertile land to eat its fruit and rich produce. But you came and defiled my land and made my inheritance detestable.

⁸ The priests did not ask, "Where is the Lord?" Those who deal with the law did not know me; the leaders rebelled against me. The prophets prophesied by Baal, following worthless idols.

⁹ 'Therefore I bring charges against you again,' declares the Lord. 'And I will bring charges against your children's children.

¹⁰ Cross over to the coasts of Cyprus and look, send to Kedar and observe closely; see if there has ever been anything like this:

¹¹ has a nation ever changed its gods? (Yet they are not gods at all.) But my people have exchanged their glorious God for worthless idols.

¹² Be appalled at this, you heavens, and shudder with great horror,' declares the Lord.

¹³ 'My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

The element of water is currently occupying us throughout Europe. In many places there was too little water. I wanted to go to the water with my grandchildren, but there was too little. God says here about Jeremiah that he is the source of living water. We all have a constant need to reach out and long for this living spring. In John, Jesus takes up this image of living water again (John 4:16). It is normal for people to be weary and to long for such a source. In Luke 11 the context is slightly different, there Jesus himself is tired and he himself needs this source, and the disciples asked him to teach them to pray. And Jesus taught them the Our Father prayer. Jesus himself needs this source of living water.

Prayer

The following people are participating in today's online meeting:

Voting members:

Bishop

Chairman	Bishop	Patrick Streiff	present
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Office

Vice-Chairman(s)		vacant	---
Secretary	Pastor	Markus Bach	present
Treasurer	Localpastor	Iris Bullinger	present

Executive Committee

Serbia-North Macedonia-Albania	Sup.	Daniel Sjanta	present
	Layperson	Daniela Stoilkova	from afternoon
Austria	Sup.	Stefan Schröckenfuchs	present
	Layperson	Ben Nausner	present
Poland	Sup.	Andrzej Malicki	from 10.30
	Layperson	Olgierd Benedyktowicz	present
Switzerland-France-North Africa	Sup.	Serge Frutiger	present
	Layperson	Lea Hafner	present
Czech Republic-Slovakia	Sup.	Stefan Rendoš	present
	Layperson	vacant	---
Hungary	Sup.	László Khaled	present
	Layperson	Henrik Schauermann	present
Chair WG Bishop's Office	Pastor	Jörg Niederer	present

Advisory members:

Retired bishop	Bishop	Heinrich Bolleter	excused
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Additional superintendents

France and Belgium:	Sup.	Etienne Rudolph	present
Algeria and Tunisia:	Pastor	Freddy Nzambe	excused
Albania:	Sup.	Wilfried Nausner	present
Czech Republic:	Sup.	Ivana Procházková	present
Romania:	Sup.	Rares Calugar	present
North-Macedonia:	Sup.	Marjan Dimov	present

Chairmen of the working groups

WG Theology and Ord. Ministries	Sup.	Stefan Zürcher	present
WG Liturgy	Pastor	Stefan Weller	excused
WG Church Order and Legal Affaires	Sup.	Serge Frutiger (Exec. Member)	present
WG Children and Youth	Layperson	Irena Stefanova	present
WG Women's Work	Pastor	Monika Zuber	excused
Coordinator	Layperson	Barbara Bünger	excused

Present as guests are:

Assistant to the bishop		Urs Schweizer	present
Staff in the bishop's office		André Töngi	present
Moderator Round Table		Matthias Bruhn	until noon

Total present: 23

Bishop Streiff: You have all received the agenda, can we proceed that way?

All agree.

A) Report of the Round Table

Bishop Streiff: The Round Table was able to meet in Budapest last week, we are very grateful for that. I give the floor to Stefan Schröckenfuchs to inform us about this.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: First I pass on greetings from Andrzej Malicki. He can join us today only belatedly. We have divided the reporting in such a way that I will first give an overview of our work and Matthias Bruhn will then present the result. The Round Table has been working intensively over the last month. We have met online and in Budapest. However, we are not yet done with our work. We will meet again in October in Budapest to finalize the documents. We are on a good way, and we are very grateful to have Matthias Bruhn with us as a facilitator. That is very helpful. I have the impression that we have found a good solution on how to go into the future together, with our different backgrounds. One important thing we want to introduce today is the Statement of Unity. Last time we had a discussion about what to expect from our worldwide church, and we found that this is not really foreseeable. It has to do with when the General Conference takes place and what they decide. We have decided, based on this debate, that we will not make any change in the understanding of marriage. Mutual trust has grown. We are currently working out what we will bring to the Central Conference.

It is important that we understand that the result is a compromise. Everyone has moved towards each other and left the original position. Matthias Bruhn will now inform us about the current status of our talks.

Matthias Bruhn: We met last week in Budapest. It was about what we can bring to the Central Conference. We continued to work on the criteria that we have presented before. They are general criteria:

A solution that is acceptable for all should fulfil the following general criteria (accepted 24th March, amended 19th Aug. 2022):
(criteria 2, 4 and 6 were called into question by country feedback.)

- 1) **The main message shall be the important message: „we want to live in unity even if we are not of one mind on every aspect.“**
- 2) **In questions of human sexuality, each country can follow local convictions and laws**
- 3) **No outside pressure on annual conferences and districts**
- 4) **We want to protect the unity of our CC using the process of adaptation (through translation) to avoid pressure from a GC. A solution must work also when the BOD is changed by a General Conference;**
- 5) Address communication aspects (within ACs and among ACs)
- 6) We want to end the discussion so that we may focus on the question, what our mission / task for the future is.
- 7) A bishop is expected to adhere to the principle of impartiality/multipartiality (Allparteilichkeit) and not to stress any personal views. A bishop cannot overrule the vote of the closed session concerning ordinations; still, a bishop's personal freedom of conscience must be accepted.
- 8) The ACs must respect the elected bishop in spite of the existing areas of dispute.
- 9) **In this round table process, we do not intend to change the definition of marriage.**

Matthias Bruhn: The previous criteria that we adopted on March 24 (1-8) were supplemented by a ninth criterion: the Round Table does not intend to change the definition of marriage.

Bishop Streiff: Questions for understanding can be asked in between, but Matthias Bruhn will go through all the documents before we go into discussion.

Matthias Bruhn: If there are no questions or additions by members of the Round Table, we will move on to the next step that we have taken. We have asked the countries for a reaction on the general criteria. The following feedback has come in:

Feedback from North Macedonia: Clear that the congregations are traditional (at least 90% of church and of general population). Homosexuals welcome in congregations but cannot be pastors and relationships cannot be blessed. Worried how cooperation between different practices shall work. If the pressure gets too big, the consequence could be to rather separate and be for ourselves.

Marjan Dimov: The description that 90% of the church and population are traditional concerns the society in North Macedonia, but in the church 100% are conservative.

Matthias Bruhn: Then I will correct that in the presentation.

Feedback from Serbia: Generally positive impression of round Table work. Specific questions:

→ what is unity, what needs to be implied? basic unity = administration, but must go beyond: spirit, love, relationship... → How can we make sure that our agreements will be binding?

Feedback from Austria: Annual Conference discussed all the points. Very important to Annual Conference to stay together! Focus on mission and on work with children and youth. Need to take reality seriously. Mission with youth is impossible if we cannot address issues of homosexuality. How can we do that so other countries do not feel that we put pressure on them?

Feedback from Switzerland/France: Annual Conference in June accepted "Kaleidoscope" with only very few "no"-votes. France (16 congregations, some 1500 people, 12 pastors; about 7 congregations want to stay, 7 want to leave; some are not homogeneous). Very complicated discussions. Some delegates didn't come to the Annual Conference. Those who came understood why kaleidoscope gives possibility to stay conservative within UMC. Others definitely will not stay in a church together with liberal elements. Some do not reckon with the church law; think they can just decide to leave...

Feedback from Hungary: Have to find an agreement among pastors in Hungary. The statement of unity is seen as the core of the process. Opinion among some: If UMC Hungary is not under pressure and can live according to own understanding, then we can live together. There is also an opposing group.

László Khaled: We have talked at the conference level only among the pastors. But we did not talk about this process of unity.

Feedback from Poland: The main focus of the Annual Conference this year: elections of the General Superintendent - Andrzej was re-elected with the perspective to continue the work at the round table. Continued discussion with pastors on Round Table subject. About 95% want to remain in UMC, want to be respected with conservative view which is also in internal law and state laws. Clear vision: we have to work on preparing our own statement of unity. Please work hard and bring back a result, which is possible to accept by UMC and Central Conference CSE.

Feedback from Czech Republic: In one Annual Conference with Slovakia - Slovakia wants to join Global Methodist Church. District council Czech Republic needs more time to discuss, so far not ready to confirm that each country should decide and that we end the process quickly. These would "run ahead of General Conference".

Bishop Streiff: Thank you for that insight that we got.

B) Proposals of the Round Table for motions on the common future in the Central Conference CSE, incl. possible changes in the regulations of the Central Conference CSE and/or the Discipline of the Central Conference CSE.

Matthias Bruhn: We have made progress in the text for unity, but we have not yet reached the end. We don't know yet if the word unity meets the concern. Currently the draft looks like this (original text in English):

Draft statement of unity as of 18th August 2022

Unity statement of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe:

Jesus prayed for his disciples: "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me." (John 17:20-21).

In the Church at large, as well as in the central conference of Central and Southern Europe, we are not of one mind on all parts of the Social Principles and its consequences on the polity and practice of the Church. Despite intense listening, conferencing, and examination of the Scriptures, we nevertheless differ about what forms of human sexuality and of faithful, committed relationships we can endorse and bless. However, we value the commandment of Jesus for unity and mutual love as core to our faith, binding us together despite divergent understandings.

We abstain from putting pressure on each other. We trust that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we will make good decisions for the welfare of our church and of those to whom we are sent in our Annual and District Conferences.

The Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe values the Social Principles as an important call to conscience, and at the same time acknowledges the country-specific differences with regard to individual topics. It allows each country that so wishes, to keep its understanding of marriage and human sexuality and testify to it in its internal regulations. Thus, the central conference wants to continue a common journey in mutual respect, connective conferencing, and support in mission.

Matthias Bruhn: Two points currently remain open for discussion/clarification:

1. The title - Statement of Unity. Can we speak of unity even if we allow diversity?
2. The fact that the definition of marriage should not be changed should possibly also be included.

Matthias Bruhn: We also discussed the following points:

1) *There must be an Option for any country that chooses to remain with the present Discipline if the Discipline is changed on General Conference level (to be proposed to the Central Conference 2022).*

The text is as close as possible to the present discipline and can be approved by the CC as a possible adaptation for countries and Annual Conferences that choose to do so.

2) *To add the Statement of Unity at the end of the preface to the Social Principles (to be proposed to the CC 2022)*

3) *Revise the present traditional wording in the social principles and in par. 341.6, so that it allows an opening for countries that so choose.*

We came upon more details to discuss:

→ Pastors shall not be forced to bless same-sex couples against their conviction.

→ If the state law is liberal, who will decide about blessings or even weddings –the pastor or the church?

4) *The General Board of Church and Society has proposed revised Social Principles to the 2020 General Conference. The wording on marriage in this proposal is not an option to be used in our current process because this would change the definition of marriage as a covenant between man and woman.*

Matthias Bruhn: We now have two requests:

1. We asked the small group to further develop its existing suggestions according to the discussions mentioned above.
2. The members of the Executive Committee are asked to present these interim results to their Central Conference delegates.

Bishop Streiff: Thank you very much! Are there any questions of understanding?

Bishop Streiff: If there are no questions of understanding, I would like to make a few more remarks before we go into the break. The Executive Committee initiated the process with the Round Table. Therefore, it is clear that the Roundtable gives its feedback to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will report on this process and make the requests to the Central Conference.

However, the process is not yet finished. But the delegates need to know where we currently stand. It is important that the delegates receive an interim report. How we want to do that is something we need to talk about.

You have heard that the Round Table will meet again in October. Based on that, the final report will go to the Executive Committee first, and then we will decide what will go to the Central Conference as a proposal.

Bishop Streiff: After the break, we will begin the discussion on the Unity Document.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: I ask that we all get the English and German text.

Bishop Streiff: I ask my assistant to send us these texts.

We take a break.

Saturday, August 27, 2022, 10:35 a.m.

Online session via Zoom

C) Possible planning for further work of the Round Table until the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference CSE

Bishop Streiff: I would like to get feedback from as many as possible on what they think about this Unity Statement. We can't discuss every piece of feedback, but it is important that we get an overview of where we stand. Then we will proceed section by section.

Irena Stefanova: I would like to tell about the situation of our church in general. The current discussion divides us. It is the result of the fact that we have been dealing with ourselves for a very long time. If we want to find a way that does not divide us but unites us, perhaps focusing on the Great Commission is the way we can work together. I am sure that living unity is a mandate for our church - and that we live God's mission. I think that we should put our focus on this way so that we can live together.

Ben Nausner: First of all, many thanks to the round table. You have produced an important document and have had intense discussions. In general, I can agree with this document. My question is about the feedback from the countries on this document where there is talk of pressure or there is a need for security that things will not change. I think the document gives clarity that we want to be together, but also that we have different views and accept that from each other. I consider that a strong message. I also understand the question of whether the term "unity statement" means an understanding of unity or of accepted diversity. Unity is a strong term and articulates what we need.

Rares Calugar: Romania is one of the countries that does not participate in the Round Table. For me, the mission is important. We talked about things that separate us, but we have to be able to learn from each other. When I look at how much good we can do with each other, for example for Ukraine, and then I see how much time we spend on this process - given all the difficulties in the world, it makes me think. I see how important the process is for us to be together. On the one hand, I want to pack my things and leave as soon as possible, but on the other hand, I want to appreciate the process and getting closer to each other. I am in a difficult situation to say this. You know that in the Annual Conference we decided to leave the UMC on May 1, 2022, but in our country we decided to stay for the time being because we want to honor the respect and the relationships on the way we have been walking so far. And when the common path comes to an end, we want a good ending. I hope that we can continue to support each other. Our country is currently more concerned with the question of how we can serve Ukrainians. I may experience a lot of support from the Central Conference - this is something we can lose. We could imagine being an autonomous church for a moment, but we don't know that yet. We are grateful for the 12-year journey we have been able to walk with the bishop and are grateful for his leadership and support from the Central Conference. What is important for us is how this time will now end, which is why we have decided to stay

on - at least until the new bishop or bishops are elected and we see what the future will bring us.

Wilfried Nausner: First of all, we would like to thank all those who worked on the process and took over the moderation. It is a good proposal that we can work with and build on. The question of unity is important, and you have also chosen the right biblical background for it. There is one question that I would like to give to the roundtable for consideration: Is it good if only the Central Conference agrees to this statement? Wouldn't it be just as important for the Annual Conferences to do the same and thus express their attachment to the Central Conference? After all, it is the Annual Conferences that send delegates to the General Conference. We need this connection if we want to stay together as a Central Conference, no matter what the General Conference decides. And we should definitely express that, especially through the Annual Conferences. If Annual Conferences have a different opinion in the General Conference, that does not end the relationship with the Central Conference. To be very clear, if Bulgaria leaves the UMC, it does not end the relationship in America, but it ends the relationship in Europe. What actually broke is the relationship that we had. So we have to make a statement about what relationship we want to have with each other in Europe.

Stefan Zürcher: I am also very grateful for the work of the Round Table. I support the present statement, it is a good text. For me the third part is important, that there should be no pressure and that we help each other to find trust in each other, so that we can live our mission in the different contexts of our countries. I have one question: what exactly does it mean if we don't want to change the understanding of marriage? What are the consequences?

Henrik Schauermann: I have two thoughts/impressions: The sentence is missing here that the Round Table agreed that the understanding of marriage will not be changed. Secondly, I don't quite understand that the Central Conference understands the Social Principles as a matter of conscience - even though they are part of the Church Order that cannot be adapted. It is not just that we value these principles as good thoughts, but they are an important part of our faith. The whole church order is not only an interesting book and has a higher value than this text.

Bishop Streiff: I have made a note of this question and will come back to it later.

Jörg Niederer: For me, the Unity Statement is a good proposal, that is helpful for us. My only question is where to place this text in the Church Order. Like Henrik, I wonder how that should work if the Social Principles are not adaptable. From my point of view, the Preface is already part of the Social Principles and thus no text should be introduced after it.

László Khaled: In connection with what Henrik and Jörg mentioned, I would like to say that in the Round Table process we also discussed this question. In the Central Conference we have the understanding that the Book of Discipline is the basis for our being church - not only the Social Principles, but the Book of Discipline. We have the same church order, and that unites us.

Bishop Streiff: We will move on to the rest of the process. Stefan Schröckenfuchs will briefly tell us again how things will proceed.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: One of the questions is where we give our understanding of unity. We had a long discussion about the Social Principles, whether they are adaptable or not, and also about their place in the Church Order. For this, the preface of the Social Principles seems to me to be helpful:

Although not to be considered church law, the Social Principles are a prayerful and reflective effort of the General Conference to address the existential issues of people in the contemporary world from a sound biblical and theological foundation - as demonstrated by the traditions of the Methodist churches. They are a call to conscientious living and are intended to enlighten and convince in a good prophetic spirit. The Social Principles represent a call to all members of the United Methodist Church to engage in thoughtful, prayerful dialogue about faith and action.

We therefore do not understand the Social Principles in the same way as the other texts of the Book of Discipline. It is the text itself that has this understanding. We therefore take the Social Principles as seriously as they want to be taken, but just not in the same way as Canon Law. The current idea is now that we insert the Unity Statement before the texts of the Social Principles. This way there can be room for different understandings that we need. One thing we have also discussed is the reference that the General Conference will change the Social Principles. And then it might be understood differently than we have it now. Now the Social Principles have a line of sight to a Western worldview. But we need a much bigger view. We need the possibility that we can stay with the traditional texts, even if the General Conference will change the text. We hope that here the small group on church discipline with László, Serge and the bishop can help us on how to use our adaptation or translation possibilities so that Social Principles can on the one hand maintain its understanding of marriage as a covenant between a man and a woman, and on the other hand also prevent this from being understood in other contexts as discriminating against lesbian, gay or queer relationships. We are still working on this.

With regard to Stefan and Henrik's question about what it means that the understanding of marriage should not be changed, I can say that it is a clear promise from the members from the Round Table that we have made to each other that we will not change this definition. We don't know what will happen or how we will react if the General Conference changes this and how it will be possible that in traditional countries the understanding can be maintained.

Moreover, it should be remembered that not changing the understanding of marriage does not mean at the same time that there should not be other possibilities for blessings of persons in special relationships, especially also in countries where the national law gives these possibilities. So it does not mean that there is a total ban on blessings for same-sex relationships in our church. We are also still working on Art. 341.6¹ where we came to the understanding that the focus here is from a situation like it is in the United States, that church marriages are also state marriages. That is not usually the case in our country - with the exception of the Czech Republic, where we have the same circumstances as in America. So we have to think about how we understand it in those countries where the background is different than in America. Here, we are not yet finished with our discussions and considerations and therefore could not yet present any texts on this.

¹ 341.6: No pastor(s) shall conduct celebrations for same-sex couples, and such celebrations shall not be conducted in our churches.

Bishop Streiff: Point 3 mentions that we need a change in Art. 341.6. We have on the one hand the criteria in the Unity Statement, but also the statement that we are not changing the concept of marriage in the Social Principles. This ultimately raises the question of how we can remain in a church that is open to blessings of same-sex relationships, those congregations that have a traditional understanding. We need to find a way within the current Social Principles to articulate the traditional Christian understanding of marriage in a way that is at the same time open to countries that want to give the opportunity for same-sex relationships to be blessed. We are still working on that. We have some proposals, but haven't had time to deal with them yet. This includes pointing out that Art. 341.6 is in the other part of the Church Order.

Why should the Unity Statement be inserted at the end of the Preface to the Social Principles? The Social Principles are the only place in our Central Conference Church Order where there is a definition of marriage and the sentence that practiced homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. And because it is the only place, it is the best place for this unity statement in this open portion of the Preface. We all need to learn that the Social Principles, while not directly adaptable in a Central Conference, do have a different status than the other parts of the Church Order. This other part of the Church Order is called Church Law. If someone violates it, that person can be sued for it. But you cannot bring a lawsuit against someone who violates the Social Principles because it is not church law.

In addition, it must be kept in mind that the Social Principles want to lay the foundation and encourage dialogue about faith and action for the whole church. In the text on the right of adaptation of a Central Conference, it is my understanding that we cannot simply include a completely different text in the Social Principles because they are not adaptable. But we can, as we have done in the past, add a footnote that points to a particular interpretation of the text for our Central Conference, how we want to go into the future. For example, the Kaleidoscope of the Switzerland-France-North Africa Annual Conference is also a statement of intent, but not an amendment to the Church Order. Similarly, the Round Table suggests that we put the spirit of the Unity Statement first, that while we do not change the definition of marriage, we give those countries that want to be open to blessings for same-sex couples the opportunity to be able to realize this.

Wilfried Nausner: I have many open questions about this, and I assume that you have already taken them on board. Currently, we understand Christian marriage ceremonies as described in the Church Order. To be clear: We do not celebrate sex. We celebrate the union and the responsibility that the couple enters into. They make a promise to each other to do so. And we celebrate that the couple integrates sex into that responsibility. When we bless other relationships besides marriage, it must also be done in that responsibility. It takes a promise for us as a church to join in the celebration. There are still many questions to be answered that I don't see answered yet. We need to be clear about what we want to celebrate as a church and what we don't want to celebrate. We still need many discussions here.

Ivana Procházková: I want to mention briefly what my understanding of marriage is. It is not about rituals and festivities, and it is not about a moral evaluation. We discussed it at the round table. In the Czech Republic, we were not there at the beginning. But I experienced the atmosphere in such a way that it was about finding a way that is possible for everyone. Many thanks for that!

Bishop Streiff: When I hear these voices, I hear that we as an Executive Committee want to come to a clear proposal to the Central Conference, even if there are still some questions that the Round Table has to work on. But I have also heard a lot of support for a unity statement. One question that is still open is whether the end of the Preface to the Social Principles is the right place. It will also be important that we develop a summary of the work of the Round Table so that we can take the other delegates to the Central Conference. We see it in ourselves how much time we need to understand everything. I don't think it will be helpful if we just give the delegates a text right before the Central Conference. We need to take them on a process that the Round Table has gone through and that we have now gone through.

Jörg Niederer: I would like to come back to point 2 on the place of insertion of the Unity Statement. The proposed place is certainly the best place to insert it. But the preface is also part of the Social Principles, which is why the insertion there is not possible. I would not insert the Unity Statement as a footnote either. I therefore suggest that the Unity Statement be inserted directly before the Social Principles, after Part 3, "The Ministry of All Christians," as a separate part of the Church Order.

Bishop Streiff: Let's come back to the unity statement. We're going to go section by section. We had some feedback on the title. Is there any more feedback on that?

Markus Bach: I know too little English to make an exact suggestion. I notice in the Bible text that Jesus says "you shall be one". In German, 'to be one' is not the same as 'to be unified'. Perhaps there is also a word in English that makes this clear. But I can also live with the word 'unity' because it points out what we want to be: We want to stay together.

Andrzej Malicki: In the round table discussions we had also talked about the title "Statement of mutual respect", but chose the other title.

Bishop Streiff: We are returning that feedback to the roundtable.

to section 1:

Bishop Streiff: This Bible text was chosen because it is a prayer and comes from Jesus himself. It also shows how important "unity" is among the disciples.

on section 2: no feedback

to section 3:

Ivana Procházková: Here I have a question about the term "good decisions". Is this the same thing we discussed before, between diversity and unity as between Canon Law and Social Principles? For example, if at a later stage we understand unity in the way of Canon Law and not in the way of Social Principles, I think that would create something like a framework or a field where it is possible to deal with each other in mutual respect.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: I would like to comment on two things: To Ivana, I would like to say that the understanding behind the term "good decisions" is that we trust each other, that we make sure that it is the best for all of us. But we will have to look at that again in detail at the roundtable.

Regarding the title, I would like to mention something about the difference between "unity" and "mutual respect". I don't love this term "mutual respect" because it implies too much distance. But the document wants to express that we trust each other. For me, that is the important message of this document. We know that we are different and live in different contexts. Therefore, we also need different solutions on how to deal with certain issues. And we have the trust that we want to seek the best for each other in all areas of our church, so that we help each other to do our mission.

Matthias Bruhn: After all, I am not a member of the Executive Committee, but my job is to support communication, and a thought came to me while listening: We will be doing different things in different countries, but we also have common encounters where we may encounter the differences. That can lead to difficulties, and we need to think about how we want to deal with that. I think it would be good that we also include a sentence about communication - so how we want to deal with it when we are irritated by each other, or so that we don't irritate each other. It's really difficult to accept that someone has a completely different point of view. I could imagine a sentence like, "When there are difficulties, we don't stop being in conversation with each other."

Bishop Streiff: What you are referring to, we have also addressed several times in the Annual Conference Switzerland-France-North Africa: that the vote on the kaleidoscope is not the end, but the real beginning of how we want to deal with each other and remain in conversation, even if there are difficulties.

on section 4: no feedback

Bishop Streiff: Thank you very much! That helps us currently to understand where we are and also to recognize what all has been done so far. We have a draft here, and on the next page we have the next steps that the Round Table wants to take. I would also like to take up a point made by Wilfried Nausner that Annual Conferences should enter into an agreement with the Central Conference. This would go further than the Round Table intended so far. It is less about the text, but more about the process we want to shape together in the future.

Wilfried Nausner: I think that is the question that is still open. It is the question of how we accept the Central Conference. We can respect the General Conference relatively easily and still break relations because they broke them on another level. But the question is how we respect our future being together as European Methodists. Is that a part on the agenda of our Annual Conferences? Do we see ourselves as people who have been working and living together for a long time? We are making a decision for the future and for future generations. It is not about what is currently our personal opinion, but about the fact that the Church is beyond that: it is a unity that has lasted for centuries. We have the responsibility to ensure that this unity continues, and this is shown by how we treat each other in Europe. This needs responses from the Annual Conferences that this is something they want. That is something that we can then also see. We can have different opinions, all over the world. I could name many more difficult problems that we disagree on than sex. We can only be together and find solutions if we do so together and with hope. This is what we should talk about in our Annual Conferences and what we should say ourselves. If we as Annual Conferences do not speak out about the Central Conference, we will have lost touch with what has shaped us for many

years in Europe. And such steps cannot be taken lightly. Even a General Conference cannot make such a decision lightly, as has been done.

Bishop Streiff: Thank you very much! It is helpful to hear your explanations. I ask Matthias Bruhn to include this consideration in the roundtable. It seems to me that this could be included as an additional item in the criteria, at the beginning, where we mention the things that are important for us to be together.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: What Wilfried says is very important. The support and responsibility for the Central Conference come from the Annual Conferences. In our timeline, we did not have time to consult the Annual Conferences before the Central Conference. However, it may be a possibility that the next Central Conference will make a recommendation to the Annual Conferences to discuss this issue and ratify the Unity Statement. The risk is that an Annual Conference might decline to do so. This would create new questions. But it would be important that this question comes from the Central Conference to the Annual Conferences.

Bishop Streiff: Thank you very much for this helpful and important aspect for our future work and life as a Central Conference. We have been working on this draft from the Round Table until now and have heard how the Round Table wants to continue working on it at the next meeting in October. This is about an overarching text on the Social Principles that we all agree with, that informs how we can move together into the future, even if the Church is going to change the Social Principles.

We now move from the current situation to the preparation of the Central Conference. We don't have a definitive motion that we can talk about now. But we have a process and a draft and elements that we want to work with further. How do we communicate that? Should the chairs of the Round Table together with Matthias Bruhn write a report about it, which we can send to the delegates already now? Or is that too early? We have to decide together how to inform the delegates about this process.

Markus Bach: I know that there will be meetings of delegates in Switzerland in the coming weeks where they will discuss the Central Conference. We should send them a document describing the current situation. It can be noted that it is a draft and we will continue to work on it. But it would be good if we could publish a document describing the current situation.

Lea Hafner: I support this idea and would also like to suggest that we also explain this paper at the meetings.

Serge Frutiger: Lea and Markus say the same thing I wanted to say. It is very important that we take the delegates along the way.

Ben Nausner: When we talk about the draft, are we just talking about the Unity Statement? Or are we talking about everything that we talked about?

Bishop Streiff: My opinion is that it is important that the delegates get a good insight into the work of the round table and not just the draft unity statement. They need to hear about the criteria and the next steps, even if it's just the headings, so they can see where we are in the process.

Ben Nausner: I'm happy to agree with that. Then I would add one more point: There needs to be a timeline of what the next steps are and when the delegates will get more information as well.

Andrzej Malicki: It is our task to inform the delegates. In some countries there are few, in others there are more. We will meet as a round table in October and as an executive just before the Central Conference. We will approve the report in October, which we can then pass on so that we can decide as a Central Conference in November. I am therefore also voting for us to draw up and pass on such a report.

Bishop Streiff: Is there anyone who disagrees? Otherwise, I take it as a consensus that we send out such a report.

There are no contrary expressions of opinion.

Bishop Streiff: May we ask Andrzej Malicki and Stefan Schröckenfuchs together with Matthias Bruhn to prepare such a document? It should be ready by about two weeks so that we can send it out with the other documents by mid-September.

The aforementioned are in agreement.

Bishop Streiff: There is still a question about the timeline. The Round Table will meet next on October 18-19, 2022. The only Executive Committee meeting after that will be right before the Central Conference on November 16, 2022. Do we see a need to have another Executive Committee meeting in between? Since it is the Executive Committee that will make the motions, it could also be tight if we have to decide on the motions just before the Central Conference. We will clarify this question with each other in the afternoon.

Bishop Streiff: Many thanks to Matthias Bruhn for his valuable work in the round table. Is there any comment from you before you leave us?

Matthias Bruhn: Thank you very much for letting me be part of it, it was inspiring for me. The only point to comment is that it is not possible for me to put much time into a summary next week. After all, the report has to be more than the presentation.

Bishop Streiff: Markus, can you tell us when you need the reports for the sending out?

Markus Bach: In the next few days we will send out the invitation with the agenda and the rough program together with the registration. I will point out that the other documents will be sent out in the next two weeks. That should probably be possible with most of the documents, and if they are ready later, I can also do a second mailing.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: I'm not so happy when we have time pressure. I am happy when we have a little more time, as Markus says. Many texts are available, but we have to clarify with each other what we compile into a report and how. But more important to me is that the delegates can discuss it, and we have to make that possible. I hope we can produce the document in the next two weeks. But it will be important that we have a discussion about it.

Bishop Streiff: It would be helpful if the report is available in both German and English by September 15, 2022. It would also be helpful if the members of the Round Table in October already had reaction from their delegates on this.

We interrupt for lunch.

Saturday, August 27, 2022, 1:00 p.m.

Online session via Zoom

Bishop Streiff: We will start with the report of the Office of the Central Conference but will not read it out.

Report of the Office of the Central Conference CSE (1.1, with enclosures 1.2 to 1.7)
represented by Markus Bach, Secretary

To 1 Presence and negotiation reports

No questions.

To 2 Planning for the meetings of the Executive Committee and the Central Conference

To 2.2 Extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference from November 16-20, 2022

How is the required quorum of 3/5 calculated in the election of bishops?

The Office of the Central Conference makes the following motion:

Motion to the Executive Committee: The Executive Committee proposes to the extra session of the Central Conference to replace the first sentence of Article 4.2 of the Rules of Order of the Central Conference as follows: "The Bishop shall be elected through secret ballot with a three-fifths majority of the voting delegates present who take part in that ballot and cast valid votes. Empty ballots shall also count among valid votes."

Bishop Streiff: This motion will change our regulations and will be presented to the Central Conference before the election of bishops.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: I have a very theoretical question: If it says here that no new people can be elected after the 1st ballot, and if all the people mentioned resign after the 1st ballot, then we no longer have the possibility to vote. What happens then?

Bishop Streiff: If that happens, the Central Conference can decide to start again with a new first ballot.

Bishop Streiff: If there are no more questions, are you ready to vote on this motion?

The Executive Committee unanimously decides to propose to the extra session of the Central Conference to replace the first sentence of Article 4.2 of the Rules of Order of the Central Conference as follows: "The Bishop shall be elected through secret ballot with a three-fifths majority of the voting delegates present who take part in that ballot and cast valid votes. Empty ballots shall also count among valid votes."

Bishop Streiff: We will put this on the agenda of the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference CSE.

To 3 Information about the church in Bulgaria

Bishop Streiff: We will pass this report on to the Central Conference, with a small addition: we have received the decision of the Court of Justice of our Church in the last few days. There is an addition at the end of the text. Basically, the Court of Justice has said that we adhere to the letter and adhere to the doctrine as the Book of Discipline states. Jurisdiction is not possible because the request was not made by a member of the Annual Conference. However, several members of the Legal Court have clearly articulated that they believe what has happened is a simple circumvention of Canon Law.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: Does this have any influence on the coming meeting of the Central Conference or on the future direction of the Central Conference, or even on the election of a bishop? Will there be delegates from Bulgaria to the Central Conference?

Bishop Streiff: No. The church in Bulgaria has decided to leave the UMC, thus they are no longer a member of the UMC and also not in the Central Conference. One cannot be a member of two different Methodist churches at the same time. By joining the Global Methodist Church they automatically left our church. So there are also no members from Bulgaria in the Executive Committee and in the Central Conference. But Romania is still a district of the EMK, even though the Annual Conference no longer exists as a Provisional Annual Conference with us, because it is too small for that.

To 4 Financial:

Markus Bach: I would like to make a note and a motion regarding the budget. The budget item "Youth Council (EMYC)" contains a total of CHF 20'000.00 for the years 2021 to 2024. This also includes CHF 10'000.00 for the EMYC, which never met in 2021 and 2022. I hope that the EMYC will take place again in 2023 and 2024, therefore we have increased the budget to CHF 20'000.00.

It is important that we can meet again and gain trust in each other. Meetings, especially those of young people, are very important for this. I hope that the children and youth working group will become active here and that we will also support them in this from the Annual Conferences.

In order to make the finances a little easier to handle, I propose that the unused funds for the EMYC may be used for Central Conference youth meetings. The Central Conference office should be able to decide on this. Therefore, I make the following motion:

Motion to the Executive Committee: The funds included in the budget "Youth Council (EMYC)" can also be used for youth meetings within the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe. The Office of the Central Conference decides on the use of the funds upon request of corresponding initiators.

Urs Schweizer: Is this budget item money for a membership fee to EMYC, or funding for the group. Depending on that, it might be difficult to need the money for something else. Maybe Stefan knows more?

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: I can't answer the question. I suspect that it is about membership fees. I see that in 2020 and 2021 nobody paid membership fees except Italy. I love the motion from its intent. I wonder more if our Children and Youth Working Group with two co-chairs, Boris Fazekas and Irena Stefanova is able to organize such meetings. If it is able to do so, we will always find the necessary finances.

Irena Stefanova: At the moment I am not able to organize a meeting due to health reasons.

Bishop Streiff: The background of the motion is that we have heard that EMYC has a lot of money that it doesn't seem to need. There are no meetings at this time either. The intent is that we as a Central Conference have the ability to speak funds for a Central Conference meeting. The problem is that if EMYC is not happening, our Children and Youth Working Group is not meeting either. But if there is money, meetings within the Central Conference can be funded.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: I would encourage to accept this motion, but also that there are meetings within the Central Conference, at least meetings of the Central Conference delegates. I know that there was no meeting in 2022, and I have no idea if there will be one in 2023. However, it is very important that the youth leaders be able to meet. However, I have a hunch that they will need not only financial support, but also other help to be able to organize such a meeting. If EMYC takes place in 2023, it can decide what to do with the contributions of the last years. But I don't even know if they will ever meet again.

Markus Bach: Of course, that wouldn't be good if they stopped meeting. But I would like to give an answer to Urs. When I was traveling with EMYC, the membership fee was not that high. Most of the costs were incurred by the travel expenses of the participants. There have also been no invoices for membership in recent years. If they are still coming, they will of course have to be paid. But I believe that most of it is for travel expenses that have not been incurred. It would be better if the EMYC would take place again, and what is with the finances is a smaller problem for me.

Wilfried Nausner: I would like to remind what the EMYC is and why nobody takes responsibility. The EMYC was the youth commission of the EMC. Then it was released into independence. Therefore, EMYC is seen as a separate organization that is not part of a whole. I think it is the EMC's problem that they have allowed this to happen. They now need to clarify: either continue or stop doing it. I would prefer it if the European Youth Center continues. But someone has to take responsibility for it, especially in view of the fact that no one is doing anything anymore. There is an urgent need for action here. Historically, it would be the EMC. We must not mix these levels.

Bishop Streiff: In recent years, there has been some kind of connection with this independent organization. But we have to keep in mind that the EMYC is older than the EMC. However, I don't think it does us any good now to get into a discussion about the EMYC. The question is about our budget for 2021-2024, i.e. whether the budget money mentioned there can also be used for Central Conference youth meetings. Are you guys ready to vote on this?

The Executive Committee unanimously decides that the funds included in the budget item "Youth Council (EMYC)" can also be used for youth meetings within the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe. The office of the Central Conference decides on the use of the funds upon request of corresponding initiators.

Bishop Streiff: The rest is information. We will present the 2023-2024 budget to the Central Conference.

To 5 Adoption of the draft Historical Statement (v3) for the attention of the Extraordinary Session of the Central Conference (#3d).

Bishop Streiff: We have already talked about this as well. The text has been changed in a few places. The additions concern the services of the bishops in our Central Conference, whose work I have provided with a little more "meat on the bone". In addition, recent events with Romania and Bulgaria have been taken into account. In addition, I have made a reference to the name of the new bishop / bishopess, but this can only be added after the Central Conference.

Jörg Niederer: I noticed in the abbreviations that the abbreviation EA was applied differently ("Evangelical Association" and "Eurasia"). Also in the German text there is "EA" on page 8, where it should actually be EG (for "Evangelische Gemeinschaft").

Bishop Streiff: I will still check on that. Thank you for pointing that out. Are there any other references?

Markus Bach: Which of the documents will be the original document? This text should be at the beginning of the Church Order CSE. This exists only in German. Is then also the German text the original text? We have no church order in English, what happens with the English text?

Bishop Streiff: That is correct. The original text will be the German one. The English text will be a help when the Church Order is translated into the language of other countries. It is usually easier to translate from an English text than to find someone to translate from German.

Bishop Streiff: Are you ready to vote on the motion?

The Executive Committee unanimously the document "Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe - Historical Statement" and submits it to the extra session of the Central Conference 2022 for inclusion in the Discipline of the CC-CSE.

To 6 Information on the right of adaptation of Central Conferences (#3e)

Bishop Streiff: This document comes from the discussion we had at the Round Table. It is meant to help everyone in the Central Conference understand what is meant by adaptation and how far a Central Conference's right to adapt goes. In point three, I show what the possibilities are for district conferences and countries. I have also included my thoughts on this. It could be that at the central conference the question comes up whether something is within or outside the right of adaptation. And I will have to make a decision then. From this document, you can see what I will be guided by, what is possible or not.

In point 4, I bring an example based on Art. 341.6. I will keep this example for the text to the Central Conference, but will take out the reference to the footnote because we found at the Round Table that it does not reflect the situation in all our countries. However, it is possible that the Round Table will prepare a proposal for a footnote. This document will be submitted to the Central Conference for information.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: I'm not sure if the whole paragraph needs to be deleted or just part of it. The main content of your footnote is about pointing out that this is a US context and we live in different contexts.

Bishop Streiff: I will leave the comment on that, but I will delete the italicized suggestion. The Round Table knows about it, and we will continue to work on it. Likewise, the small group on church order will look at it. I'd rather not include a proposal now that then doesn't fit the Round Table proposal.

To 7 Amendment of the Regulations for By-elections to the Executive Committee for the attention of the Extraordinary Session of the Central Conference (#3f).

Bishop Streiff: In item 7 of the report of the Office we have another proposal for a change in the Rules of Order of the Central Conference.

Bishop Streiff: Can we take a vote on this?

The Executive Committee unanimously decides to the extra session of the Central Conference to amend the Rules of Order of the Central Conference in Article 7.2 at the end as follows: "If needed, an Annual Conference may elect additional reserve delegates."

To 8 Amendment of the Pension Plan CC CSE

Bishop Streiff: We continue with the proposed changes for the Pension Plan of the Central Conference. You will find one text each with the visible changes incorporated and a final text. We have motions on the open portion of the Pension Plan that we can amend. It concerns the questions of what happens when a country leaves the Church, and thus also leaves the Pension Plan. We can vote on that as an Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee unanimously approves the revised regulations of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe Pension Plan, rev10 of 25.5.2022 and 24.7.2022.

Bishop Streiff: We will discuss the other parts of the office report later.

Report of the Working Group on the Episcopate (4.1 , with Supplements 4.2 - 4.7) represented by Jörg Niederer, Chairman

Bishop Streiff: We have received various documents from the Working Group, which we have also already seen.

Jörg Niederer: We will send various documents to the delegates of the Central Conference. There are no changes in the bishop's job description. There are several changes in the schedule, especially in the dates. The list of ordained elders has been brought up to date. There are also few changes in the declarations. There are also minor changes in the procedure for electing a bishop. The personnel sheet is unchanged.

Bishop Streiff: We will only discuss the documents that have undergone changes. On the schedule, I will add for submission to the Central Conference the updated dates that will come through the Council of Bishops. The Council of Bishops wants to have a short online meeting in December to welcome all the newly elected bishops. That will be between 15 and 17 people. Most of them are from the U.S., three are from the Philippines, and my successor or successors will be there. There will be no bishop election in Africa. You will also see here

some indications of how the handover/retirement will be handled. Joerg, I and the newly elected person will go through the data following the Central Conference and see what is the most helpful way. Are there any questions about this?

Bishop Streiff: The list of eligible elders has been updated. Please check if everything is correct, especially regarding your own countries, and report immediately to Jörg if you still find errors.

Jörg Niederer: The explanation of the list makes it clear how it came about. There were only editorial changes.

Bishop Streiff: Are there any questions about the election process?

Jörg Niederer: I have another question myself. We have mentioned that between the 1st and 2nd ballot the staff sheet has to be filled in. The 1st ballot will take place on Thursday evening. The staff sheets should then already be distributed to the delegates the next morning. I have the impression that this might be too close.

Bishop Streiff: Please clarify with Markus Bach how you want to handle this so that it matches the schedule. It may also be that the morning is available for the gathering.

Bishop Streiff: Then we come to the first motion of the Working Group on Episcopacy.

The Executive Committee unanimously decides that the above six documents, with the latest changes, be given to the delegates of the extraordinary Meeting of the Central Conference CSE on November 16-20, 2022 as a foundation for the election of a bishop.

Jörg Niederer: I have been asked by colleagues from our conference if they can receive the list of eligible elders already now. May we now give this document to the delegates to the Central Conference? After all, it is not a secret list.

Bishop Streiff: The list will be distributed in mid-September. Is there a reason to have this earlier?

Jörg Niederer: A group of delegates from the Annual Conference Switzerland-France-North Africa is meeting next Saturday and would like to have the list. For me it would just be helpful to know what is allowed.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: As I understand it, this is a list of publicly accessible data. I don't see any problem in passing this on. The conversation is probably important in larger conferences.

Bishop Streiff: Does anyone see a problem with this list being passed around before Joerg officially sends it out? I don't see a show of hands.

Jörg Niederer: Then we come to the second motion of the working group on the episcopate. It is about the duration of the first term. We in the working group are of the opinion that re-election for life after only two years is too short a time to be able to decide. Therefore, we would like to extend it to six years until the next but one Central Conference. After consultation with the bishop, we have made another small change in the English version that makes the motion more understandable. We will submit this proposal directly to the Central Conference as the Bishop's Office Working Group.

Motion to the extraordinary session of the Central Conference 2022: The new election of the bishop for a first term of office will take place until the regular session of the Central Conference following the regular General Conference that will follow the General Conference of 2024 (presumably GC 2028 and CC 2028/29) - in deviation from Art. 4.3 of the Rules of Order of the Central Conference, which provides for a first term of office of four years.

Bishop Streiff: The motion is somewhat awkwardly worded because we cannot say exactly when the next sessions of the General Conference and Central Conference will take place.

Jörg Niederer: If there is no opposition to this now, we as the Working Group Episcopacy will bring this motion in our report to the Central Conference. We would like to sincerely thank the Office of the Central Conference, the bishop and his assistant Urs Schweizer for all their support.

We take a break.

Saturday, August 27, 2022, 2:40 p.m.

Online session via Zoom

Draft of the official invitation and agenda for the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

represented by Bishop Patrick Streiff

Bishop Streiff: Our next topic is the preparation for the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference. You will find information about this in the office report under 2.2. Are there any questions about the preparation process?

To A) Official invitation (#1a)

here are no requests to speak.

To B) Official Agenda (#1b)

Bishop Streiff: It is important that we mention everything we want to discuss. We cannot include any other reports or motions. We are only allowed to talk about what is on the agenda.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: Item 4 is the agenda for the report of the Round Table. There will also be motions in our report, but they have not yet been formulated. How do we deal with this?

Bishop Streiff: The thinking is, that in item 4 we will have the report of the Round Table. That way the delegates can understand the whole process. But the motions will be made by the Executive Committee on the report from the Executive Meetings under item 5.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: What is meant by the "consensus procedure" in point 5c?

Bishop Streiff: This is the procedure that we used in Budapest. The goal is not, that we have a consensus on everything, but that at the end of the process everyone has been able to give their opinion and know that they have been heard.

Serge Frutiger: The word "consensus" could be confusing if there doesn't have to be a consensus. It actually paints a wrong picture. Shouldn't we be talking about a vote after all?

Bishop Streiff: The document we had in front of us in Budapest makes it clear that we will still have a vote at the end, and that it does not have to be unanimous. But it is true that consensus can be understood in different ways. We have not sent you this document now, but it will be sent to the delegates. And then they will understand what it is about.

Ben Nausner: There are two terms I know: "consensus" and "consent". But they don't mean the same thing. With consensus, we usually discuss until everyone actively agrees to a proposal. With consent, we instead deliberately ask, if anyone has an objection to the proposal and therefore 'actively' rejects it. I have had very good experiences with the consent process. Perhaps this will help.

Bishop Streiff: That could be helpful. I'm going to look into that. We will then still look at the guidelines.

Bishop Streiff: There will be an addition to the agenda under 3 with the request for a change in the Rules of Order for the calculation of the quorum in Art. 4.2.

Bishop Streiff: When the Central Conference is constituted, there will also be a motion to justify an election of bishops. This document has also been sent to you. It explains the background of why we can have a bishop election at an extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference. The goal is that when we are constituted, we accept this procedure and are prepared to proceed in this way. This will be important if later someone were to question this election because we had not followed the Church Order. But we have found a narrow way through Constitutional Article 46 that makes the election possible. The Philippines will also hold their episcopal elections on this ground. In the United States, they can hold ordinary jurisdictional conferences.

To C) Provisional rough program, incl. spiritual elements and celebrations (#1c)

Bishop Streiff presents the rough program and asks that all delegates take advantage of the opportunities to talk with each other and get to know each other. It will also be important that all delegates be present for the consecration of the new bishop on Sunday afternoon and not plan their return trip for Sunday morning.

Jörg Niederer: It will be important that we discuss the report of the Working Group Episcopacy before the first ballot. Because we have our motion on this.

Bishop Streiff: Yes, it will be important that we do this beforehand. This is a rough program that doesn't have all the details yet. But we will take the hint.

Henrik Schauer mann: If the service starts at 2.00 p.m. I would like to ask how long the service will last. Possibly it will be too late after the end of this service to travel home the same day.

Bishop Streiff: I expect the service to last about an hour and a half, perhaps longer. Probably it will not be possible to leave the Minster before 4:00 p.m. But Urs may know more.

Urs Schweizer: We have to leave the church at 4:00 p.m. because it will be used for another event and has to be prepared for it.

Henrik Schauermann: Then it would be helpful, if the end of the service is also included in the rough planning, so that the return journey can be planned accordingly.

Bishop Streiff: That's a helpful comment, and we're happy to take it.

To D) Request to the members of the Executive Committee for nominations for the by-elections at the extraordinary meeting of the CC (#9a - Info about necessary by-elections)

Bishop Streiff points out that the members of the Executive Committee have received a list of the current elections. We have asked all of them if they would like to continue in office. The office report lists all who are stepping down for the 2022 Central Conference and also all vacancies.

If there are proposals from a conference for an election, these are to be sent to the secretary Markus Bach or to the bishop. It should be noted that certain elections are only possible for members of the Central Conference or the Executive Committee. For other elections it is possible to nominate persons from the whole church.

To Documents of the European Bishops (Supplements 5.1 - 5.5)

Bishop Streiff gives an overview of the documents on leaving the UMC that they have prepared as European bishops. The documents 5.1 to 5.3 are for information (leaving of lay people, pastors, Annual Conference). They are based on the Book of Discipline.

Bishop Streiff: Enclosures 5.4 and 5.5 are a bit more complicated and need a motion in our Central Conference. 5.4 describes the withdrawal of a District Conference covering a whole country, i.e. how it can withdraw from the UMC in agreement with the church. In this document, we were still unsure whether we could invoke Article 2548. This week the Judicial Council decided how to deal with this. As a result, these documents are no longer as feasible as we would have liked. I therefore sent you a new proposal last night. In order for such an orderly departure to be possible, we need a temporary article in our church constitution. I ask you, if you have contact with the WCA or the Global Methodist Church: do not share this document with them. On a global level, the climate is so bad, that there is a great danger that it will only be about harming each other. There is a great danger, that if a complaint is made to the Judicial Council, the Council will have to decide unilaterally in favor of the UMC, and then such a course of action will not be possible.

Wilfried Nausner: Don't we talk too much about those who want to leave the UMC? Shouldn't we talk more about how we can bring positive messages to the world that we are and can be together? There are way too many negative messages about the UMC at the moment.

Bishop Streiff: That's absolutely right. Take a look at www.umc.org/en/who-we-are/our-people/beumc. There is much there that is different and gratifying about what makes our churches tick. For example, the recent speech by the president of the Council of Bishops.

Bishop Streiff: So we will forward these documents to the delegates. Are there any other comments on this?

Serge Frutiger: I would like to point out two more things: Wilfried pointed out the positive things that we should mention. I think Stefan Schröckenfuchs and Andrzej Malicki could present the interaction of the Round Table as something positive.

The second concerns the timeline in the document that the bishop sent us last night: Shouldn't it say 2022 instead of 2023?

Bishop Streiff: It should actually read 2022.

Markus Bach: I would still like to ask the question who makes the motions on these documents. Is it the bishops, that is, you as our bishop, or is it the Executive Committee? Who makes the motion? If it is the Executive Committee, then we still need a meeting of the Executive Committee before November 16, 2022, but I can also imagine the bishop making that motion. I think this matter is so complex that we can vote on it, but we can hardly have a real discussion about it.

Bishop Streiff: I'm not sure I can bring a motion to the Central Conference. In the American context, that would be unthinkable.

[subsequent note by the secretary: article 17.1 of the regulations of the Central Conference:

Paragraph 17 - Deliberations

1. Business may reach the Central Conference:

- By motion of the chairperson]

Markus Bach: If the motion will not come from you, then we need an additional meeting of the Executive Committee to decide on it.

Bishop Streiff: I would be fine, if the Executive Committee could look at this and make the motion on this.

To 6. Miscellaneous

Next dates of the Executive Committee

Bishop Streiff: We still need a date between the next meeting of the Round Table and the Central Conference in November. Do you agree with that? That seems to me to be balanced.

Markus Bach: I suggest that we meet on an evening date.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: I think it would be helpful if we could have a short meeting. We have passed on a lot of information now. I think we should get through in an hour and a half to two hours. That seems to me to be better than no meeting at all.

Bishop Streiff: What is the goal we want to achieve with this session? In the case of information, we can keep it shorter. With an adoption of the motions, we need more time.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: It also depends on what we present and how we do it. We won't be able to have an editorial meeting about it.

Markus Bach: I don't think we can work very much on the report of the Round Table and possibly change it. We should understand it and be able to comprehend it as it is and then pass it on to the Central Conference. If we have to discuss it for a long time, it will be difficult whether we can make a motion at all.

Andrzej Malicki: Stefan's suggestion is clear to me. In one to one and a half hours we should get through.

Henrik Schaueremann: We only have a few delegates. We can inform them well. I think that we need to inform well and do not need an additional meeting of the Executive Committee. I don't have any spare capacity.

Bishop Streiff: Then what we'll do is we'll do a two-hour additional online meeting one evening just for the Roundtable report. I'm going to create a Doodle poll and ask you to put your options in it.

The next Executive Committee meetings are:

- Online meeting on Thursday, October 27, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. [Addendum by the Secretary].
- Meeting on Wednesday, November 16, 2022, 9.00 a.m. in Basel (arrival the day before)

Meetings of the new Executive Committee:

- Constituent meeting on Saturday, November 19, 2022, 2.00 p.m., in Basel
- Expected next meeting: June 29 - July 1, 2023 (No March meeting!).

Bishop Streiff: Many thanks to all who have contributed in the background to this meeting and to the meeting of the extraordinary Central Conference.

Followed by prayer and blessing by the secretary.

The Secretary:
Markus Bach

These minutes of the 75th Session of the Executive Committee of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe, held on August 27, 2022, were reviewed and declared correct.

The auditors of the protocol:
Lea Hafner and Jörg Niederer

II. Minutes

of the 76th meeting of the Executive Committee of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

Unauthorized translation - Original in German

Minutes of the Executive Committee of Thursday, October 27, 2022

Thursday, October 27, 2022, 7:00 p.m.

Online session via Zoom

Bishop Streiff extends a warm welcome to all members of the Executive Committee. He begins with prayers from the "Methodist Prayer Handbook" of the British Methodist Church, which includes prayers from our Central Conference for today. He reads from it the prayers for the countries in Albania, Hungary and North Africa.

The following people are participating in today's online meeting:

Voting members:

Bishop

Chairman	Bishop	Patrick Streiff	present
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Office

Vice-Chairman(s)		vacant	---
Secretary	Pastor	Markus Bach	present
Treasurer	Localpastor	Iris Bullinger	present

Executive Committee

Serbia-North Macedonia-Albania	Sup.	Daniel Sjanta	present
	Layperson	Daniela Stoilkova	from afternoon
Austria	Sup.	Stefan Schröckenfuchs	present
	Layperson	Ben Nausner	present
Poland	Sup.	Andrzej Malicki	from 10.30
	Layperson	Olgierd Benedyktowicz	excused
Switzerland-France-North Africa	Sup.	Serge Frutiger	present
	Layperson	Lea Hafner	present
Czech Republic-Slovakia	Sup.	vacant	---
	Layperson	vacant	---
Hungary	Sup.	László Khaled	present
	Layperson	Henrik Schauer mann	present
Chair WG Bishop's Office	Pastor	Jörg Niederer	present

Advisory members:

Retired bishop

Bishop	Heinrich Bolleter	excused
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Additional superintendents

France and Belgium:	Sup.	Etienne Rudolph	excused
Algeria and Tunisia:	Pastor	Freddy Nzambe	excused
Albania:	Sup.	Wilfried Nausner	present
Czech Republic:	Sup.	Ivana Procházková	present
Romania:	Sup.	Rares Calugar	present
North-Macedonia:	Sup.	Marjan Dimov	present

Chairmen of the working groups

WG Theology and Ord. Ministries	Sup.	Stefan Zürcher	excused
WG Liturgy	Pastor	Stefan Weller	present
WG Church Order and Legal Affairs	Sup.	Serge Frutiger (Exec. Member)	present
WG Children and Youth	Layperson	Irena Stefanova	present
WG Women's Work	Pastor	Monika Zuber	excused
Coordinator	Layperson	Barbara Büniger	present

Present as guests are:

Assistant to the bishop		Urs Schweizer	present
Staff in the bishop's office		André Töngi	present
Moderator Round Table		Matthias Bruhn	present

Total present: 24

Bishop Streiff: You have all received the agenda, can we proceed that way?

All agree.

Bishop Streiff: The minutes of the last Executive Committee meeting on August 27, 2022 were approved by the reviewers for the minutes. The minutes are on the Dropbox and have been sent to us.

The proceedings of the spring meeting in Mulhouse were prepared by the secretary and have been printed. We have already sent copies to some of you. Many thanks to the secretary for the great work.

Brief information about the District Conference Slovakia

Bishop Patrick Streiff

Bishop Streiff: You have heard in the news that our church in Slovakia decided a good week ago to leave the UMC. I will write a report for the Central Conference, which contains a bit more information than the news could report.

Their resignation with immediate effect also means that they can no longer participate in the Central Conference or in today's meeting. One pastor and one lay person from Slovakia were elected for the Central Conference, but they will no longer be present. However, we will have three lay people and three pastors from the Czech Republic at the Central Conference. At the Central Conference we will also have to change the name of the Annual Conference to the Annual Conference of the Czech Republic. In addition, at a later stage we will also have to clarify whether the Annual Conference can remain a fully-fledged conference or has to be changed into a provisional Annual Conference. This depends on the number of pastoral members in it. However, we will not do that at the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference.

Markus Bach: Until now, Štefan Rendoš was a voting member of the Executive Committee as Superintendent of the Czech-Slovak Annual Conference. He is now no longer on it. Could we therefore give Ivana Procházková the right to vote for the Annual Conference and elect her as a member to the Executive Committee?

Bishop Streiff: That is a good indication. That's something we can do right now. Do you guys agree with that?

The Executive Committee unanimously elects Ivana Procházková as a voting member of the Executive Committee of the Central Conference CSE with immediate effect.

Jörg Niederer: Štefan Rendoš was also a member of the Working Group Episcopacy. Can he also be replaced there by Ivana Procházková?

Bishop Streiff: In the Working Group Episcopacy, the representative of an Annual Conference does not necessarily have to be a superintendent. I therefore propose that Ivana Procházková take the place on the Working Group Episcopacy until the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference, and then we will make the official election to the Working Group. Do you agree with this?

The Executive Committee unanimously elects Ivana Procházková as a member of the Working Group Episcopacy until the extraordinary session of the Central Conference.

Report of the Round Table on the Common Future in the Central Conference CSE represented by Andrzej Malicki and Stefan Schröckenfuchs

A) Report of the Round Table

Bishop Streiff: The Round Table was able to meet last week. Stefan and Andrzej will introduce us to the report. We then have to decide what we will bring to the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference.

Andrzej Malicki: We agreed that I would start. As you know, not everyone was satisfied with the decisions of the 2019 General Conference. In Monospitovo, we decided to install a round table. Because of the pandemic, it was not always possible to meet physically. I don't remember how many times we met to do our best. We have representatives from the western and eastern parts of the Central Conference: Lea Hafner, Marjan Dimov, Ivana Procházková, Daniel Sjanta, László Khaled, Stefan Schröckenfuchs, Etienne Rudolph, Barbara Bünger as well as Andrzej Malicki. We were also happy to have Bishop Patrick Streiff among us. I and Stefan were elected as co-chairs. After a certain time we realized that we needed external help for moderation, and we could find it in Matthias Bruhn. Especially in the last months we met often after physical meetings became possible again. So we could also still explore Budapest, because some of our meetings took place in Budapest.

The Round Table, as you know, has developed a package of measures that will be presented in this final report that we plan to present to the extraordinary session of the Central Conference. It was a very good collaboration, because I could sense that we were striving to find a common way that we want to go as Methodists in our Central Conference. And we have been working hard on that. We have produced a document "Declaration on Unity," but we have changed the title to "Call to Unity." The point is that we are called to stay together even when we disagree. We also had to realize that the UMC in Bulgaria and Slovakia have left us. But it is our wish that the rest of us stay together, no matter what happens in further General Conferences. This wish is important for us. We hope that with our work we were able to work out what will help us in the different countries and in the future. I would like to express my appreciation to all the

members of our Round Table. And of course, all of us, especially the members of our Round Table, are happy to answer any questions.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: You have all received our report. I don't want to repeat anything. But it will be good if we give a little more "meat on the bones" than is written in the text itself. We have listened carefully to each other. It was important that we considered our different situations. It was also important to distinguish what would be helpful and what is allowed. It was important for us to do what is important, but also what is (just) allowed. This is also how we defined the criteria for our work. On the other hand, we worked intensively on what is now formulated as the "Call to Unity". We struggled over every word. One of the questions was how we could insert the text into the church order.

We have always been very careful to make sure that what we do is consistent with what we are allowed to do in our Central Conference. And so at the beginning of the report you will find this basis for the work of the Round Table. It's a statement that makes it clear that what we've done is something that we're allowed to do - and that describes why some things may be worded in a somewhat complicated way. What we have prepared is a package of four elements that build on each other.

The first thing we came up with were general criteria (Part A - General Criteria), which served as a basis for us to outline a way forward for remaining together in the Central Conference. And we found that this was helpful not only for our roundtable work. It could be helpful for the Central Conferences as well. It highlights the important message that we want to live in unity even when we disagree. The general criteria emphasize that each country can and should follow local beliefs and laws. They underline that we do not want to be pressured from the outside, nor do we want to pressure each other, but we want to protect the unity of our Central Conference by using the process of adaptation. And in the end, it was very important that we stipulated that no member of the Round Table intends to change the definition of marriage, because that was one of the open questions that had to be answered. So all you will find under the letter A are these general criteria that we recommend be adopted by the Central Conference as part of our report.

The second thing we spent a lot of time on was "Call to Unity" (Part B - Call to Unity). We need a text that provides a theological foundation, as well as a clear statement of how we want to stay together - and that we feel called to stay together. Believe us, we tweaked almost every word. A big question was where is an appropriate place to put these statements and this call. Since the text belongs to the Social Principles, it is our proposal to place it there as well. We propose to place this statement in the Church Order of the Central Conference right before the preface to the Social Principles.

The third part is "Internal Regulations for an Annual Conference or District Conference of a country". They are intended to incorporate what was stated in the first two parts. The point is that the Central Conference allows Annual Conferences or District Conferences of a country, based on their own decision, to adhere to the previous texts of the Church Order or to change or delete negative restrictions on the practice of homosexuality in the legally binding parts of the Church Order. This applies in particular also if the General Conference should change texts on homosexuality in the future.

The fourth part we have called "Overarching Texts" for the Church Order, which should apply to all countries and conferences. There are not so many texts. They are two articles in the Social Principles and one article in the Church Law section. We want to footnote these so that we can deal with them in a helpful way.

For us as a Round Table, it was important to put together a whole package. Our intention was that all participants of the round table could agree to this package.

Bishop Streiff: Thank you for this introduction to the final report of the Round Table. We will now go through this report point by point and everyone can bring their questions and comments. At the end we will decide how to deal with it. The texts can still have grammatical errors, then write these corrections to Markus Bach. So we can now concentrate on the content.

Bishop Streiff: On pages 1 to 3 we have the actual report of the Round Table, which we can take note of. In the appendix we then have the recommendations of the round table in a clear version and at the end another version with the changes as they will then be included in the church order.

Bishop Streiff: Are there any questions about A) "General criteria"?

Ben Nausner: What exactly is meant by point 5, the consideration of communication aspects within the ACs and between the ACs?

Matthias Bruhn: This sentence comes from the situation when we were looking for common solutions in the Round Table. We knew that the proposed solution might have seemed sensible to us at the Round Table, but needed careful explanation to others. So we always wanted to look at the end of the meeting to see what we could communicate and how we were doing it. And always at the next meeting we asked how it was received. Does that help?

Ben Nausner: Yes, that helps. Maybe in the new context of the Central Conference, it would help if it was a little more paraphrased as to what is meant by that.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: These criteria have helped us in terms of how we can work together. It wasn't mainly about us formulating criteria for the Annual Conference on how they should communicate.

Bishop Streiff: That certainly helps us anyway, as we report from the Central Conference in our Annual Conferences.

Bishop Streiff: Then we go to part B "Call to Unity". Are there any questions about that? We changed the original title "Unity Statement" to "Call to Unity." When I was finalizing the report, I realized it would be better if we used a verb: Called instead of vocation. However, this suggestion came after the last meeting of the Round Table. Therefore, the newest title should be "Called to Unity". But it is up to you what title you want to give the document.

Andrzej Malicki: Your suggestion is more personal, and I have no objection to changing the title. It also sounds better in the German version. From my point of view, this change is OK.

Markus Bach: I agree with Andrzej. The headline is more personal and therefore better.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: Ivana, there were comments about the title from the Czech Conference in the Round Table. How do you see it with this change?

Ivana Procházková: I don't have a problem with the change either. In Czech, the difference is not very big.

Bishop Streiff: Then we can take a vote. Who is in favor that we change from "call" to "called"?

The Executive Committee votes unanimously to change the title to "Called to Unity."

Bishop Streiff: The Round Table suggests inserting the text before the preface of the Social Principles. Is the floor desired for this?

Bishop Streiff: If there are no questions or feedback on that, we will take it that way.

Bishop Streiff: Then we come to Part C, the "Internal Regulations for an Annual Conference or a District Conference of a Country". Two different variants have been worked out for two different situations in the countries. Are there any queries or comments on this?

There are no requests to speak.

Bishop Streiff: Then we move on to D, to the "Overarching Texts" in the Church Order of our Central Conference with footnotes.

Henrik Schaueremann: Do I understand correctly that we are not changing the text in the Social Principles, but adding footnotes that are inconsistent with the text?

Bishop Streiff: The answer is yes. We cannot change the text of the Social Principles.

Henrik Schaueremann: If someone reads these footnotes in the Social Principles that contradict each other, they won't know what our stance is. It will cause confusion.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: There are various aspects. The Social Principles are not part of the legally binding texts. They cannot be sued for. They are helpful and good texts. So we are not making an actionable mess. But we are pointing out that we have different opinions. What we can say together is that we have different opinions here. It is possible that in 2024 the Social Principles will change, but we don't know exactly how. That's why we want to work out a solution now that will make it possible for us to stay together later, even if we don't agree in the future. That's what we can say together, that we want to stay together even if we don't agree. And because we can't say it any other way, we say it with footnotes.

Second, we allow the various Annual Conferences or District Conferences to stay with the old, traditional text, even if the Church Order at a future General Conference turns away from it. You can then adopt what works for you in your translations. Was this helpful?

Henrik Schaueremann: No, not really. We are anticipating the General Conference with these formulations and assume that there will be changes. But we don't know that yet.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: In Part C we decide on changes to our church order - completely independent of what changes the General Conference will decide on to the church order. In Part D we describe what we want to decide now, in case the General Conference will decide on a change in the area of homosexuality in the future. Therefore, we cannot interfere with the text of the Church Order, but we can indicate what our intention and understanding is. Perhaps Matthias Bruhn can explain this even better.

Matthias Bruhn: There is a great chance that the next General Conference will move to a more liberal stance. At the Round Table, we therefore wanted to find a way to respect and protect ourselves now and in the future. We therefore sought protection so that those countries with a traditional stance can formulate now what their stance will be - and that we will assure them of this. Countries with a traditional position should also be able to have a traditional position in the future. And the Central Conference should assure them of this now. It is about respecting each other now and in the future. It is about the traditional countries being protected. That's what these various text amendments are designed to do. I hope that was helpful.

Bishop Streiff: We see that it is a very difficult thing to explain this to people who were not present at the round table. It was important for us to find a solution now that will also be helpful in future decisions.

Lea Hafner: It was not enough for us to just give each other a verbal commitment that even if the General Conference makes a more liberal change, we can keep the traditional position where it is desired. We wanted to have that put in writing. We tried to include that with the footnotes that we are already deciding on.

Daniela Stoilkova: I see it as a good way to move forward.

Irena Stefanova: It is the same for me.

Serge Frutiger: I was not officially at the Round Table, only occasionally in between. I find it a helpful text.

Stefan Weller: The text sounds to me as a very carefully formulated text. We can discuss in many places and always ask what is meant by it. I hope we can all live with it, even if we could perhaps still make changes. It is good because we worked it out together. And that is why it is very good. It seems almost sacred to me.

Markus Bach: It is not the text that is important, nor do I know whether it is sacred. The most important thing is not the text itself, but our attitude behind it.

Bishop Streiff: Thank you very much for your feedback. Are there any comments on the fourth part?

Ben Nausner: I can only underline what I said before. I am very grateful for this text. It is noticeable that you have listened to each other in different countries and situations. I am very grateful that you have worked out this text in this way.

Matthias Bruhn: I think that the people who said something before also meant it for this fourth part.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: For the 2nd footnote, we didn't have that much discussion at the Round Table because the topic wasn't really very controversial. Maybe that is reflected in our silence, that there is not so much material to talk about that part.

But I want to emphasize again what has already been said. Our goal was really to consider how things need to be formulated so that we can stay together when the General Conference makes future decisions. Because in 2019 there were situations that we were not prepared for, and therefore caused the problems. And now, with these texts, with these decisions, we want to go into the future. We have a basis on which we can say: This is the way we want to go. And we will not be surprised.

Bishop Streiff: Then let's go now to D.3, which is about a footnote to Article 341.6. Is there any feedback or comments on this?

There is no feedback from the Executive Committee.

Bishop Streiff: When we go to the Central Conference with this text, the delegates will have their questions about how to deal with it. And then we must be able to give an answer. It will be very helpful that we have already dealt with possible questions.

Bishop Streiff: This brings us back to the whole report. It should go to the Central Conference as a whole package and be presented with a single motion. The Central Conference should be able to approve or reject all motions. It will not be possible for it to accept individual motions and not others. We will of course go through all the texts, but in the end, we will decide on the document as a whole.

Bishop Streiff: Are you ready for us, as the Executive Committee, to bring this concern to the Central Conference with the recommendation that the motions be adopted and implemented?

The Executive Committee agrees with one dissenting vote to the adoption of the report and the proposals of the Round Table and submits them to the Extraordinary Session of the Central Conference 2022 with a request for approval and implementation.

Bishop Streiff: We will submit this document to the Central Conference slightly revised to fit the Central Conference. If you find any spelling errors, please let the secretary know.

Bishop Streiff: How do we proceed now? We have already talked about this at the Round Table. The suggestion was that the Executive Committee be asked to set up a group to make a presentation to the Central Conference. This should include the co-chairs and Matthias Bruhn in consultation with the bishop.

The Executive Committee unanimously agrees.

Bishop Streiff: I would like to sincerely thank the two co-chairs for their commitment to the Round Table - but also Matthias Bruhn for his helpful moderation. We found how helpful it was to be able to meet locally. Thank you for the Executive Committee providing the finances for this. That was very helpful.

Markus Bach: I have another question regarding the reports of the Round Table to the Central Conference. Is it correct that we now have two reports from the Round Table? The first interim report, which I already sent to the delegates in September, and now this final report?

Bishop Streiff: Yes, we have already sent the interim report and will now send the second, final report to all delegates with the official proposals of the Executive Committee.

László Khaled: Didn't we also want to talk about how we vote on this?

Bishop Streiff: We have said that we will present the whole package, which we can agree or disagree with. We will discuss each section and also allow that changes can be made. But in the end, we will vote on the whole thing with a motion and we need a well qualified majority for that.

It was also a question of what qualified majority we need for the vote. We found out that due to the withdrawal of the UMC in Bulgaria and in Slovakia, the majority of Switzerland-France-North Africa in the Central Conference is proportionally larger. Of course, not all members in this conference are of the same opinion. However, about 60% of all participants come from this Annual Conference. Therefore, in the Round Table, we argued that we need a clear majority for these motions. It would not be good if only a few over 50% were in favor or only one or two countries agreed. Is that what you were referring to, László?

László Khaled: Yes, that was one reason for my question. If we want to agree to this unity understanding, then we need a bigger majority than a simple majority. The other reason of my question is that there is also the possibility that we put the three parts of the report A, B and C separately to the vote or present them as a whole package.

Bishop Streiff: In the Round Table, we advocated making the decision in one package. But we have not made a proposal with which majority ratio we want to vote.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: We discussed two different questions at the round table without determining a final solution: The first question was about the majority issue, where we assumed at least a 60% majority as in a bishop's election. Should we go to 75%? We asked ourselves: is that high enough? Does a country that does not agree to this solution have the option of letting everything die? Should a country have that option? Do all countries have to agree? We should set a quorum now, but I don't know what really serves either. We have some countries with few votes. Another question is what happens if we fail. Would the round table then have to continue? Our understanding then is that the roundtable would have to expand its work, which is not what the roundtable members would want. They would be happy, of course, if the work could be completed and they could devote time to other things. Is there a way to find out which we prefer: 60% or 75%?

Andrzej Malicki: It is important that we can win a larger majority for this. 50% plus one vote is too little. I don't have a suggestion how high it should be, but it must be a larger majority.

Bishop Streiff: That is why we work with the consensus method. This does not mean that we aim for a 100% majority. But it is clear that the large majority must agree.

Jörg Niederer: I don't know if a slightly larger majority is helpful. We really need the approval of as many delegates as possible. If it's really only 50% who are behind it, that doesn't help, not even 60%. We really need a very large majority that wants to implement this and thus expresses its will that we want to stay together.

Bishop Streiff: I hear that we can't set a majority now, but that we want a very large majority.

Urs Schweizer: We have 68 voting members at the Central Conference. A 60% majority corresponds to 41 people, which again corresponds pretty much to the Switzerland-France-North Africa delegation. It would be more important to me that as many countries as possible, agree to the document than that individuals are counted who agree. That would be more important for our common future as a Central Conference. But the problem lies in how we can count that. When we look at this text, everyone has really contributed, and everyone has taken a step toward each other. It's not about fighting for positions, it's about finding a common path. And I think that should also be reflected in the way the proposals are adopted.

Matthias Bruhn: There is a voting procedure called "Systemic Consent," which involves asking everyone if they can accept something or how much resistance they have to a particular proposal. And it involves asking people to go into the discussion after a vote and especially to listen to people within the conference who say they have a strong sense of opposition to what is being proposed. In the preparation group, I would discuss with you how we might use this method. It would also give us a sense of whether there are a lot of people in the room who are uncomfortable with what is being proposed. And it also gives us an opportunity to compare a number of different options. So if we present the roundtable proposal and maybe somebody suggests an alternative and says "If we change this or that, that might be a better option for me," then you can easily vote on a set of options. You discuss the options and then come up with a solution that hopefully will meet very little resistance. So, in a way, that would be in line with what you said, Mr. Schweizer, that you can look at that. It makes things very transparent where people are not comfortable. I think that has something in common with the consensus method, but I think it is a little bit more detailed.

Wilfried Nausner: Thank you, Matthias, for what you just said. I think that we are only at the beginning of a process. You told us that the Round Table agreed that we are called to unity. That call needs to find more substance and more reality in our relationships. It is not enough to be guided by the outcome of a Central Conference decision. Otherwise, it will be like the General Conference, which is in a hamster wheel with always the same theme. The Round Table has helped us in this process to take steps out of this hamster wheel. There are so many open opportunities for collaboration, for common interest in each other, for lived community, that these majority issues are really small issues. But we have to get out of that first. And that means we also have to get to a different style of conference.

Let me just say this much: it is good that we have taken these first steps, but we are not there yet. And when we present this document to the Central Conference, we do it because we have common ground on the road to unity, but not because we are already there. We still have a lot of work to do. It's a process, and I think we should tell that to the Central Conference. Please don't think we already have everything we want, but they are steps in the right direction. Let's look at it, and I am grateful for everyone who has taken a step in this direction.

Bishop Streiff: Are there any other requests to speak? You see how helpful it is that we have Matthias Bruhn with us in this process. On the one hand, he is an outsider, and at the same time, he has a lot of expertise that helps us structure this process so that we can listen to each other and find good ways. Thanks also to László for reminding us of this question.

Report of the Working Group on Church Order and Legal Affairs

represented Serge Frutiger, Chairman ad interim

Bishop Streiff: At the Round Table we also encountered a problem with our constitution in the Church Order. It is not correct because, on the one hand, we have an article 6 in it that has not been confirmed by the Annual Conferences. And on the other hand, we have some recent changes from 2016 which have since been confirmed by the Annual Conferences. In document #5a.1 you will now find German language suggestions where and how the Constitution needs to be changed. In document #5a.2 you will find the whole constitution with the marked changes. Many thanks to the Working Group that worked on this German text.

Bishop Streiff: Is there a need for discussion?

The Executive Committee has no need to talk.

Bishop Streiff: Then we will also submit this request to the Central Conference for a vote. Do you agree with this procedure?

The Executive Committee unanimously approves the submission of the constitutional amendments to the 2022 Central Conference.

Bishop Streiff: Thank you very much! We will present this to the Central Conference. Many thanks to the working group and to László, who brought this to our attention.

Bishop Streiff: Urs, is there any special information about the Central Conference meeting in Basel?

Urs Schweizer: I don't have any specific information. I am grateful if those whom I have asked for their travel data still submit them if they have not already done so. But otherwise I assume that everyone will travel according to the completed online registration. I appreciate everyone letting me know as soon as possible if there are any changes in travel plans. Changed travel times will also affect meals and I would appreciate knowing that. So thank you all for keeping me informed. Otherwise, see you in Basel very soon.

Bishop Streiff: Thank you for all your intensive work in the background.

Bishop Streiff: I will be sending a list to all superintendents in the next few days indicating where we will need additional nominations for specific positions. Some of these nominations you will need to discuss with your delegation, others we probably won't be able to make until the delegations are together in Basel. But take a look at the list I will send you in the next few days. This will give you the opportunity to have some initial discussions. One of the topics is also the lay members for the Executive Committee. This must be a person from your delegation in Basel. But I will look at this in more detail with the individuals.

Bishop Streiff: Thank you very much for taking the time for today's meeting. Thank you for keeping the Central Conference meeting in your prayers. I wish you all God's blessings on your preparations and good health. Please remember that we depend on local presence. This is what our rules provide for.

Andrzej Malicki: I have one last question about vaccination and Covid restrictions in Switzerland.

Bishop Streiff: At the moment there are no restrictions and no compulsory vaccination. But we don't know how it will be in a few weeks. If anything changes, we will inform you immediately.

Andrzej Malicki: Thank you very much!

Bishop Streiff: Then I will close our meeting here. May God bless you and your work.

The Secretary:
Markus Bach

These minutes of the 76th session of the Executive Committee of the Central and Southern Europe Central Conference, held on October 27, 2022, were reviewed and declared correct.

The examiners of the protocol:
Lea Hafner and Jörg Niederer

III. Minutes

of the 77th meeting of the Executive Committee of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

Unauthorized translation - Original in German

Minutes of the Executive Committee of Wednesday, November 16, 2022

Thursday, November 16, 2022, 9.00 a.m.

Zwingli House Basel

Bishop Streiff welcomes all members of the Executive Committee. He points out that he grew up not far from here. Accordingly, he has something like a home game here in Basel. He begins with the Herrnhuter watchword text. Proverbs 8, 1-4; 13+14. In the opening service, the bishop will take up this text about wisdom again. Wisdom in the Old Testament is not simply intellect. It is a wisdom that helps life and promotes community. This is different from the understanding of Greek philosophy. So, in the Bible it has more to do with discerning how we can create a good life. In the opening sermon, he will use Galatians to show how this corresponds to the Christian life.

Bishop Streiff offers a prayer.

The following persons are attending today's meeting:

Voting members:

Bishop

Chairman	Bishop	Patrick Streiff	present
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Office

Vice-Chairman(s)		vacant	---
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Secretary	Pastor	Markus Bach	present
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Treasurer	Localpastor	Iris Bullinger	present
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Executive Committee

Serbia-North Macedonia-Albania	Sup.	Daniel Sjanta	present
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Layperson	Daniela Stoilkova	present
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Austria	Sup.	Stefan Schröckenfuchs	present
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Layperson	Ben Nausner	present
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Poland	Sup.	Andrzej Malicki	excused
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Layperson	Olgierd Benedyktowicz	excused
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Switzerland-France-North Africa	Sup.	Serge Frutiger	present
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Layperson	Lea Hafner	present
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Czech Republic-Slovakia	Sup.	Ivana Procházková	present
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Layperson	vacant	---
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Hungary	Sup.	László Khaled	present
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Layperson	Henrik Schaueremann	present
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Chair WG Bishop's Office	Pastor	Jörg Niederer	present
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Advisory members:

Retired bishop	Bishop	Heinrich Bolleter	excused
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Additional superintendents

France and Belgium:	Sup.	Etienne Rudolph	present
Algeria and Tunisia:	Pastor	Freddy Nzambe	excused
Albania:	Sup.	Wilfried Nausner	present
North-Macedonia:	Sup.	Marjan Dimov	present

Chairmen of the working groups

WG Theology and Ord. Ministries	Sup.	Stefan Zürcher	present
WG Liturgy	Pastor	Stefan Weller	present
WG Church Order and Legal Affairs	Sup.	Serge Frutiger (Exec. Member)	present
WG Children and Youth	Layperson	Irena Stefanova	excused
WG Women's Work	Pastor	Monika Zuber	excused
Coordinator	Layperson	Barbara Büniger	present

Present as guests are:

Assistant to the bishop		Urs Schweizer	present
Staff in the bishop's office		André Töngi	present
Moderator Round Table		Matthias Bruhn	present

Total present: 22

Bishop Streiff sends warm greetings from retired Bishop Heinrich Bolleter and his wife Marta. They cannot be present for health reasons. They will follow the services on the livestream.

Of the two bishops who were to be present from the Council of Bishops, Bishop Mande found out yesterday that he is sick with Covid-19. He is in quarantine together with his wife at Christine Schneider-Oesch.

Bishop Streiff: We begin with the report from the office that met yesterday.

Report Office of the Central Conference MSE

Markus Bach, Secretary

Markus Bach: The list of all elections with the nominations (#9a) is available. I have prepared from it a report (#9b) with the elections to be made by the Executive Committee and nominations for the Central Conference. I think it is helpful to first make the elections that we can make as an Executive Committee.

Bishop Streiff: We will make the election for the vice chair with the "new" Executive Committee, possibly even in the summer of next year. As an office, we would like to be able to recruit a lay person to do this. I would be grateful if you could think about who could take over.

Still open are:

- CPCE Regional Group South-East Europe
- DMYP (Representation of Youth Employees)
- World Evangelism (Regional Secretary CSE)

Any suggestions on this from your side?

Bishop Streiff: We are keeping these assignments as vacant and will make the elections when nominations are received. Please look to your Annual Conferences for us to make the assignments.

Bishop Streiff: Are you prepared to make the elections as proposed?

The Executive Committee unanimously elects the following individuals:

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|--|--|
| - Vice Chair Executive Committee | <i>Election by new Executive Committee</i> |
| - 2 pastors EMC | Adrian Myslinski (PL)
Vladimir Fazekas (RS) |
| - 2 lay persons EMC | Lilla Kardosné Lakatos (HU)
Anna Shammas (CH) |
| - Fund for Mission in Europe (FMIE) | Lilla Kardosné Lakatos (HU) |
| - European Lay Seminar | Christa Wichers (CH) |
| - Board of Directors e-Academy | Zoltán Kovács (HU)
Christoph Schlupe (CH) |

Bishop Streiff: Then we continue with the nominations for the attention of the Central Conference.

Ivana Procházková: The lay member from the Czech Republic for the Executive Committee will be determined in the course of the Central Conference.

Bishop Streiff: That is quite possible. We will hold the elections only on Saturday morning.

Henrik Schauermann: I have noticed that there are almost no laypersons in the Working Group Episcopacy and only superintendents. Shouldn't there be a balanced number of parish and laypersons in the Working Group Episcopacy?

Bishop Streiff: Thank you for the important advice. I have tried to work towards electing laypersons as much as possible in the nominations. But it is very difficult to wrest even more time from the laity. If laypersons are willing, we welcome them very warmly. But at present it is not possible, except in Poland. If at a later time such possibilities arise that laypersons can be elected, then we are free to do so at any time.

Bishop Streiff: For the Working Group Church and Society we are still looking for a member who is not from Switzerland and the Czech Republic. Marietje Odendaal (CH) will take over the chair from David Chlupáček, who will remain in the Working Group. Also note with possible suggestions that it does not have to be someone from the delegates to the Central Conference. Please look in your Annual Conferences if there are people who have a relevant interest in these issues and make suggestions.

Bishop Streiff: For the Working Group on church order and legal affairs, I have asked Wilfried Nausner if he is willing to chair it.

Wilfried Nausner: I am prepared to do this. But I also want to make it clear that we as a Working Group should be given the task of translating the Church Order into English. In most Annual Conferences the Church Order is translated from English into the respective language. In addition, we need someone who has studied law and can help us with difficult questions.

Bishop Streiff: That is an important reference. I'm going to talk to you more about exactly what the mandate is. We have found in the past that many translations in our countries were made from English. But there was no official and good translation of the Church Order. We have found that we have come closer and closer to the English translation. However, we also need to consider whether and how we want to keep the German Church Order. One advantage of translating into German is that we have a little more time to deal with the texts.

Therefore, it might be helpful if we keep the German text anyway. You have also heard that Wilfried would like to have experts in law for this Working Group. Are there any suggestions?

Wilfried Nausner: I am willing to chair the Working Group. I would also like to go in search of a suitable legally competent person in our church.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: Do we need to make a motion so that we can add one person to the Working Group?

Bishop Streiff: We'll take that up later when we'll also talk about a mandate for the Working Group.

Bishop Streiff: Currently we also no longer have Co-Chairs in the WG Children and Youth. At the last EMC meeting, it was decided that the EMC Co-Chairs would meet with the previous EMYC Executive Committee to get a revival of EMYC going. They hope to find a date in the spring of next year to restart EMYC. So it would be important for us to be able to appoint the Co-Chairs.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: The Co-Chairs and members of the Working Group Children and Youth need to know what their goal and task is. They need to know what they have to do and what we expect from them. We would need to take the time at some point to clarify this. In the past, that was clearly combined with the EMYC. But if that doesn't work, they are left hanging in the air.

Bishop Streiff: That is an important indication. How can we proceed? There needs to be a group that thinks ahead here.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: I think we can't decide something over the heads of future Co-Chairs. We should do it together with them. We need a common vision that we can give them and work out with them.

Stefan Weller: There is a great distance to the time when we were in EMYC. But we have to consider whether we need the same kind of EMYC in the future as we did back then. It would be important that we can absorb the old knowledge but be open to new ways. We would have to ask in the youth area of our churches if there are capable people there.

Bishop Streiff: It is not yet clear when the new meeting will take place. Otherwise, we could perhaps also send the new bishop there.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: The question is whether youth is important for us. We have talked about it many times. But the important thing is whether we want this and not simply delegate the bishop. Do we just want to resign ourselves to the fact that we're getting older and we're done? We have to decide if youth is important to us, or if we are only going to deal with young people when we have some time left. I believe that youth is an important area of our church, and I think we should invest ourselves much more intensively here.

Daniel Sjanta: When I was still in the EMYC, I noticed that we were not very respected as a central conference. The EMYC was dominated by other countries. There was very little meeting between the countries. Therefore, there was an impression that the whole thing was not that important. We might have to find something that would affect us more as a Central Conference. I am very unsure if the EMYC can be revived as it used to be.

Ben Nausner: I remind you that we also said that the promotion of youth ministry should start in our Central Conference. We can also start with our youth workers in the Annual Conferences getting together and just starting.

Bishop Streiff: I hear that it is important that our youth leaders could meet for a few days. Only from this could something for the whole of Europe come about. For this to succeed, it would be important that you report your youth leaders so that they can be contacted. In almost all countries they are not specially employed persons. Urs Schweizer will send you a list with all responsible persons in the youth area after the Central Conference, and I ask you to check it. So we could start with these persons.

Stefan Weller: It is important that we get our people from the church development department in Zurich to commit themselves to the Central Conference. In our Central Conference, they are probably the only people employed to work with young people.

Lea Hafner: The Board of our Annual Conference has already assigned these people accordingly.

Bishop Streiff: I had a conversation with the youth leaders. They are also frustrated because they never got a response from EMYC. In the meantime, the leadership of the youth officers has changed. They are willing but don't know how to start. But I will tell them again that we want to start in this way.

Wilfried Nausner: Structures are needed so that people can meet. That does not seem to be the case at the moment.

Bishop Streiff: Look in your countries to see who from your country can and will commit to this. From the Bishop's Office, we are looking at making it possible for our youth leaders to meet before the start of EMYC.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: Does it have to be before the EMYC meeting for sure? We should meet independently of that. We should not have to wait for the EMYC.

Bishop Streiff: A connection to an EMYC meeting would be nice, but it doesn't have to be that way.

Henrik Schaueremann: It is important that we can work independently. We should not be directly dependent on the results and decisions of the EMYC but can participate in them.

Bishop Streiff: I hear clearly that we should primarily focus on the work in the Central Conference. But the important work now is that you motivate and commission the appropriate people in your countries.

Serge Frutiger: But the question is still open as to who decides on this assignment. Is it the youth or the Central Conference?

Bishop Streiff: We need to work together. In earlier discussions it was clear that we would like to see a meeting of youth leaders in our Central Conference. That would be the basis of such a mandate.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: The Central Conference would rather have to provide a framework. But it is open how it will continue after that. It is important that they meet, and it would be helpful if someone from us were there to accompany and support them.

Bishop Streiff: That is a good suggestion. If there is not someone willing now, I will ask again on Saturday.

Urs Schweizer: I think this is a very urgent matter. I suggest that we update an already existing list of youth leaders still during the upcoming meeting of the Central Conference.

Bishop Streiff: It would be very helpful if we could have that as early as Friday night.

Bishop Streiff: We are still in the process of nominations for the Central Conference. Proposals for vacant commissions can still be submitted until Saturday.

Barbara Bünger: In the Working Group Women's Work we have decided that we do not need a by-election for Gabriella Kopas from Slovakia who has left. We are enough people to be able to continue working.

Bishop Streiff: Thank you for pointing that out. We will therefore delete this vacancy.

Markus Bach: In the Judicial Council we have a vacancy which could perhaps be filled by one of the substitute members. Since we already have three people from the Annual Conference Switzerland-France-North Africa, it would be good if Bernhard Pöll could be this person.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: Bernhard Pöll is in very poor health, and I hardly think that trips would be possible for him. Nevertheless, I will inquire with him.

Bishop Streiff: The Judicial Council has never been convened in our Central Conference. There have been individual requests to the chair. In this context, we hope that this will continue.

Bishop Streiff: We would then have two vacancies in the substitute members for the Judicial Council. I ask you to send us your suggestions by Friday evening.

Bishop Streiff: We are also still looking for an advocate for the church.

Ben Nausner: What is the lawyer of the church, what are his tasks?

Bishop Streiff: The attorney represents the church in an appeal or investigation. Please get back to me before Friday night. We need a designation, even if we hope that the person in question will never have to take action.

Bishop Streiff: Can we vote on the nominations for the attention of the Central Conference?

The Executive Committee unanimously nominates the following persons for election by the Central and Southern Europe Central Conference:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| - Pastor CZ in Executive Committee | Ivana Procházková |
| - Layperson CZ in Executive Committee | Miluše Šálková |
| - Layperson HU in Executive Committee | Dávid Csernák |
| - Layperson PL in Executive Committee | Bożena Daszuta |
| - Representation CZ in WG Episcopacy: | Ivana Procházková |

- Representation HU in WG Episcopacy: László Khaled
- Representation PL in WG Episcopacy: Bożena Daszuta
- Chairperson WG Liturgy: Erica Stalcup (CH)
- Chair in WG Church and Society: Marietje Odendaal (CH)
- Member of WG Church and Society: vacant
- Chair of WG Church Order and Legal Affairs: Wilfried Nausner
- Member of WG Church Order and Legal Affairs: vacant
- 2 Co-Chairs in WG Children and Youth: vacant
- Advocate of the Church: vacant
- 2 pastors as alternate members of the Judicial Council: vacant
- 1 full Local pastor as alternate member of the appointment committee: vacant

The secretary, *Markus Bach*, will finalize the documents for the attention of the extraordinary session of the Central Conference and send them to all delegates.

Brief information about the church in Slovakia (Report #3b.2)

Bishop Patrick Streiff

Bishop Patrick Streiff has prepared a report which has been added to the document collection as #3b.2. The motion with the name change to Annual Conference Czechia, or Annual Conference Czechia is made in #5a.

The Executive Committee unanimously decides to submit the following proposal to the Extraordinary Session of the 2022 Central Conference:

Due to the withdrawal of Slovakia from the UMC as of October 15, 2022, the Annual Conference is renamed in Annual Conference Czechia.

Iris Bullinger points out that the contribution of Slovakia is still included in the budget of 2023 and 2024 with CHF 750.-- each.

Bishop Streiff: In principle, each Annual Conference pays an annual contribution of CHF 1'500.--. Since the Czech Annual Conference can no longer divide the amount between the two District Conferences, it will have to pay the amount of CHF 1'500.-- alone. The budget should not be changed.

Working Group on Church Order and Legal Affairs

Wilfried Nausner, future Chair

Bishop Streiff: We still have to decide on the mandate for the Working Group Church Order and Legal Issues. They have the wish to prepare and present an English translation of our church order. They also indicate that they would like to include an additional person in the Working Group who is well versed in legal matters. Are you willing to agree to this mandate and the increase of the Working Group?

The Executive Committee approves the mandate for the Working Group on Church Order and Legal Affairs to prepare an English translation of our Church Order. It also approves the inclusion of an additional person in the Working Group who is well versed in legal matters.

We take a short break.

Thursday, November 16, 2022, 11.00 a.m.
Zwingli House Basel

Report Working Group Episcopacy

Jörg Niederer, Chair

Bishop Streiff: We will hear an oral report from the Working Group Episcopacy.

Jörg Niederer: My report is not only oral, but also in writing. You have received the report. It is mainly a big thank you to Heidi and Patrick Streiff. We have also expressed our thanks to the Bishop's Office, to Urs Schweizer and André Töngi.

We also said goodbye to two people in the Working Group: Henrik Schaueremann and Andrzej Malicki. Thank you for your cooperation in the Working Group.

The list of eligible persons has been slightly revised. It is already posted on the Dropbox.

Bishop Streiff: Thank you very much for your work. Thanks also to the group from my side and especially to Jörg Niederer. That was very helpful for me.

Round Table of the Central Conference CSE

Stefan Schröckenfuchs, Co-Chair

Bishop Streiff: A few notes beforehand. Until now, we could only be together with Matthias Bruhn online as Executive Committee. It is nice that we can now meet each other directly. Nice, can you be among us. We, the Co-Chairs, and Matthias Bruhn, have exchanged ideas on how to present the result of the round table. This has resulted in the fact that we probably do not have to use the consensus method, at most when it comes to amendments on Friday morning. I now ask you, Matthias, to present the procedure.

Matthias Bruhn: We have asked the members of the Round Table as well as Serge Frutiger whether they would be willing to take over a table leadership. You have already seen the lists, how the tables are composed. After a 15-minute presentation of the results by Stefan Schröckenfuchs and Andrzej Malicki, we will continue working on the tables. The table leaders will receive a detailed procedure. We will take queries. But we will also ask what fears and hopes are present. It will be important to always mirror what has been heard. However, the opinions and attitudes expressed should not be acted upon. I hope that a good feeling and conversation will develop in these smaller groups.

Afterwards, the positions of the table discussion partners will be made visible on a diagram and finally shown in the plenum. From this we hope to see whether the proposal of the round table is accepted or not. Afterwards, we will open the discussion where motions can then be made. If there are amendments, we will discuss this again in the table groups on Friday morning and finally take it up in the plenary and vote on it.

I then hand over some material to the table leaders.

Bishop Streiff: Are there any questions about the presentation of the result?

Henrik Schaueremann: Are all members of the Central Conference eligible to participate?

Bishop Streiff: Yes, we have assigned all voting and non-voting members of the Central Conference, but no guests, to the table groups.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: We made sure that the groups were well mixed. Some are in German, the others in English.

Bishop Streiff: I sincerely thank the co-chairs and Matthias Bruhn for all the preparation. I also want to point out that on Thursday morning we will begin the bishop's message in the same groups. The table groups will then be completed with the official guests.

Information and hints

Bishop Patrick Streiff

Bishop Streiff: On Monday or Tuesday, superintendents received an email from the Central Conference Theological Education Fund (CCTEF). If you have had a project in the past, I am sure you have received an email. Anyone who did not receive one, please contact me so I can still forward it to you. If you have a project for theological education, please use that avenue through CCTEF. We will not be able to support such projects from Connexio funds. If you have any questions, you can contact me.

Bishop Streiff: The meetings of the Annual Conferences next year will all take place between April and June. The plan is that I and the newly elected bishop or bishops will attend the conferences together. I will still preside over the session in each case. The new person will preach the sermon and make the ministry assignments and thus take charge from that point on. So I will not be preaching. If you still wish to do so, you must make arrangements with me in advance. After the Annual Conference, the new bishop or bishopess will stay for a while and talk with the leaders of the conference and possibly with congregations. Please include this in your planning. Ask me if there are any questions. Urs Schweizer will inform you about the dates on Saturday.

Bishop Streiff: Then I cordially thank those who are with us today for the last time on the Executive Committee: Henrik Schauer mann (Executive Committee) and Stefan Weller (Chair of the Liturgy Working Group). Thank you very much for your commitment to the Central Conference.

Bishop Streiff: We will meet on Saturday afternoon as a new Executive Committee and talk mainly about youth issues. We will also discuss what topics we want to include for our theme days. That will then be for the Executive Committee in March 2024. Next year, the Executive Committee will be at the end of June, but probably without a theme day.

Bishop Streiff closes the meeting with prayer.

Minutes of the Executive Committee of Saturday, November 19, 2022

Saturday, November 19, 2022, 2:00 p.m.
Zwingli House Basel

Bishop Streiff welcomes all members of the Executive Committee in its new composition. He begins with a prayer.

The following people are attending today's meeting. There is a round of introductions.

Voting members:

Bishop

Chairman Bishop	Bishop	Patrick Streiff	present
Bishop elect	Bishop	Stefan Zürcher	present

Office

Vice-Chairman(s)		vacant	---
Secretary	Pastor	Markus Bach	present
Treasurer	Pastor	Iris Bullinger	present

Executive Committee

Serbia-North Macedonia-Albania	Sup.	Daniel Sjanta	present
	Layperson	Daniela Stoilkova	excused
Austria	Sup.	Stefan Schröckenfuchs	present
	Layperson	Bén Nausner	present
Poland	Sup.	Andrzej Malicki	present
	Layperson	Bozena Daszuta	present
Switzerland-France-North Africa	Sup.	Serge Frutiger	present
	Layperson	Lea Hafner	present
Czech Republic	Sup.	Ivana Procházková	present
	Layperson	Miluše Šálková	present
Hungary	Sup.	László Khaled	present
	Layperson	Dávid Csernák	present
Chair WG Episcopacy	Reverend	Jörg Niederer	present

Advisory members:

Retired bishop

Bishop	Heinrich Bolleter	excused
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Additional superintendents

France and Belgium	Sup.	Etienne Rudolph	present
Romania	Sup.	Rares Calugar	excused
Algeria and Tunisia	Sup.	Freddy Nzambe	present
North Macedonia	Sup.	Marjan Dimov	present

Chairmen of the Working Groups

WG Theology & Ord. Ministries	--	vacant	---
WG Liturgy	Pastor	Erica Stalcup	present
WG Church Order and Legal Affairs	Sup.	Wilfried Nausner	present
WG Children and Youth	--	vacant	---
WG Church and Society	Pastor	Marietjie Odendaal	excused
WG Women's Ministry	Pastor	Monika Zuber	excused
Coordinator	Layperson	Barbara Bünger	present

Present as guests are:

Assistant to the bishop
Staff in the bishop's office

Urs Schweizer
André Töngi

present
present

Total present:

24

Bishop Streiff: Last night there was an earthquake here in Basel because a big stone fell from my heart. It was a very difficult day. I doubted for a long time that we would come to a good result at the end of the day. There were many misunderstandings and a lot of incomprehension. I am very relieved that we voted the way we did. Now it is time for us to implement this. I am also very happy that I can hand over the job to Stefan Zürcher for the next six months.

Working Group Children and Youth

Bishop Streiff: We have the following topics of the Working Group Children and Youth before us for today.

- We need a mandate for the Working Group Children and Youth within our Central Conference.
- We need to identify a person to support the Working Group Children and Youth at the beginning.

We are hardly in a position to formulate the mandate spontaneously now, but we can name the keywords for it. So far, the following requirements have been mentioned:

- We need a network of diverse national levels, for mutual support.
- We need a meeting of young adults within our Central Conference.

Lea Hafner: Later we will talk about the theme days. Could we possibly combine this with the concern of the youth and invite the youth to us on the occasion of a theme day in order to be in conversation with them in this way?

Bishop Streiff explains what is meant by theme days.

Wilfried Nausner: We primarily need a person who takes the initiative for this.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: I think it's a good idea to bring the youth to a meeting of the Executive Committee. That sounds good. But if the youth haven't found each other as a group yet, it might be difficult for anything to come out of it.

We should give young people the opportunity to meet internationally and benefit from each other and thus become a community. Maybe it is not yet their interest to become such a network group, but it should be our interest that we can win new leaders for our church through this. I think this is something very important for the new bishop, to seek these contacts with the young people and to make them understand that they are very important for us.

Stefan Zürcher: For me, it is very important to be with the young people. In Switzerland, I was responsible for this and enjoyed doing it. But I can't yet estimate what time opportunities I will have for this.

Bishop Streiff: Are there persons among us who would be willing to commit themselves in this direction?

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: It should not be a person from a German-speaking conference. That's why I'm not the appropriate person. Perhaps the question now comes somewhat surprisingly to the other conferences.

Markus Bach: I don't know whether we are now in a position to assign an appropriate person. We may have to approach people specifically from the office of the Central conference and leave the responsibility in the office.

Bishop Streiff: Of course, we can take the matter to the office or to the bishops. But it would be helpful to hear if someone could agree to do it right now.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: Can't we ask the newly elected bishop to take responsibility for this?

Stefan Zürcher: It is a matter of concern to me that young people can meet, and I also want to make sure that it is possible.

Markus Bach: Does this now also mean that we will include this as a theme day for 2023?

Bishop Streiff: We have to look at the issues separately.

Wilfried Nausner: We can only talk about who takes responsibility. However, it is important that we now bring together all those responsible from all conferences as quickly as possible. We need a responsible person for this.

Lea Hafner: Initially, it's just a matter of getting them talking to each other and to us.

Bishop Streiff: We are discussing two different things. One is the question of how we can get the young people to meet, and the other is the question of whether we invite them to a theme day.

Urs Schweizer: I now have all the names of those responsible in the Annual Conferences. With this background, it should not be a big challenge to contact them. We can invite them to a meeting. There can even be two bishops there.

Bishop Streiff: So we are asking Stefan Zürcher to take the responsibility to create a meeting with all these young people. The other thing is that we ask the office to plan the theme days. I think that's what we can decide now.

Marjan Dimov: Did I understand correctly that there is a meeting of youth leaders of the conferences and that Stefan Zürcher invites to it?

Bishop Streiff: Yes, the newly elected bishop takes a first step and helps them to take further steps. The date for the next Executive Committee meeting is June 26 - July 2, 2023.

Daniel Sjanta: This date does not seem suitable to me for school reasons to be able to include the topic "Youth" as a theme day.

Markus Bach: I assume that the meeting of the youth leaders will take place in the first half of 2023. Then it will probably be difficult for the young people to meet with us again within such a short time.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: Who is leading this meeting of the Executive Committee? If it's about concluding old things, it can be Bishop Streiff. If it is about starting something new, it should be the new Bishop Zürcher.

Bishop Streiff: The meeting of the Executive Committee will be the last handover from me to the new bishop. After that, the new bishop will have taken over everything and will be solely responsible from then on.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: I suggest that we continue to work on the topic of the round table at the Executive Committee meeting next summer and also get to know and understand each other better. It must be about what understanding of being together we have for our future.

Bishop Streiff: That seems like a helpful suggestion. Can we work like this from Thursday to Sunday?

Markus Bach: I can only be there until Saturday. On Sunday there is an appointment in my congregation, where I can't be absent.

Bishop Streiff: I have heard that it is important to us that we want to talk about how we can imagine our future cooperation and how we want to shape it. It could be that we need to call on external help for this.

Bishop Streiff: What about the scheduling possibilities in 2024? We are proposing March 14-17, 2024. The office will determine the locations. We had already given you the opportunity to suggest topics. The secretary has been collecting them.

Markus Bach: We mentioned the following topics in the spring of this year (see minutes Executive Committee of March 26, 2022 in Mulhouse, page 18f.):

- What brings people together?
- Diaconia
- current social issues
- Reconciliation (with others, with creation, with neighbors)
- Digitization
- Ecology and preservation of creation
- Children and Youth
- How do we as a church deal with an increasing secularization of society?
- What makes us Methodists?
- Migration

In addition, it was also given the topic: "Strengthening the 'we'". It is about living and strengthening a healthy relationship between 'I' and 'we'. We perceive that this relationship has moved too much in the direction of 'I' in recent decades (individualism). This is about the level of the community. How is it going with this in the other Annual Conferences? Here an exchange would be interesting, and we could learn from each other.

Wilfried Nausner: I had the impression lately that the Executive meetings were very boring. Nobody gets involved. Maybe we need pre-meetings so that people can prepare. We need to think about how we can really work together. I think we need a different style of how we can work.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: I would like to emphasize that. We need a lot of time until we understand what the other person has said. The greeting videos to the new bishop have once again given me a new good insight into the respective situation of the parishes.

Ben Nausner: I would like us to share more. I've been on the Executive Committee a few times now, but can hardly say anything about the current situations in the other countries.

Bishop Streiff: Are there other things we would need to talk about?

Stefan Zürcher: Is the hint from Wilfried Nausner an assignment for me or for the next Executive Committee?

Wilfried Nausner: We should all be involved in the Executive Committee meetings.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: Isn't the vice chairmanship of the Executive Committee also still vacant?

Bishop Streiff: Thank you for reminding us. I still say what is the task of the person who holds this office: In exceptional cases, this person would head the Executive Committee. In addition, this person is part of the office of the Central Conference. In addition, this person is also a member of the association "Hilfe im Sprengel". In recent years, Helene Bindl has been the vice chairperson. In preparation for the many meetings of the Executive Committee, there were regular meetings of the Office. In the past it was mostly lay people who took on this task. I think it should be the right of the new bishop to nominate someone.

Markus Bach: Does it have to be a layperson?

Bishop Streiff: No, there is no requirement that this must be a layperson. We will talk about it in June of next year and choose a person.

Bishop Streiff: We have discussed the dates and agenda items for the next Executive Committee meetings. If there are no further comments or questions, I ask Bishop Stefan Zürcher for a closing prayer.

Stefan Zürcher says a prayer.

The Secretary:
Markus Bach

These minutes of the 77th session of the Executive Committee of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe, held November 16 and 19, 2022, were reviewed and declared correct.

The examiner of the protocol:
Lea Hafner and Jörg Niederer

IV. Minutes

of the 19th meeting of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

Unauthorized translation - Original in German

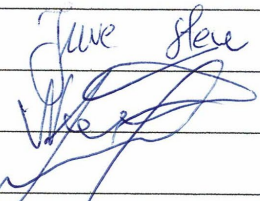
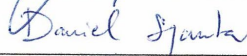


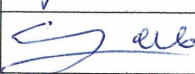
Anwesenheitsliste 19. Tagung der Zentralkonferenz von Mittel- und Südeuropa vom 16. - 20. Oktober 2022

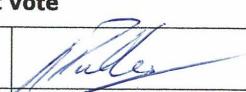
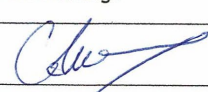

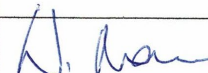
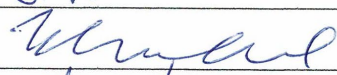

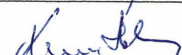
Attendance list of the 19th Meeting of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe on October 16 - 20, 2022

		Unterschrift - Signature
Delegierte - Delegates		
Patrick Streiff	Bischof	
Thomas Fux	AT	
Esther Handschin	AT	
Ben Nausner	AT	
Stefan Schröckenfuchs	AT	
Roland Affolter	CH-FR-NA	
Markus Bach	CH-FR-NA	
Marian Bach	CH-FR-NA	
Esther Baier	CH-FR-NA	
Nicole Becher	CH-FR-NA	
Marc Berger	CH-FR-NA	
Jürg Bertschinger	CH-FR-NA	
Markus Bitterli	CH-FR-NA	
Manuel Both	CH-FR-NA	
Andrea Brunner-Wyss	CH-FR-NA	

		Unterschrift - Signature
Delegierte - Delegates		
Ursula Brunner	CH-FR-NA	U. Brunner
Matthias Bünger	CH-FR-NA	M. Bünger
Barbara Bünger-Zürcher	CH-FR-NA	B. Bünger-Zürcher
Serge Frutiger	CH-FR-NA	S. Frutiger
Lea Hafner	CH-FR-NA	L. Hafner
Claudia Haslebacher	CH-FR-NA	C. Haslebacher
Alfred Hummel	CH-FR-NA	A. Hummel
Martine Isenring	CH-FR-NA	M. Isenring
Philipp Kohli	CH-FR-NA	P. Kohli
Barbara Mazotti	CH-FR-NA	B. Mazotti
Silja Moll	CH-FR-NA	S. Moll
Stefan Moll	CH-FR-NA	S. Moll
Brigitte Moser	CH-FR-NA	B. Moser
Jörg Niederer	CH-FR-NA	J. Niederer
Freddy Nzambe	CH-FR-NA	F. Nzambe
Marietjie Odendaal	CH-FR-NA	M. Odendaal
Barbara Oppliger	CH-FR-NA	B. Oppliger
Etienne Rudolph	CH-FR-NA	E. Rudolph
Christoph Schlupe	CH-FR-NA	C. Schlupe
Jürg Schmid	CH-FR-NA	J. Schmid
Christine Schneider-Oesch	CH-FR-NA	C. Schneider-Oesch
Erika Stalcup	CH-FR-NA	E. Stalcup
Esther Steiger	CH-FR-NA	E. Steiger


		Unterschrift - Signature
Delegierte - Delegates		
Bettina Weller	CH-FR-NA	B. Weller
Adrian Wenziker	CH-FR-NA	A. Wenziker
Gunnar Wichers	CH-FR-NA	G. Wichers
Corina Zolliker	CH-FR-NA	C. Zolliker
Stefan Zolliker	CH-FR-NA	S. Zolliker
Simon Zürcher	CH-FR-NA	S. Zürcher
Stefan Zürcher	CH-FR-NA	S. Zürcher
Jana Daneckova	CZ	J. Daneckova
Josef Havir	CZ	J. Havir
Jana Krizova	CZ	J. Krizova
Petr Procházka	CZ	P. Procházka
Miluse Salkova	CZ	M. Salkova
Vladislava Taubenhansl	CZ	V. Taubenhansl
Dávid Csernák	HU	D. Csernák
Donát Gyurkó	HU	D. Gyurkó
Janos Haman	HU	J. Haman
Bence Vigh	HU	B. Vigh
Bozena Daszuta	PL	B. Daszuta
Thomas Flemming	PL	T. Flemming
Krystof Klusek	PL	K. Klusek
Andrzej Malicki	PL	A. Malicki
Agata Myslinska	PL	A. Myslinska
Adrian Myslinski	PL	A. Myslinski

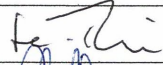


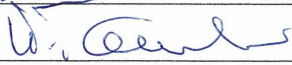
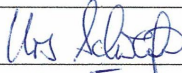
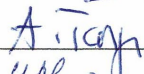


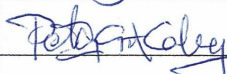
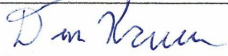



		Unterschrift - Signature
Delegierte - Delegates		
Slawomir Rodaszynski	PL	Slawomir Rodaszynski
Julia Stekla	PL	Julia Stekla
Novica Brankov	RS-NMK-AL	
Marjan Dimov	RS-NMK-AL	
Daniel Sjanta	RS-NMK-AL	Daniel Sjanta
Daniela Stoilkova	RS-NMK-AL	
Dusan Tordaj	RS-NMK-AL	
Emil Zaev	RS-NMK-AL	

		Unterschrift - Signature
Beratende Mitglieder / Members without vote		
Iris Bullinger	CH-FR-NA	
Heinrich Bolleter		entschuldigt
Rares Calugar	RO	
Boris Fazekas	RS-MK-AL	
Wilfried Nausner	RS-MK-AL	
László Khaled-Abdo	HU	
Ivana Procházková	CZ TK	
Henrik Schauermann	HU	
Christa Tobler	CH-FR-NA	Christa Tobler

Stefan Welle CH-FR-NA

Chakirian Guejate CH-FR-NA


Stefan Welle

		Unterschrift - Signature
Gäste / Guests		
Guy Muyombo Mande	Bishop DR Kongo	anwesend
David Bard	Bishop US	anwesend
Harald Rückert	Bischof DE	
Christian Alsted	Bishop NE	
Eduard Khegay	Bishop NE	Eduard Khegay
Rosemarie Wenner	Bishop ret. DE	anwesend
Heidi Streiff	CH-FR-NA	anwesend
Marta Bolleter	CH-FR-NA	entschuldigt
Mario Fischer	GEKE / CPCE	anwesend
Thomas Kemper	^{westph} GBGM	
Ullas Tankler	GBGM	
Linda Tate	COB	
Urs Schweizer		
André Töngi		
Gjergj Lushka	AL	
David Field		
Peter Caley		
Maurice Weller		anwesend
Dan Krause	UMCOM	
Tim Tanton	UMNEWS	
Sarah Bach		
Matthias Gertsch		
Natascha Bertschinger		anwesend

Minutes of the Central Conference CSE of Wednesday, November 16, 2022

Thursday, November 16, 2022, 4:00 p.m.

Opening service with communion at Zwinglihaus Basel

At the beginning of the opening service, *Pastor Dr. Matthias Mittelbach* brings the warm greetings of the church council of the Reformed Church of Basel-Stadt. The church is the owner of the rooms in which the meeting of the Central Conference will be held.

The liturgy of the opening service was prepared by Rev. Erica Stalcup (CH). The liturgy was given in English, while the sermon was given by Bishop Patrick Streiff in German. Sylvia Wilhelm played at the organ. The sermon on Colossians 2 is included as an attachment to the minutes. In the service, we celebrate communion with the participants in the Central Conference.

At the end of the service, Milan Kostrešević, the current president of the Association of Christian Churches in Switzerland and a layman of the Serbian Orthodox Church, offers a word of greeting. He appreciates the closeness with the Evangelical Methodist Church. Bishop Streiff presents him and Matthias Mittelbach with the printed bishop's message and a book about the theology of John Wesley in his sermons.

Thursday, November 16, 2022, 5:30 p.m.

Plenary session at Zwinglihaus Basel

Constitute with reports #1a, #1b, #1c, #1e, #1f, #3a, #3e.

Bishop Patrick Streiff

Bishop Streiff begins by welcoming some guests to the Central Conference: First, he welcomes the official representative of the Council of Bishops, Bishop David Bard with his wife Julie. Bishop Bard is currently bishop of the Michigan Episcopal Area as well as the Minnesota Conference (USA). The conference gives a warm welcome applause. Bishop Streiff points out that fortunately two bishops have been delegated to our Central Conference by the Council of Bishops. Bishop Muyombo Mande, who arrived in Switzerland last Saturday, has since fallen ill with Covid, so he is now isolated and cannot be with us. We hope that he can at least still be with us on Saturday or Sunday.

From the British Methodist Church, the conference secretary Jonathan Hustler is among us. He too receives a welcome applause.

Furthermore, *Bishop Streiff* welcomes the active bishops from Europe: Bishop Christian Alsted from the Episcopal Area of Northern Europe-Baltic States and Bishop Harald Rückert from the Central Conference Germany. Bishop Eduard Khegay from the Episcopal Area of Eurasia has not yet arrived. They too are welcomed with applause.

There are other people among us from the USA: Tim Tanton and Dan Krause from United Methodist Communications and Ullas Tankler from GBGM, the mission agency of the worldwide UMC. The Central Conference extends a warm welcome to them as well.

Bishop Streiff points out that Bishop Rosemarie Wenner will join us on Friday. Then other ecumenical guests are expected.

After some organizational remarks, *Bishop Streiff* opens the 19th meeting of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe, which is held as an extraordinary meeting. He points out that the invitation went out in August of this year. The agenda was sent at that time and cannot be supplemented.

Bishop Streiff: Are there any questions or concerns about the agenda or the detailed program? If not, we will move to the 1st motion in report #3a.

Motion to the Central Conference CSE 2022:

The detailed program for the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe, November 16-20, 2022 in Basel (#1f) is unanimously approved.

Bishop Streiff: In Document #1e, you have a thorough rationale for allowing us to conduct a bishop election at an extraordinary meeting. The text provides insight into the considerations and questions involved. Included is the rationale for why we can do this. It is important that we decide this as a whole Central Conference. Are there any questions or concerns about this?

There are no votes from the delegates.

Bishop Streiff: Then I put the motion to you for a vote:

Motion to the 2022 Central Conference:

In accordance with the rationale here presented, the extra session of the Central conference of Central and Southern Europe shall have authority to hold an episcopal election at its session of November 16-20, 2022.

The Central Conference unanimously approves the motion.

Bishop Streiff: Thank you very much for the clear result. This means that we can now hold a bishop's election. This is a load off my wife's and my mind.

Bishop Streiff: In document #3a we point out further organizational and spiritual things. Behind this there are always people who are willing to contribute in a certain way to our meeting. I thank all those who contribute in some way to the success.

Bishop Streiff: In this document we also find the other motions. The next motion concerns the vote counters or the electoral office. Are you ready to make these elections?

The Central Conference unanimously elects the following persons as scrutineers, or electors office:

Chair: Matthias Büniger (CH-FR-NA) Clergy
Members: Julia Stekla (PL) Layperson
Miluse Salkova (CZ) Layperson
Marjan Dimov (RS-NMK-AL) Clergy
Dávid Csernák (HU) Layperson
Esther Handschin (AT) Clergy

Bishop Streiff: I thank all these people for agreeing to do this.

Bishop Streiff: The next motion is to review the minutes:

Motion to the Central Conference CSE 2022:

The following persons shall be elected as examiners / reviewers of the negotiation report: Andrea Brunner-Wyss and Jürg Schmid

The Central Conference unanimously approves the motion.

Bishop Streiff: Again, I thank Andrea Brunner-Wyss and Jürg Schmid for their willingness. The next motion concerns reporting. Can we take a vote?

The Central Conference unanimously elects Urs Schweizer with a media team as rapporteurs.

Bishop Streiff: Many thanks to Urs and his team for this work. In this context, I would also like to express my sincere thanks to our secretary, Markus Bach. He has done a great job in the run-up to this Central Conference.

The Central Conference gives a warm applause.

Bishop Streiff: With document #3e you have received information about the right of adaptation. In advance, it was important for us to be able to clearly show what possibilities we have for adaptation in the Church Order. This should help us in dealing with the questions that came from the Round Table. You were able to read the document. Are there any questions or concerns from you?

Bishop Streiff: We don't have to vote on it, but take note of it as a basis for how we deal with the Church Order.

Bishop Streiff: With that, we have completed the necessary motions and resolutions for the constitution.

After some organizational notes from *Christine Preis*, the head of the organizing committee, we are cordially invited to dinner at L'ESPRIT.

Bishop Streiff closes the meeting with prayer.

Thursday, November 16, 2022, 6:15 p.m.

Dinner at L'ESPRIT Basel

Thursday, November 16, 2022, 7:30 pm

Encounter evening at the Zwinglihaus Basel

Bettina Weller welcomes those present to the evening of encounter. She is from Basel and has come up with two exercise games that we can use to meet each other.

A first exercise is to discover a card piece under the chair and find the other pieces that belong to it. The groups have to find out what they have in common. The results are collected in plenary.

In the second exercise, a table bomb is ignited. On the one hand, sweets are taken from the table bomb, but also small pieces of paper, which are also brought together in small groups. In these groups it is now a matter of discussing hopes or expectations for the Central Conference. The results are collected by each group in the plenum.

Bishop Streiff passes on some information about the seating arrangements from the coming day.

Andreas Stämpfli points out various possibilities that can be taken advantage of on Saturday afternoon:

- Soon to be 100 years of Bethesda Basel - a plant in transition
- The Reformation in Basel - a momentous upheaval
- City walk in Basel
- The Basel Cathedral - a journey through time
- Dietisberg - The idyllic place in beautiful Baselland

At the end we sing the song "Bind us together, Lord" with musical guitar accompaniment by Stefan Welller.

Minutes of the Central Conference CSE of Thursday, November 17, 2022

Thursday, November 17, 2022, 8:30 a.m.

Morning service at Zwinglihaus Basel

Andrea Brunner-Wyss welcomes us to the morning devotion. We are greeted with joyful and cheery piano playing by *Sylvia Wilhelm*. The liturgy as well as the sermon of *Bishop Christian Alsted* on the topic "Faith active in love" on Galatians 5, 1-6 and 22f. can be found in the attachment to the minutes.

At the beginning of the sermon, *Bishop Christian Alsted* brings warm greetings from his episcopal region and wishes us a good meeting. On behalf of the sisters and brothers in Ukraine, he expresses his heartfelt thanks for the help that Ukrainian refugees are receiving through our Central Conference.

Thursday, November 17, 2022, 9.00 a.m.

Bishop's message and talk at Zwinglihaus Basel

Bishop David Bard leads us in reflection on *Bishop Dr. Patrick Streiff's* message on the Central Conference theme, "Empowered by the Spirit of Christ."

Bishop Bard: Good morning. I am pleased to be able to consider this bishop's message with you this morning. I have had the pleasure of doing several assignments together with *Bishop Streiff*. *Bishop Alsted* is right when he says that faith operates in love. It is good that I can also experience this.

Bishop Streiff: You have already received the bishop's message (#2) in advance so that you can read it. It would not have been helpful if I had read it aloud. Therefore, we will talk about it in the groups that have already been divided.

Bishop Streiff briefly introduces the various sections of his bishop's message, which the delegates and guests present discuss in 10 table groups.

Following the group discussions, *Bishop Streiff* invites those present to express themselves in plenary.

Brigitte Moser: There are two quotes that I take away from the group discussion: "When we do, we are there, when we only think something, we are gone." and "Faith is personal, but not private".

Bishop Streiff: My bishops' messages build on each other. I always had the impression after writing a bishop's message that I should work on it further. I am grateful that I had these opportunities. But now it is coming to an end and I will not write another message.

Bishop Bard: *Bishop Streiff* has inspired us in the groups to interesting conversations and reflection. He showed us how the Spirit can work in us and make growth possible in us and in our church. I am deeply grateful for this message, and I think I speak for all of us when I thank you very much for it.

The Central Conference applauds warmly.

Bishop Streiff: Let us now sing the song "Love Divine, all Loves Excelling."

Thursday, November 17, 2022, 12.00 p.m.
Midday prayer at Zwinglihaus Basel

Jana Křížová leads us in the midday prayer. This can be found attached to the minutes.

Thursday, November 17, 2022, 12:15 p.m.
Lunch at L'ESPRIT Basel

Thursday, November 17, 2022, 2:00 p.m.
Plenary session at Zwinglihaus Basel

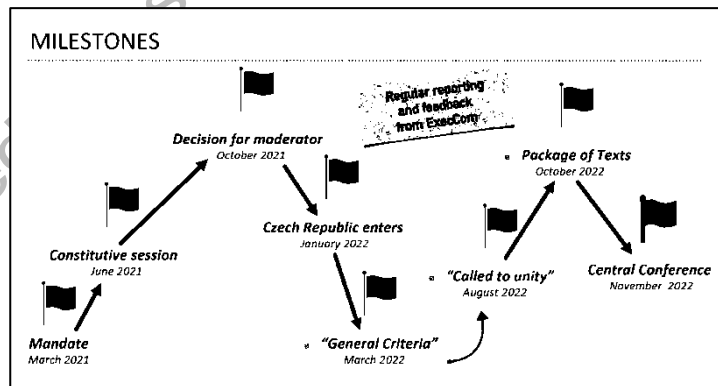
We begin today's group work on the outcome of the roundtable with a prayer by Bishop Patrick Streiff.

Bishop Streiff: Andrzej Malicki and Stefan Schröckenfuchs are the co-leaders of the Round Table. They will now introduce us to its work. Thank you very much for your service.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: You have received a first interim report (#4a) and the final report of the Round Table (#4a.2). In it, we have tried to show what we have done. We would now like to present the main parts of it to you again.

Our goal was given to us by the Executive Committee meeting as follows: "To find a renewal of commitment and a common vision for the EMC in Central and Southern Europe".

Andrzej Malicki introduces the members of the Round Table: Andrzej Malicki (PL), László Khaled (HU), Marjan Dimov (NMK), Daniel Sjanta (RS), Lea Hafner (CH), Stefan Schröckenfuchs (AT), Ivana Procházková (CZ), Etienne Rudolph (FR), Barbara Büniger (WG Women's Ministry), Matthias Bruhn (Moderator), Patrick Streiff (Bishop), Serge Frutiger (WG Church Order and Legal Issues). He then shows the journey they have taken as a round table:



Stefan Schröckenfuchs points out that we as the Central Conference have a right of adaptation. In particular, he points to Art 31.5 and Art 543.7 of the Church Order, which give us the possibility to adapt. "A Central Conference shall have the power to make such amendments and adaptations to the Church Order as the particular conditions and mission of the Church in the area may require."

Andrzej Malicki: We have formed a package of measures consisting of four elements: 1. The criteria are our basis with the main message "We want to live in unity, even if we do not agree on everything". In matters of human sexuality, each country should be able to follow its local beliefs and laws. We want to protect the unity of our Central Conference through the process of adaptation. 2. the text with the declaration should help to remind us of the goal of unity and to commit us. 3. the Annual Conferences and the District Conference should be given rights for internal regulations to protect local beliefs. 4. we need to find regulations for the church order of the Central Conference that safeguard traditional beliefs in a balanced way and give space for pastoral work with LGBTQI persons where necessary.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: We worked on this text for a long time. We spent hours tweaking individual words. It was important to us that we listened to each other. Please take notes if you have any questions. Andrzej will now present the criteria we agreed on.

General criteria for being together in the ZK CSE

- 1) The main message shall be the important message: "We want to live in unity, even if we are not of one mind on every aspect".
- 2) In questions of human sexuality, each country can follow local convictions and laws
- 3) No outside pressure on annual conferences and districts.
- 4) We want to protect the unity of our CC using the process of adaptation (including translation) to avoid pressure from a GC. A solution must work even if the Book of Discipline is changed by General Conference.
- 5) Address communication aspects (within ACs and among ACs).
- 6) We want to end the discussion so that we may focus on the question what our mission / task is for the future.
- 7) A bishop is expected to adhere to the principle of impartiality (multipartiality) and not to stress any personal views. A bishop cannot overrule the vote of the closed session concerning ordinations; still, a bishop's personal freedom of conscience must be accepted.
- 8) The ACs must respect the elected bishop in spite of the existing areas of dispute.
- 9) We do not intend to change the definition of marriage.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: The most important statement is found at the beginning: "We want to live in unity, even if we do not agree on all issues". The Round Table recommends that we adopt this. Based on these criteria, we have prepared a text that calls us to unity. Andrzej will present it to us:

Called to Unity in the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe:

Jesus prayed for his disciples: "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me." (John 17:20-21).

In the Church at large, as well as in the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe, we are not of one mind on all parts of the Social Principles and its consequences on the polity and practice of the Church. Despite intense listening, conferencing, and examination of the Scriptures, we nevertheless differ about what forms of human sexuality and of faithful, committed relationships we can endorse and bless. However, we value the commandment of Jesus for unity and mutual love as core to our faith, binding us together despite divergent understandings.

We abstain from putting pressure on each other. We trust that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we will make good decisions for the welfare of our church and of those to whom we are sent in our Annual and District Conferences.

The Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe values the Social Principles as "a call to prayerful, studied dialogue of faith and practice", and at the same time acknowledges the country-specific differences with regard to individual topics. It allows each country that so wishes, to keep its understanding of marriage and human sexuality and testify to it in its internal regulations. Thus, the central conference wants to continue a common journey in mutual respect, connectional conferencing, and support in mission.

Andrzej Malicki: The text "Called to Unity" allows each country that chooses to do so to adopt special "Internal Regulations". Since a future General Conference may delete the parts of the Social Principles and/or negative restrictions on the practice of homosexuality in legally binding parts of the Churchwide Church Order, the Round Table recommends that the Central Conference, on the one hand, allow a country (District or Annual Conference), by its own decision, to include the formulations of the Social Principles currently in force in its internal regulations; and on the other hand, affirm that a country (District or Annual Conference) has the right to make a declaration of intent to amend or delete the current negative qualifications on the practice of homosexuality in the Church Order.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: The EMF of a country can, by its own decision, include the current wording of the Social Principles in its internal regulations in order to protect traditional beliefs when the Social Principles have been amended by the General Conference.

A country may, by its own decision, declare its intention to modify or remove current negative restrictions regarding lived homosexuality.

Andrzej Malicki: We need clear formulations in our Central Conference Church Order which, on the one hand, are valid for the entire Central Conference and, on the other hand, safeguard traditional convictions in a balanced way and, if necessary, allow room for pastoral work with LGBTQI persons. It is important that we share with each other how we want to live a common future. However, the extraordinary session of the Central Conference may not simply change the wording of the Church Order before the 2024 General Conference has made new decisions, nor may it openly contradict the wording of the Book of Discipline.

Andrzej Malicki: We have therefore decided that we will work with footnotes in the Church Order. They are to show how we intend to build a common future. They are to show what should remain valid in the Central Conference CSE if a General Conference deletes the negative reservations about homosexuality and/or changes the definition of marriage - or the current traditional wording in the Social Principles and in Art. 341.6. We understand footnotes not to mean a change in the current wording, but to be clarifications. When we speak of "overarching texts," it means that they are valid for the entire Central Conference.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: Working with footnotes can lead to the question of which text of the Social Principles is actually valid. Please note that the current text is the official text until a regular Central Conference meets and exercises its right of adaptation in

view of decisions of a regular General Conference. However, the footnotes already indicate how the Central Conference intends to move into the future, and they clarify how the Social Principles will look in the Church Order of the Central Conference CSE when the General Conference will make changes in this area.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: There could also be the misunderstanding that we have two texts because the Central Conference could not agree on a common text of the Social Principles. But this is not the case! If the Central Conference agrees on these overarching texts, we have a common text that clarifies how we want to live a common future.

Andrzej Malicki: We further recommend including overarching texts for the church order of the Central Conference CSE in the sense of declarations of intent for a common future in unity and mutual commitment (Part D). The texts in this section are called "overarching texts" because they are to remain valid in the Central Conference CSE as a whole - this in contrast to the recommendations in Part C, which are to apply only in those countries which wish to adopt them for themselves. The "overarching texts" in the Church Order have the following objectives:

- They include clarification for the future when a General Conference deletes the negative statements on homosexuality and/or changes the definition of marriage.
- They affirm a common commitment of all Annual and District Conferences in the Central Conference CSE who remain in the Evangelical Methodist Church.
- They will remain valid in the Central Conference CSE in case the General Conference changes the current traditional wording in the Social Principles and in Art. 341 (Special Regulations).
- They are to be presented for decision at the extraordinary Central Conference as footnotes to the present Church Order of the Central Conference CSE. If the Central Conference CSE agrees, these footnotes would replace the current footnote in Art. 161.G with the text of the Central Conference Germany.

Recommendations D1 to D3 are read out.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: So we have the whole document together. The whole package of measures forms a unit and yet is intended to be open to the different needs of the Annual Conferences. The elements try to take up different beliefs in a balanced way. What the Round Table cannot do is implement this way. We now have to decide that with each other. We have tried to do our best.

Andrzej Malicki: It was hard work. We realized again and again that we are not of the same opinion on this matter. And yet we present this work to the Central Conference with conviction.

The members of the Round Table have grown together in this process. The work is not yet finished, but we are happy to hand it over to the Central Conference. We all need to give life to the goal of unity!

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: During our work, Matthias Bruhn supported us as a moderator to find our way. We are sincerely grateful to him for that.

The Central Conference affirms this thanks with a warm applause.

Matthias Bruhn: I am a trained energy technician and once asked myself what was more difficult, mediator or energy technician. I came to the conclusion that both are complicated, but that I prefer to go into consulting as a mediator. Our biggest problem

in communication is that we listen to respond rather than to understand what is being said.

I would therefore like to enter into a group process with you that will help us to work on these round table proposals and listen to each other. If necessary, we will also work on motions in these groups.

In a 1st step, the table groups are invited to read the clarification in the roundtable report for themselves and note any clarification questions on the green slips of paper.

The next step is to note what causes concern when thinking about the unity of our Central Conference. These concerns are shared at the tables. The table group describes what worries they have heard from the others. The same step is then taken with what gives us hope. The questions that cannot be answered by the table group are collected and answered from the beginning:

Question 1: Is it possible that the General Conference will not make any changes to the Book of discipline at all?

Response by Bishop Streiff: I have yet to see the General Conference make any changes to the Book of discipline.

Question 2: Why is nothing said about the ordination of homosexuals?

Answer by *Bishop Streiff*: In our church order the prohibition which forbids the ordination of homosexual people has not been included. We therefore do not need any additional regulation here.

Question 3: The definition of marriage is not to be changed and yet there is new wording in the "superior text". Why?

Answer by *Bishop Streiff*: In the superordinate texts, we have distinguished between what is to apply in the church and what applies and is possible in the respective state. The understanding in the church is not to be changed. But the state understanding is changing and has already changed.

Question 4: In D1, marriage is referred to as the union of a man and a woman and, on the other hand, the union of two adults. Is there a difference?

Bishop Streiff's answer: We will unify the terms in German and change it to "Vereinigung". In English the term is identical.

Question 5: What is meant by "for a long time"?

Answer from *Stefan Schröckenfuchs*: That depends on ourselves how long we leave these texts in our church order. We can decide for ourselves what is helpful for us.

Question 6: In Criterion 9, we affirm that we do not intend to change the definition of marriage. And yet we allow each Annual Conference to define its understanding, which can lead to change.

Answer by *Andrzej Malicki*: In the Unity Statement, we give each Annual Conference the right to keep its understanding of marriage if the General Conference changes it in the Book of Discipline. So this is so that the concept of marriage can remain, despite a decision by the General Conference.

Question 7: In C1 it is said that the Central Conference "allows", while in C2 it "recognizes". What is the difference?

Answer from *Bishop Streiff*: In C1 it is a possible interference in the church order of the Central Conference CSE, which cannot be made without permission of the Central Conference. In C2, however, it is a declaration of intent by a country for itself, which the Central Conference recognizes. The declaration of intent is not part of the church order and therefore does not necessarily have to be "permitted" by the Central Conference.

Question 8: D1 and D3 speak of the union between a man and a woman and the union between two adults. Why is this distinction made?

Answer by *Matthias Bruhn*: The formulation of two adults aims at the fact that in a country in which marriage ceremonies of same-sex couples are permitted, the church gets the possibility to determine its own attitude towards it. However, this cannot be used to ensure that marriage is recognized under state law.

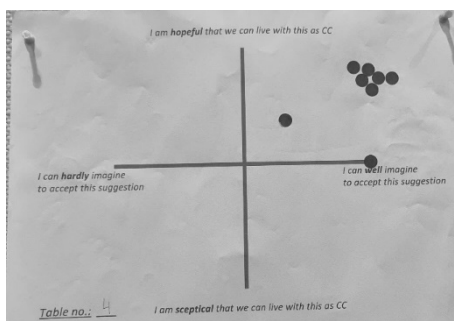
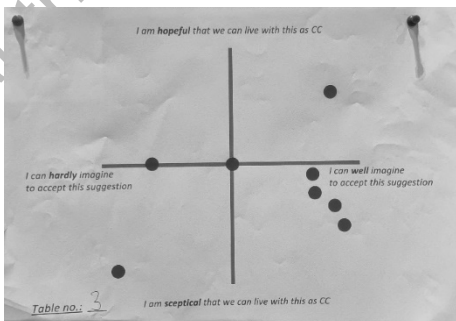
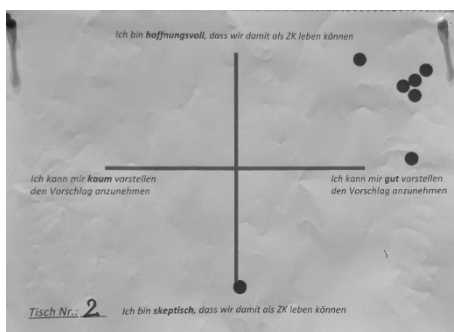
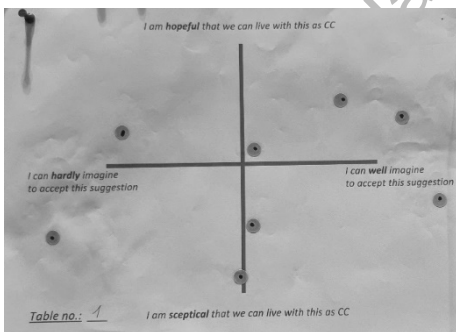
In a further step, we evaluate our feelings about the results of the roundtable. A diagram with the vertical poles:

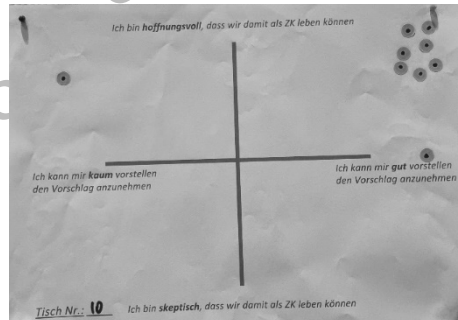
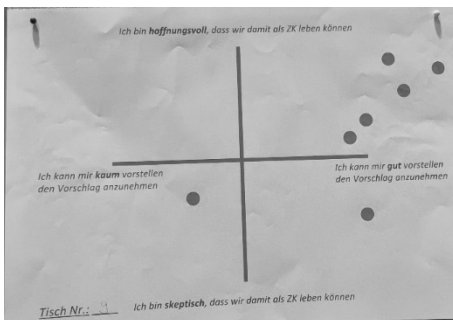
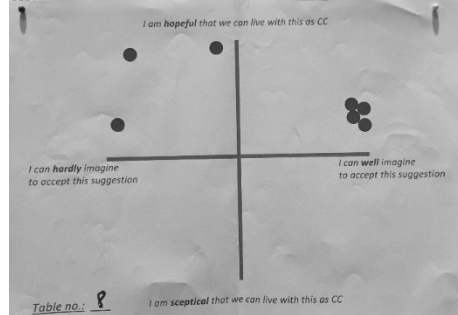
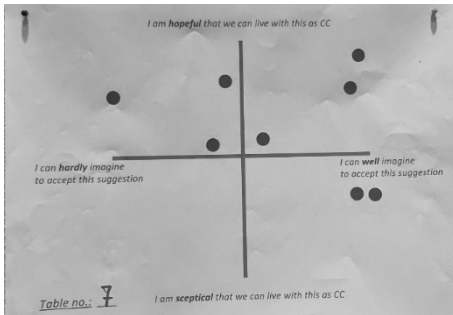
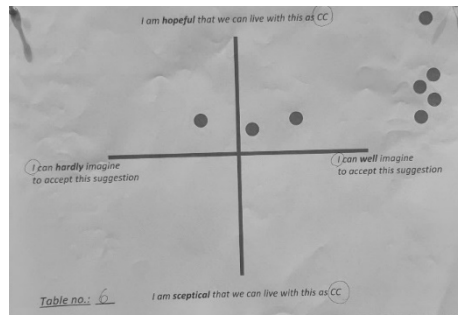
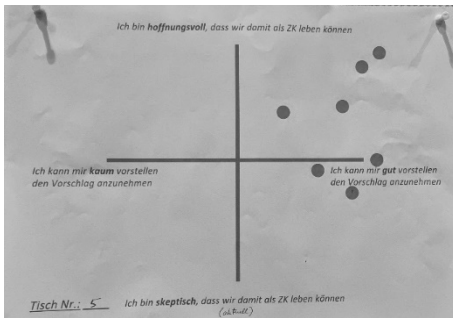
- I am hopeful that we can live with this as a Central Conference and
- I am skeptical that we can live with this as a Central Conference.

And with the horizontal poles:

- I can hardly imagine accepting the proposal.
- I can well imagine accepting the proposal.

The table group participants are asked to mark with a dot where they are currently located and to justify this with one or two sentences. The diagrams are presented and briefly commented on.





Bishop Streiff: Thank you very much for the high intensity of the discussions in your table groups. Thank you also for the honesty. The diversity of the points shows the honesty.

Look at the pictures again. Where were we two or three years ago? Have we not traveled a path that brought us closer together? Thank you for listening to each other.

We will have to vote on this way. But this will not happen tonight. Please note that any amendment has to be with me by 8:30 tomorrow. I want to give you time to sleep on it again. Once we have voted, however, the road will not be over. We still have some steps to go together.

Bishop Streiff: I would now like to thank the members of the Round Table very much for the great work they have done for us. It is very helpful for us and helps us on our way into the future. Many thanks for that!

Those present rise and give a prolonged round of applause for the members of the Round Table.

Bishop Streiff: I would like to invite you now that we close this part with a common prayer. I invite us to do this together. Each one may do this in his or her own language.

We close today's discussion of the Round Table Report with a prayerful communion.

Afterwards we go to dinner

Thursday, November 17, 2022, 6:15 p.m.

Dinner at L'ESPRIT Basel

Thursday, November 17, 2022, 7:45 pm

Plenary session at Zwinglihaus Basel

Bishop Streiff welcomes to the evening session and points out the seating arrangements. He says a prayer.

Bishop Streiff: We now have a number of motions to deal with before we can proceed to the election. We will begin with Report #3g Motion to amend Bylaws Art. 4.2.

Markus Bach explains the motion in report #3g.

Markus Bach: Are there any questions about that?

There being no questions, *Bishop Streiff* put the motion to a vote.

The Extraordinary Central Conference decides, with four votes against, to replace the first sentence of Article 4.2 of the Rules of Order of the Central Conference as follows: "The Bishop shall be elected through secret ballot with a three-fifths majority of the voting delegates present who take part in that ballot and cast valid votes. Empty ballots shall also count among valid votes."

Bishop Streiff: We come to the report of the working group on the episcopate.

Report of the Working Group Episcopacy

Jörg Niederer, Chair

Jörg Niederer: I refer first to report #6.b. The report provides information about the documents sent out, the cancelled nomination process, and the request for the term of office of the newly elected bishop(s).

On behalf of the Working Group on the Bishop's Office, *Jörg Niederer* proposes that the new election of the bishop for a first term of office should take place at the regular session of the Central Conference after the regular General Conference that will follow the General Conference of 2024 (presumably CC 2028 and CC 2028/29). This is in derogation of Art. 4.3 of the Regulations of the CC, which provides for an initial term of four years. The first term of office of the bishop would thus presumably be 6 years. This provision is unique and applies only to the current election. The regulations will not be changed.

The extraordinary session of the Central Conference unanimously decides that the election of a new Bishop has a first term of office until the regular session of the Central Conference after the regular General Conference which will follow the General Conference of 2024 (presumably GC 2028 and CC 2028/29) - in deviation of Art. 4.3 of the Rules of the CC, which provides for a first term of office of four years.

Jörg Niederer explains document #6a Timetable for change in the episcopate.

Bishop Streiff: This is essentially information. One or the other date has already changed again. Are there still questions?

Jörg Niederer points to document #6c.1, which is the basis for the list of eligible elders.

Esther Handschin: To the last indent in the worldwide experiences: Does participation in a committee in Germany also count there?

Jörg Niederer: It would be difficult to say no here. But one could probably still discuss one or two things, especially with regard to international experience. Ultimately, this document remains an attempt to describe reality as helpfully as possible.

Bishop Streiff: We have consciously counted the commissions which were pronounced by us.

Jörg Niederer: In #6c.2 the election procedure for the office of bishop is described. It includes, for example, that only persons who have received at least two votes are eligible for the second ballot. This election procedure was so decided by the Executive Committee.

Adrian Wenziker: Will the result be announced this evening?

Bishop Streiff: Yes, we will announce that later today.

Jörg Niederer points to document #6c.3 the Bishop's job description and then to the list of eligible elders #6c.4.

Jörg Niederer: Since we previously set the first term of office of the bishop at six years, all persons highlighted in yellow are no longer eligible, since they would have exceeded the maximum age of 72 at the time of a re-election/new election. In addition, we have noted that Urs Rickenbacher is still on the list, having been located this summer. He is to be deleted accordingly.

Bishop Streiff: Are there any questions about that?

Jörg Niederer: The document #6c.5 is the candidate profile. Those who are admitted to the second ballot, we ask to fill in this candidate profile in German and English and to send it to the secretary by mail until tomorrow at 8:00 a.m.

Philipp Kohli: Will we know this evening if someone declares that they are not available for election?

Bishop Streiff: That is entirely in your hands and communications.

Bishop Streiff: With this we have dealt with all the documents and the report of the working group on the episcopate. I would like to thank the working group very much for the great work they have done.

First ballot for the election of a bishop of the Central Conference CSE

Bishop David Bard

Bishop Streiff: I now ask Bishop Bard to lead the first ballot for the election of a bishop.

Bishop Bard: Good evening. I'm sure some are happy that I'm now chairing the meeting in English. I am pleased to preside over this ballot. I ask the Secretary to explain to us the election procedure.

Markus Bach: Eligible for the first ballot are all persons on the list #6c.4 with the exception of the persons marked in yellow and Urs Rickenbacher who still has to be deleted. I ask you to take out your voting card. The Elections Office will give a ballot to those persons with a voting card. Write down one name (and only one name!). It must be clearly legible who you are voting for or your vote will be invalid. Then stand and remain standing until the Elections Office has picked up your ballot. Bishop Bard will ask if everyone has cast their ballots and will declare the ballot closed if this has been done. The Elections Office will count and report back to us.

Esther Handschin explains that it is important to be able to distinguish the different Stefan's in the Central Conference. Only first names are not enough, also Stefan Z. or S. Zürcher can mean more than one person.

The secretary hands over the ballot papers, they are distributed and collected again.

Bishop Bard: Has everyone been able to cast their ballot? Then I hereby declare the first ballot closed.

During the counting by the electoral office, we sing the song "My hope and my joy"

Bishop Bard announces the results of the first ballot:

Number of ballots distributed:	68
Number of ballots received:	68
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Total valid ballots:	68
60% of valid ballots:	41
Number of blank ballots:	0

An election has not been held.

Votes received:

1. Stefan Zürcher	29 votes
2. Andrea Brunner	11 votes
3. Claudia Haslebacher	4 votes
4. Markus Bach	4 votes
5. Stefan Weller	4 votes
6. Sarah Bach	2 votes
7. Monika Zuber	2 votes
8. Etienne Rudolph	2 votes

9. Stefan Schröckenfuchs	2 votes
10. Stefan Zolliker	2 votes
11. Ivana Prochazkova	2 votes
12. Brigitte Moser	1 vote
13 Matthias Bünger	1 vote
14. Laszlo Khaled	1 vote
15. Andrzej Malicki	1 vote

Claudia Haslebacher: I am not available for election. I ask you not to vote for me.

Stefan Zolliker: Thank you for the votes. I am also not available.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: I am not available either.

Etienne Rudolph: Thank you for the votes. I withdraw from the election.

László Khaled: Thank you for the votes. But I am also withdrawing.

Ivana Procházková: I am also withdrawing.

Sarah Bach: I am not available either.

Bishop Bard offers a prayer at the conclusion of the first ballot.

Andreas Stämpfli passes on information from the OC.

We close the evening with a prayer by Bishop Streiff and the song "Bless and keep".

Minutes of the Central Conference CSE of Friday, November 18, 2022

Friday, November 18, 2022, 8:30 a.m.

Morning service at Zwinglihaus Basel

Bishop Streiff: First of all, I would like to congratulate Bishop Christian Alsted on his birthday this morning. We wish you all the best and God's blessing.

The Central Conference sings "Happy Birthday to you".

Stefan Zolliker gives a warm welcome to the morning service. Sylvia Wilhelm plays the piano. The liturgy as well as the sermon of Bishop Eduard Khegay on "Patience, Kindness and Generosity" can be found in the appendix of the minutes. But first he brings warm greetings from his episcopal prayer.

Bishop Khegay: It is a great blessing and privilege to be part of this community of the Episcopal Area of Central and Southern Europe. Your area is home to so many of my heroes in life such as: Jean Piaget (Switzerland), Mozart, Roger Federer, Dominik Hasek, Jean Reno, Maria Skłodowska-Curie, Nikola Tesla, Viktor Frankl, ... and my favorite Swiss - Bishop Patrick Streiff.

Thank you, Patrick, for your generous invitation and for strengthening our Christian solidarity in this so difficult time for our Church and our world! You are truly a leader who leads with patience, kindness and generosity. I thank God for you!

Stefan Zolliker closes the morning devotion with a blessing.

Friday, November 18, 2022, 9.00 a.m.

Plenary session at Zwinglihaus Basel

Continuation Report of the Round Table of the Central Conference CSE

Stefan Schröckenfuchs, Andrzej Malicki, Co-Chairs

After an intensive *consultation of the Round Table* prior to the follow-up of the report of the Round Table, Bishop Streiff announces the following:

Bishop Streiff: I have not received any direct amendments to the Round Table report and motions. However, we have received clear indications from delegations that they cannot go to a final vote at this time. We have heard from the members of the Round Table that the discussions yesterday helped and aroused understanding. However, individual questions still remained unanswered. Sometimes, though, it was a question of how our delegates should go back to their countries after a vote, where there is little or no understanding of any changes.

Continuing the image of the puzzle from yesterday, we felt that the process is still open and should be continued. Individuals feel that we should send a signal through a vote. At the same time, other delegations have expressed the fear that this would be the wrong time for their process and that they cannot decide this now. They are not ready yet.

Bishop Streiff: And now we have to help each other to get clarity about how we want to go into the future. With the Executive Committee motions, we are creating the opportunity for traditional conferences to decide to go the traditional way. But it is unclear

whether they are in a position to be able to decide the future for themselves. Therefore, I would like to invite you to talk in delegations about what possibilities you see for how our future should look like. I propose that the Czech Republic and Poland form one discussion group, Hungary with Serbia-North Macedonia-Albania a second, and that Switzerland-France-North Africa and Austria split into two groups.

Bishop Streiff: Think about what is important for you today until the next ordinary Central Conference. I ask you to organize yourselves accordingly.

The Central Conference meets in the instructed delegations, with the two Eastern European delegation groups uniting after a short time.

We will go into a break before the memorial service.

Friday, November 18, 2022, 11:10 a.m.

Commemoration at the Zwinglihaus Basel

The memorial service will open with a piano performance by *Sylvia Wilhelm* "Sonata in G minor by G.F. Handel". It will be conducted by *Reverend Esther Handschin*. The schedule can be found in the appendix of the minutes.

Esther Handschin: We remember those who have died in the last five and a half years since we last met. In this service we sing songs in which two of the deceased have participated: Hans Hauzenberger and Lothar Pöll.

We sing the song 707 translated by Lothar Pöll at the beginning.

Ivana Prochazkova reads the Beatitudes from Matthew 5:1-12

We remember the deceased:

- 2017: René Divoux (FR)
Werner Burkhard (CH)
Adam Kuczma (PL)
Ingegerd Nausner (AT)
- 2018: Kurt Rohmann (CH)
Klaus Eck (CH)
Wilhelm Nausner (AT)
Martin Rüd (CH)
Lydie Schmidt (FR)
- 2019: Peter Bauer (CH)
Ruth Bickel (CH)
Hans Hauzenberger (CH)
- 2020: Liljana Sjanta (RS)
Lothar Pöll (AT)
Martin Hovan (RS)
- 2021: Willi Wiesendanger (CH)
- 2022: Dorothe Buser (CH)

Esther Handschin offers a prayer of thanksgiving.

We will hear the piece of music "Adagio in A minor" by D. Schtjebjelt performed on the piano by *Sylvia Wilhelm*.

From *Andrzej Malicki* we hear the detailed curriculum vitae of Adam Kuczma (PL), 1.3.1924 - 24.9.2017, former Superintendent from 1983 - 1989, Principal of the English Language College in Warsaw. The detailed curriculum vitae can be found in the appendix of the minutes.

We sing the song "Majesty, worship his majesty."

Stefan Zürcher presents the detailed curriculum vitae of Ruth Bickel, 15.11.1925 - 19.5.2019. She was a member of the Women's Service Working Group from 1964 - 1981 and Chair of the Women's Service Working Group from 1964 - 1969. The detailed curriculum vitae can be found in the annex to the minutes.

We sing the song, "Serve the Lord."

Daniel Sjanta brings us the detailed curriculum vitae of his mother, Liljana Sjanta, 1.8.1960 - 29.6.2020. She was a delegate to the Central Conference CSE from 2001 to 2013. The detailed curriculum vitae can be found in the appendix of the minutes.

We sing the song: "O let the Son of God enfold you with his Spirit and his love".

Ben Nausner presents us with the detailed curriculum vitae of Wilhelm Nausner, 3/17/1931 - 4/30/2018 and Helene Nausner, 12/12/1929 - 4/29/2018. He was secretary of the Central Conference during 24 years from 1973 to 1997 and superintendent of North Macedonia. The detailed curriculum vitae can be found in the appendix of the minutes.

Esther Handschin reads the detailed curriculum vitae of Lothar Pöll, 5.12.2951 - 16.9.2020. He was secretary of the Central Conference from 1997 - 2009 and superintendent in Austria from 2001 to 2016. The curriculum vitae can be found in the appendix of the minutes.

We sing the song, "Come and receive the Spirit of the Son."

Esther Handschin says a prayer and then invites us to pray the Our Father together.

We sing the song written by Hans Hauzenberger: "Nun darf getrost ich gehen in deine neue Welt".

Esther Handschin says the blessing.

The memorial service closes with the musical piece "Minuet in C-sharp minor" by F. Schubert, performed by *Sylvia Wilhelm*.

Bishop Streiff expresses his sincere thanks to Esther Handschin for organizing the memorial service. He passes on further information about the following program and lunch.

Afterwards we will go to lunch.

Friday, November 18, 2022, 12:30 p.m.

Lunch at L'ESPRIT Basel

Friday, November 18, 2022, 2:30 p.m.
Plenary session at Zwinglihaus Basel

Continuation Report of the Round Table of the Central Conference CSE
Stefan Schröckenfuchs, Andrzej Malicki, Co-Chairs

Bishop Streiff begins the session with prayer.

Bishop Streiff: I'm sure you've noticed that we have motions from the Executive Committee that they've taken from the Round Table. On the other hand, we noticed this morning that there are difficulties for some people from the Annual Conferences to decide on this. What helps us to get out of this situation? What can help us is if we listen to each other. We start with the Central European groups, and after that we listen to the other two groups. After that, maybe we will be in the situation where we can work on amendments. Let's listen to the groups now.

Andrzej Malicki and Ivana Procházková: There are two of us. We had important talks and we want to do the good and not to upset others. We have noticed that we have polarization between the different attitudes. The consequence of this is that we cannot accept the result of the report and we have to seek the conversation with each other. We are ready to vote on Motion B "Called to Unity." However, Pt. 9 of the criteria (We do not intend to change the definition of marriage) should still be inserted in it.

Bishop Streiff: The group does not want to include anything in the Church Order. However, they are willing to accept the Unity Statement with one addition. The report of the Round Table is to be accepted, but no decisions are to be made about changes in the Church Order (Parts A, C and D).

Bishop Streiff: Let's hear from the other two groups:

Stefan Moll: We had intensive discussions and cannot hide the fact that we are disappointed that we cannot vote on the proposals presented. It seems to us that the report accommodates the traditional conferences, but we expect that the General Conference will change the church order and adopt a more open stance. In this respect, little would change in the future for more open countries. However, what we appreciate about this text in particular is that it gives traditionally minded people the opportunity to remain in our church when the General Conference makes the changes. This assurance that countries can still be with us then gives us confidence for future communion. What we need is to trust each other. We are willing to give more time so that mutual trust can be worked on. However, a decision among us must be made before the General Conference. Therefore, we could well imagine that we will meet again in a year to vote on these motions. If the postponement is not helpful in gaining trust in each other, we would rather vote on it today.

Serge Frutiger: Some of what we heard we also discussed in our group. We were alienated and irritated. We asked ourselves what the problem is. Why do we need more time? There was conjecture, but also uncertainty. For our part, we have already come a long way. We would now like to finally be able to vote on it. We ask ourselves: what has to happen so that we can vote? We agree that the text should not be changed.

Matthias Bruhn: We have also thought about possible solutions: One of them is to give us time again. We could also imagine time for small editorial changes.

Marietjie Odendaal: I heard that we don't want to change the text, but we want to give time.

Bishop Streiff: I have heard that on the one hand there is disappointment that we cannot vote. But I also hear a struggle that we as a Central Conference want to find a common way. I hear that there is a willingness to give time if there is a need for it. However, the Central Conference should also be able to say in which direction it is going and how we can still remain Central Conference in all our diversity. The group with the members from the Central and Eastern European countries does not see it if we make changes through resolutions in the church order. However, they would like to submit the statement "Called to Unity" for approval. The work of the Round Table is seen as helpful, but they need more time to discuss the issues in the countries. How do we move forward?

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: The members of the Round Table have prepared seven proposals. The Executive Committee has confirmed these. It is now difficult to understand why we should not vote on the whole.

We heard that we are willing to give it some more time. This willingness was controversial, but it was an idea that we can bring in. However, the plenary still has to be convinced of this. It doesn't make sense to take only part of the report to the decision. Personally, I don't yet know what it means to adopt only a part. The texts were available early enough that we could have formed an opinion. We are ready to give ourselves time, but it must be a filled time.

Markus Bach: I have heard that the group with the members from the Central and Eastern European countries does not want to insert the proposed texts into the Church Order and therefore does not want to vote on them. However, I have not heard any reason why the texts cannot be inserted. From my point of view, I see two possible reasons for this, and I would like an answer as to which is correct - or whether there is another reason. One reason would be that we don't want to insert the texts into the Church Order now because we still want to change them. The other reason is that the countries still need time to be able to gain their basis for this, and it would not be helpful to include the texts in the church order now. You have to help me understand. With the second reason, I see the possibility that we can help each other. I could not support the first possibility because I don't want to change anything in the text.

Bettina Weller: I would like to recall how we were on the road yesterday. There was a big applause and standing ovation for the work of the Round Table and the document presented by all of us. And now, all of a sudden, you can't agree? I would like to be able to understand. What happened?

Bishop Streiff: Who from a Central or Eastern European country can give an answer? What triggered the resistance? What would be helpful now?

Thomas Flemming: I cannot speak for all Eastern European countries and maybe not even for Poland. With this text Andrzej has difficult conversations ahead of him at parish meetings, because he will be accused of selling the church. Personally, I think that

we need time in Poland to explain it and maybe discuss it. However, I do not think that we need big changes.

Rares Calugar: I think people in our countries are not ready to accept change at all. We are not ready to be in such a pluralistic central conference. We also don't know what will be decided in 2024.

Bishop Streiff: In the Eastern European group, there was a request that the result not be inserted into the Church Order. Please help us to understand what is helpful for you. We need to hear it from you.

Christoph Schluep: I can understand when you say, Rares, our country is not ready, and we can't live with every country looking for its way. And it's like we don't know what will be in two to ten years. Is that what you are saying? If we don't decide now because we don't know what will be in ten years, we won't be wiser or different in one year. We won't know then either. Then there is no point in delaying. What is helpful for me to understand is that you are not ready to accept difference, pluralism. We live in a pluralistic world. That is the case everywhere. As a church, we cannot defend ourselves against it, but only consider how we want to fulfill our mission in it.

Slawomir Rodaszyński: It's not just about the Eastern European countries. Every conference, even in the West, has to decide on this. If we decide now according to the motions, we have to represent that at home. Then it is not only the pastors but also the laity who ask us why we did not send them this paper before we made a decision. That's why I don't want to decide now. It is too important a decision for us to make too quickly. I am afraid that such a decision will not be accepted currently. We need time to pray, to discuss, to talk and to decide.

Bishop Streiff: I have heard from the Western groups that they are willing to give time. But at some point we have to decide how to go further together, even if not all countries are so pluralistic. Do we have the will to be together even if we are different? Are you ready to take this document to your conferences to promote that we can stay together? If you are willing, then we will find a way. We must be ready to present this to the Annual Conferences.

Claudia Haslebacher: I hear from some that the Unity Statement could be accepted. When I have the whole report in front of me, I get the impression that the further texts are too detailed and complicated. They assume that we are doing justice to the Book of Discipline. I suggest that we accept the report and vote on Parts A and B later, leaving out the details of the Church Order (Parts C and D).

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: The discussion is helpful right now. Especially helpful is Rares' question about whether we want to be in a pluralistic church. The fact is that we have been for a long time. We can deny that, and pretend it is not a reality. The other option is to accept it and live with it. It's trying to play with our cards on the table. My concern is that we might formally accept it and then hide it. But such hiding has the potential in it that at some point it will pop up again and destroy everything. The question to us is: do we want to live in a pluralistic church? The articles and footnotes in the document are not the bottom line. So the question is really whether we want to live in a pluralistic church or not. If we don't want to, we still remain neighbors. We should

vote whether we can agree to that or not. That is also fine if someone rejects the document. I don't think we gain much by an extra year until the vote.

Matthias Bruhn: What we have before us is a clear statement from Stefan Schröckenfuchs. We have a proposal from Poland to get time. At the Round Table, we have asked in turn in such situations how everyone takes a position on this. Rares has clearly shown how it looks in Romania. Maybe looking at the different countries could help.

Emil Zaev: Marjan gave us the document, and I can fully stand by what it says. But we don't want a change in the understanding of marriage in any case. That's why I would be happy if we don't agree to the whole document.

Stefan Moll: The impression is being created right now that we Western European countries are putting the Eastern European countries on the spot. But that is only one side. It is also difficult for me to represent the document at home. Actually, the document is the outer limit of what I can still accept. But I am taking this heavy burden because it is important for me to be able to stay with you. Please do not think that it is difficult only for you. It is also difficult for us.

Roland Affolter: I have a question: How much more time do you need and for what? And I also have a second question: We will have a General Conference in 2024. If we don't vote anything today, and if the General Conference provides openings in the church order: How are you going to deal with that in the eastern states? The goal of the document is that you will then have a shield and be able to stay with us despite General Conference changes. We have shown our view. I can understand that you currently have the church order on your side. It is difficult to understand why changes should be made. However, in the Western European context, we are assuming the future situation and want to protect you so that we can stay together. So how do you want to handle the situation when the General Conference changes its position?

Bishop Streiff interrupts the conversation for a roundtable discussion.

Bishop Streiff: Before the interruption, there was a desire from the traditional countries for more time. From other sides came the desire to decide now. The co-chairs of the Round Table came to me with a proposal for change.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: As co-chairs, we have a suggestion on how to proceed. Since the Central Conference seems to be stuck deciding on the Central Conference motions, **we are making the following substitute motion for all Executive Committee motions in #5a.2:**

- 1. Motion 2 "Called to Unity" shall be accepted immediately without further amendments.**
- 2. Motions 1 and 3-7 be referred, as they are, to the Executive Committee for further decision at an Executive Session in one year's time.**
- 3. All countries and/or Annual Conferences should report there if they can agree to motions 1 and 3-7.**

Christa Tobler: I have a question about the correct understanding: What is the concrete text in "Called to Unity"? And which understanding is visible in this text if you look at it isolated from the other texts? Then it seems to me that it alone protects the conservative side.

Matthias Bruhn: I understand that you understand the document as a lawyer. But the intention was that it is not just for one side, but that both sides should be protected.

Christa Tobler: I see it that way, too. The text of the whole report is broader than the section "Called to Unity". If we leave out all the other texts, the part B "Called to Unity" becomes a mere safeguard clause for traditional values.

Andrzej Malicki: We worked on the text for two years. I think that with the section "It allows each country that wishes to do so to maintain its understanding of human sexuality and to bear witness to it in its internal regulations. " there is a breadth after all.

Bishop Streiff: We also mentioned before that we have differences, showing a breadth. "Despite intense listening, deliberation, and examination of Scripture, we disagree about what forms of human sexuality, as well as faithful, committed relationships, we can approve of and bless. "

Bishop Streiff: The co-chairs would like to give more time. Let's talk about it.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: I see the issues that we discussed before. But I am still not ready to withdraw the motion because it helps us to move forward.

Jörg Niederer: Which text do we have in D1? The one with "union"?

Bishop Streiff: Yes, we decided on this change to the text yesterday.

Thomas Flemming: Is it possible for the Executive Committee to decide on changes to the Church Order?

Bishop Streiff: If we give the Executive Committee that authority, that is possible. That would have happened with this motion. But normally that is not possible.

Roland Affolter: I wonder if it is not still possible to adopt not only Part B "Called to Unity" but also the criteria already now. That would be very helpful for us in Switzerland. I therefore make the supplementary motion that the criteria should also be accepted immediately.

Christine Schneider: I move that we now take a break.

Bishop Streiff: Agreed, we will take a 15 minute break.

Friday, November 18, 2022, 4:55 p.m.

Plenary Assembly at Zwinglihaus Basel

Bishop Streiff: We have before us the substitute motion of the co-chairs with the Affolter amendment. The secretary shows us what the substitute motion would look like if the amendment were adopted.

The application is then called:

We make the following substitute motion for all Executive Committee motions in #5a.2:

- 1. The motion 1 "Criteria" and 2 "Called to Unity" should be accepted immediately without further changes.**
- 2. Motions 3-7 be referred, as they are, to the Executive Committee for further decision at an Executive Session in one year's time.**
- 3. All countries and/or Annual Conferences should report there if they can agree to motions 3-7.**

Bishop Streiff: Can we vote on the Affolter amendment?

The Central Conference approves the Affolter amendment with a clear majority. There are some votes against and few abstentions.

Christine Schneider: I would like to make a further amendment: point 9 should be deleted from the criteria.

Bishop Streiff: Is the motion seconded?

Some supportive voices are coming forward.

Bishop Streiff: The motion is seconded, now you can justify it.

Christine Schneider: My point is about the text logic. If we speak in the unity text, about the fact that a country can keep its understanding of marriage, if the church order should change, this shows a change of the understanding of marriage to the church order, but this would not be possible with point 9. Therefore, point 9 must be deleted from the criteria.

Bishop Streiff: Is the floor requested on this?

Simon Zürcher: I don't understand what is meant by text logic. Can you explain that again?

Christine Schneider: We took out the understanding of marriage yesterday through the amendment in the Unified Text. If we now put it back in via Article 9, that is not logical.

Bishop Streiff: Let's vote.

The Central Conference approves the Schneider amendment with 39 votes in favor, 25 against and 3 abstentions.

Bishop Streiff: We decided to add the criteria without item 9 on the first substitute motion.

Daniel Sjanta: This has been a very long thing now, and I have no hope at all that we will get anywhere. You have treated us like children, but we are adults.

Jana Křížova: I was not fast enough. I was actually of the opinion that the substitute motions of the Round Table should be adopted without any change in the text. I should have drawn attention to that. I am sorry that I did not notice that before.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: I had wished that we would never get to this place where we are now. It was originally our intention as a roundtable that we would be able to pass the motions in their entirety. In order to find a way out of the impasse, we made the substitute motion. This has now been amended, as is entirely possible. But it is not true at all that we treated anyone as a child. We decided as a round table to leave the report as a whole so that we would not get into this detailed discussion. But we have not treated anyone as children; on the contrary, we have taken everyone very seriously. I firmly reject the accusation.

Andrzej Malicki: I want to confirm what Jana said. It was our intention in the substitute motion that nothing would be changed. We have now decided to include also part A without item 9. But that was not our intention.

Bishop Streiff: Allow me to comment. We see how difficult it is to take anything in or out of this package. However, we have now begun to change the package. However, with the exception of item 9 in Part A, we still have the motions as we originally had them before us. My opinion is that taking something in or out is not going to get us anywhere.

Christa Tobler: I regret that we are in this situation. Nevertheless, I would like to point out that the social principles have not been touched by these motions and will remain as they are.

Bishop Streiff: Can we take a vote?

Andrea Brunner: I want to give time and take time. Nevertheless, I will vote no to these three motions because we have the responsibility here and we should take it. I know that people in all countries are praying that we take responsibility. I would like us to take a step forward.

Bishop Streiff: If we accept the three substitute motions from the co-chairs, they replace the Executive Committee's roundtable motions. If they are rejected, the original 7 motions remain.

Bishop Steiff: Are you ready to vote? Let us take a brief moment of silence and personal prayer.

The Central Conference rejects the three substitute motions with 27 votes in favor, 27 against, and 13 abstentions.

Bishop Streiff: This means that the substitute motions are not accepted. The original seven motions thus remain.

Friends, we have a very difficult situation. You know that, and I feel the same way. We hoped to be able to go into the future with these applications. That now seems to be a long way off.

Knowing what discussions, we have had so far, I am not sure if we should continue in the vote here. As a central conference, we need to know what future we want. And only then can we ask who should lead us on this path. The newly elected bishop needs to know what future we want to go into as a Central Conference.

Andrzej Malicki: I'm confused that after we rejected our substitute motion, we're going back to the original motions.

Bishop Streiff: That is the normal procedure when a substitute motion is not passed.

Bishop Streiff: In document #5a, before the motions, we find the decision of the Executive Committee that all motions should be taken together.

Simon Zürcher: Previously, we deleted point 9. Does that still apply?

Bishop Streiff: No, that was referring to the rejected substitute motion. We are back to the original text with the only adopted change in D1.

Lea Hafner: As a member of the Round Table, I experienced a similar situation, but in a smaller circle. We moved forward because we reached out to each other. We now feel what can happen if we only insist on our own opinion. Therefore, please: trust each other and accept the text as a whole.

Claudia Haslebacher: I would like to support Lea's vote. It was not only the Round Table, but also the Executive Committee that stands behind the report and the motions. It has agreed to this document and the motions. It is our leaders that we elected that are presenting us with this text. We should trust them more.

Bishop Streiff: We have before us the motions of the Executive Committee that all motions be made together.

Christa Tobler: As a member of the Central Conference without voting rights, I am nevertheless entitled to make a motion according to our regulations. I therefore **request a secret ballot for this vote.**

The motion for secret ballot is accepted with 2 votes against and some abstentions.

Bishop Streiff: Then let us now vote on the seven motions of the Executive Committee. They can be found in document #5a.

The tellers distribute the ballots and collect them afterwards.

The Central Conference approves the seven motions of the Executive Committee on the Round Table with 53 votes in favor, 12 against and 3 abstentions.

Bishop Streiff: I would like to close this moment with a prayer, and I will say afterwards how we will proceed.

Bishop Streiff offers a prayer.

Bishop Streiff announces that we will not hold the planned ecumenical evening, but will hold the bishop's election in the evening. We will see if it is still possible to hear one or the other greeting afterwards. He asks that we be back at 7:30 pm.

Friday, November 18, 2022, 6:15 p.m.

Dinner at L'ESPRIT Basel

Friday, November 18, 2022, 7:30 p.m.

Plenary Assembly at Zwinglihaus Basel

2nd ballot for the election of a new bishop in the Central Conference CSE

Bishop David Bard

Bishop Streiff: I now ask Bishop Bard to preside over the 2nd ballot for the office of Bishop.

Bishop Bard: Good evening. Earlier that day, the sun was shining so beautifully into this room, and I thought that fit well. Now it's darker, but it still fits. I would like to sing an English song with you at the beginning of this 2nd ballot.

The Central Conference sings the song "Come and fill our Heart with your peace."

Bishop Bard: Thank you very much, that sounded very nice. I now ask the secretary, Markus Bach, to explain the election procedure to us.

Markus Bach: I have asked Andrzej Malicki to inform Monika Zuber that she has been nominated for the office of bishop. Please tell us what she has to say to you.

Andrzej Malicki informs that he spoke with Monika Zuber on the phone and informed her about the result of the 1st ballot. She has asked him to communicate her renunciation of election.

Markus Bach: Only the four people from whom you have received the profiles as candidates are now eligible for the 2nd ballot: Stefan Zürcher, Andrea Brunner, Stefan Weller and Markus Bach. I ask you to take out your voting card. The election office will give a ballot to those persons with a voting card. Write down a name, stand up and do not sit down again until you have been able to cast your vote. Bishop Bard will ask finally if all have been able to cast ballots and will declare the ballot closed if so. The Elections Office will count and report back to us on this ballot.

Prayer by *Bozena Daszuta* and *Christoph Schluep*.

The secretary hands over the ballot papers, they are distributed and collected again.

Bishop Bard: Has everyone been able to cast their ballot? Then I hereby declare the 2nd ballot closed.

During the counting by the election office, we sing the song "Love Come Down to Earth."

Bishop Bard announces the results of the 2nd ballot:

Number of ballots distributed:	68
Number of ballots received:	68
Number of invalid ballots:	1
Total valid ballots:	67
60% of valid ballots:	40
Number of blank ballots:	0

An election has not been held.

Votes received:

1. Stefan Zürcher	30 votes
2. Andrea Brunner	20 votes
3. Markus Bach	12 votes
4. Stefan Weller	5 votes

3rd ballot for the election of a new bishop in the Central Conference CSE

Bishop David Bard

Bishop Bard: So we come to the 3rd ballot. I ask Markus Bach to declare the ballot.

Markus Bach: For the 3rd ballot, the person with the fewest votes is eliminated. Stefan Zürcher, Andrea Brunner, Markus Bach are therefore still eligible for election.

The secretary hands over the ballot papers, they are distributed and collected again.

Bishop Bard: Has everyone been able to cast their ballot? Then I hereby declare the 3rd ballot closed.

During the counting by the election office we sing the song "Holy, holy, holy".

Bishop Bard announces the results of the 3rd ballot:

Number of ballots distributed:	68
Number of ballots received:	68
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Total valid ballots:	68
60% of valid ballots:	41
Number of blank ballots:	0

An election has not been held.

Votes received:

1. Stefan Zürcher	35 votes
2. Andrea Brunner	23 votes
3. Markus Bach	10 votes

4th ballot for the election of a new bishop in the Central Conference CSE

Bishop David Bard

Bishop Bard: We are going to a 4th ballot. Before that, I ask that two people, one parish person and one lay person, pray with us.

Freddy Nzambe and *Henrik Schaueremann* say a prayer in French and Hungarian.

Markus Bach: Only Stefan Zürcher and Andrea Brunner are still eligible for the next ballot. The person who wins at least 3/5 of the votes is elected. For all further ballots, the deletion of the last-placed person does not apply. So we vote until one person has reached this minimum.

The secretary hands over the ballot papers, they are distributed and collected again.

Bishop Bard: Has everyone been able to cast their ballot? Then I hereby declare the 4th ballot closed.

During the counting by the electoral office, we sing the song "My hope and my joy"

Bishop Bard announces the results of the 4th ballot:

Number of ballots distributed:	68
Number of ballots received:	68
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Total valid ballots:	68
60% of valid ballots:	41
Number of blank ballots:	0

An election has been held:

Elected was Stefan Zürcher with 41 votes

Votes received:

Andrea Brunner 27 votes

Bishop Bard: my understanding of your tradition is that you ask the person elected whether they say yes or no.

Stefan Zürcher: I accept the election and look forward to working with all of you. However, I am also dependent on your willingness to work together with me. I thank you for all your trust.

Bishop Streiff: I am happy with you, Stefan. We will now sing a song during which Stefan can tell his wife the news on the phone.

We sing the song: "Praise the Lord my soul".

Bishop Streiff now asks all superintendents to come forward and greet the new bishop.

Bishop Bard presents Stefan Zürcher with the bishop pins.

Bishop Streiff: I would now like to give Stefan the opportunity to speak to us.

Stefan Zürcher: If you have read my profile, you have seen that I was active in agriculture. Two years ago, a meadow lay fallow where we live, and there were lots of different flowers in different colors. This is a picture for me of how I see our church. We are such a blooming garden. That's how God created us, in great diversity. And I appreciate this diversity very much.

What connects us to this image is the soil in which the flowers flourish. A special task of a bishop will be to work the soil in such a way that fruit can emerge. This also requires the Spirit of God. It is my wish that we can experience the fullness of God. Once again, thank you very much for the trust you have placed in me.

Brigitte Moser: Habemus Episcopum. I am very happy that I and we may be on the way with you. Until now, I was allowed to hold my location and promotion discussions with my superintendent colleague; now it will be with my new bishop. In keeping with your picture, I may present you with a colorful bouquet of flowers.

Brigitte Moser also hands him a stick with videos of all Annual Conferences with a welcome message.

We sing together the song "My mouth sings a thousand times".

Friday, November 18, 2022, 8:30 p.m.

**Welcome of the newly elected bishop with ecumenical guests at Zwinglihaus
Basel**

Brigitte Moser sends warm greetings from Bishop Mande. He is very happy about the election, which he followed on the live ticker. He sends his warmest greetings to the new bishop.

Brigitte Moser then welcomes the President of the Swiss Protestant Church, Rita Famos, and asks her for a word of greeting. She emphasizes that the EMC was given a platform to present itself at the 100th anniversary. Now there is a reciprocal right, and the Evangelical Church Switzerland can introduce itself to us.

Rita Famos: Dear Bishop Patrick, dear Bishop-elect Stefan, dear bishops, dear sisters and brothers. For over a hundred years, the EMC has been a member of the former Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches, or rather of today's Swiss Protestant Church. That says a lot about the EMC that it has been with us for so long. I have noticed: Everywhere I have been so far, I have experienced the EMC in some form. In all the congregations, youth groups and even in the FSPC Council I find it again: the EMC. I experience you open and committed, emphasizing discipleship in Jesus Christ. For this evening, I asked myself why I encountered the EMC everywhere. In doing so, I came across John Wesley's teaching sermon on Ecumenical Mindedness. I like this very practical understanding of ecumenism that I find in you. At the WCC assembly, some voices emphasized that they were more excited by the experience of lived ecumenism than by perfectly crafted papers. I believe these were Methodists. We share common concerns in Europe, that unites us. God will judge us not by whether we have found each other in the understanding of ministry or on the issue of the Lord's Supper. But by whether we have lived and proclaimed the love of God in word and deed.

I thank the EMC for being an active and open partner in our church fellowship. I am happy that we were able to go this way with Patrick Streiff, whom we will say goodbye to at the synod, and that we can continue the way with the newly elected Bishop Stefan. I commend you to the grace of God.

We listen to a piece of music by *Urs Bertschinger* on the organ.

Brigitte Moser welcomes Mario Fischer, General Secretary of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe.

Mario Fischer expresses his heartfelt thanks for the warm welcome he was able to experience. He points out that the EMC has been part of CPCE for many years and also in various forms. The Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) is the association of Protestant churches. 107 Lutheran, Methodist, Reformed and United churches from over thirty countries in Europe and South America belong to it. The CPCE thus represents a total of around 50 million Protestants.

CPCE exists thanks to the Leuenberg Agreement of 1973. It states: churches may be different because they are based on the gospel as common ground. What sounds simple had far-reaching consequences: Since then, a Lutheran pastor may preach in a Reformed pulpit or a French pastor may lead a congregation in Germany.

CPCE is worship fellowship. The churches celebrate worship and the Lord's Supper together, they recognize baptism and ordination. They exchange information about their

liturgical traditions. And they sing from the common European hymnal of the CPCE "Colours of Grace".

CPCE is also the common voice of Protestants. Many member churches are minority churches which fulfill their mission under sometimes difficult conditions. In a changing Europe CPCE strengthens and unites the voice of Protestants towards political institutions.

Mario Fischer expresses his gratitude for the long time during which he was also allowed to be together with Bishop Patrick Streiff. He wishes the newly elected Bishop Stefan Zürcher God's blessing for his new task.

We listen to another piece of music by *Urs Bertschinger* on the organ.

Brigitte Moser offers a greeting from Jørgen Skov Sørensen, General Secretary of the Conference of European Churches. His greeting is printed out and available at the exit. She thanks all those involved in this short ecumenical encounter: Urs Bertschinger on the organ (applause from the Central Conference), the technical team (applause from the Central Conference) and the translators (applause from the Central Conference).

God's blessing at the end of the evening will be given to us by the newly elected Bishop Stefan Zürcher.

We then sing the song: "Go God's way, bring peace to the world".

Minutes of the Central Conference CSE of Saturday, November 19, 2022

Saturday, November 19, 2022, 8:30 a.m.

Morning service at Zwinglihaus Basel

Andrea Brunner-Wyss warmly welcomes us to the morning devotion. *Sylvia Wilhelm* plays the piano. The reading is from Galatians 5:22-23.

Bishop Bard: "Good afternoon", "Bonjour". I can also count to ten in both of these languages, but fluent conversation in either language is beyond my current abilities. I am deeply grateful to be with you this week as you celebrate the ministry of Bishop Patrick Streiff and elect a new bishop to your Central Conference. I am honored to be able to represent the Council of Bishops.

Bishop David Bard's sermon on "Faithfulness, Meekness, and Self-Control:" can be found in the appendix to the minutes. At the conclusion of the sermon, Bishop Bard expresses his hope that he was not too quick to speak. That is his part of self-control that he still wants to practice. He concludes with a prayer.

We sing the song "Go God's way, bring peace to the world".

Andrea Brunner-Wyss closes the morning devotion with a blessing.

Saturday, November 19, 2022, 9.00 a.m.

Plenary session at Zwinglihaus Basel

Bishop Streiff: We still have some work to do today. You also heard yesterday that the newly elected bishop received some videos. We will catch up on their presentation later today. It was also not possible yesterday to hear the greeting of Jonathan Hustler, the "Secretary of the Conference" of the British Church. We will make up for that now. May I ask you, Jonathan, to give us your greeting?

Jonathan Hustler: I extend warm greetings from the British Methodist Church. I am grateful to be with you now. Bishop Streiff is a good friend of ours, and we are privileged to maintain an intense connection. The motto of our church is: "We want to live with you, and we pray for you". In the difficult environment in which we do our work in the world and in our country, it is always important that we focus on prayer. We have the same ground in grace. And a second common ground is our longing.

Bishop Streiff: Thank you very much for your greeting. Yesterday there was no possibility to give a last word to the chairman of the working group on the episcopate. We will make up for that now.

Jörg Niederer: As a working group on the episcopate, we work closely with the bishops. From now on, this must be formulated in the plural. Will you, Stefan, come forward to me? I would like to give you something. I'm handing you a lot of tree nuts, because you have a lot of nuts to crack. But, we want to help you crack the nuts. But, there are also sweet things in your office. I wanted to give you a very special chocolate and sent a messenger to Bethesda to buy it. However, I didn't realize that the chocolate would be so small, so a big thank you. By the way: The messenger I sent was Stefan Zürcher...

Jörg Niederer: I now also ask Patrick and Heidi Streiff to join me in the front. Many will thank you for your service these days, and we will do it in a special way this evening. The working group felt that we wanted to do this now and have it be fun. Sixteen years ago you received a backpack from Hanna and Walter Wilhelm for election as bishops. Now the time is approaching when you need a new backpack. It is not as big as it was then. But there are a few things in it for your retirement. In it you will find the same chocolate and a mosquito bite remedy with a wish that you will not be bitten. In your retirement you should find peace and quiet, and socks for both of you fit the bill. If you get caught in the rain, there is a matching cloth to dry you. You will find in it a flexible clothesline to remain flexible, but also garlic to drive away inappropriate contemporaries. On the road, it's handy to have a comb for certain people. This one even has a mirror. A panettone, at least for me, is a sign of a beautiful vacation spot. You'll also find liquid energy gels to fortify you. So we wish you as a working group on the episcopate and as the whole Central Conference God's blessing on your further way. It was nice to be on the road with you.

The Central Conference gives a warm applause.

Bishop Streiff: Yesterday we also wanted to thank the co-chairs of the Round Table, Stefan Schröckenfuchs and Andrzej Malicki, and the moderator Matthias Bruhn. During an online meeting, you guys talked to each other in the background about starting a roundtable, and you were also willing to co-chair it. For this initiative and willingness to serve, I thank you very much with a small gift.

The conference gives a prolonged applause.

Bishop Streiff: At this point I would also like to return a thank you to Jörg Niederer. We talked long and hard about how we could realize the postponement of the retirement and the holding of an extraordinary Central Conference. Many thanks for your work.

Bishop Streiff: We would now like to proceed with the treatment of the remaining documents and motions.

Information about the churches in Bulgaria and Slovakia (doc. #3b, #3b.2)

Bishop Patrick Streiff

Bishop Streiff refers to documents #3b and #3b.2. In them the situation of the Church in Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia is described.

The reports are taken note of without any queries.

Budget 2023-2024 (Documents #5a, #3c)

Iris Bullinger, Treasurer

Bishop Streiff: We will continue with document #5a. This provides information about the work of the Executive Committee since August 2022. First we look at the budget for 2023 - 2024. You will find the figures for this in Report #3c. You will find the proposal on page 1 of #5a.

Bishop Streiff: are there any questions about the budget or the numbers?

The Central and Southern Europe Central Conference unanimously approves the budget for 2023-2024.

Amendment of the Rules and Orders of the Central Conference Art. 7.2 (Documents #5a, #3f) Markus Bach, Secretary

Bishop Streiff: On August 27, 2022, we as the Executive Committee decided to submit a motion to the Central Conference to amend the Regulations in Article 7.2. You will find the motion and the rationale for it in Report #3f. Are there any questions about this?

The Central Conference unanimously decides to amend the Rules of Order of the Central Conference in Article 7.2 at the end as follows: "If needed, an Annual Conference may elect additional alternate delegates."

Historical overview Central Conference CSE (Documents #5a, #3d)

Bishop Patrick Streiff

Bishop Streiff: Furthermore, at the same meeting we also approved document #3d with the historical overview of the Central Conference CSE and are submitting it to the Central Conference so that it can be included at the beginning of our church order. Our archivist still pointed out to me a few small details with the history of the Evangelical Fellowship. In addition, the withdrawal of Slovakia also needs to be mentioned and the name of the newly elected bishop added. If you have noticed other things, you may still report them to me. However, I think that we can still vote on the motion.

The Central Conference unanimously adopts the document "A Brief History of The United Methodist Church" and publishes it in future editions of the Central Conference CSE Discipline (original in German).

Corrections to the text of the Constitution (documents #5a, #5a.1 and #5a.2)

Bishop Patrick Streiff

Bishop Streiff: At the Executive Committee meeting of October 27, 2022, we not only approved the motions of the Round Table, but we also made changes to our Constitution, which we now present to you. You will find the report and motions, as well as the shape of the Constitution in Reports #5a.1 and #5a.2.

László Khaled: We have heard a lot about internal regulations and adaptation rights in recent days. We have found that we can have some leeway in this. These texts of the constitution cannot be adapted. They are constitutional amendments from 2012 and 2016, which have now been definitively included in the Book of Discipline. We have not incorporated the other 2016 or 2019 amendments into our Church Order. I just want to say that for clarification.

Bishop Streiff: It's probably a little more complicated than that. When the General Conference adopts constitutional changes, it takes a 2/3 majority vote from all members of all Annual Conferences for the change to be ratified. Once the result is in, the Council of Bishops recognizes the result. Only from that moment is the text of the Constitution legally valid. But this is only valid for the Constitution. For the other texts there are possibilities of adaptation. But we will not be able to vote on them every four years.

Bishop Streiff: Are you ready to vote? Do you agree if we decide all 6 motions together?

The Central Conference unanimously adopts the following changes in the Constitution of the Church Order of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe:

- 1. Article 6 is to be deleted entirely.**
- 2. Article 14.1 shall be amended as follows:**
«Die Generalkonferenz tagt alle vier Jahre, zu der Zeit und an dem Ort, wie sie selbst oder die von ihr beauftragten Ausschüsse es bestimmen.»
- 3. Article 34 is amended as follows:**
«Diese Wahlen umfassen offene Nominationen in der Plenarsitzung der Jährlichen Konferenz, und die Delegierten werden durch einfache Mehrheit der abgegebenen Stimmen gewählt.»
- 4. Article 40 is amended as follows:**
«Die Autorität der Jurisdiktional- und Zentralkonferenzen, die hier festgehalten ist, schränkt die Autorität des Bischofskollegiums und seine Pläne, bischöfliche Aufsicht bereit zu stellen, nicht ein.»
- 5. Article 46 is amended as follows:**
«Für die Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen bestimmt die Generalkonferenz den Zeitpunkt und Ort. Die Zentralkonferenzen bestimmen diese selbst. Bischofswahlen in den Zentralkonferenzen müssen auf einer ordentlichen und nicht auf einer ausserordentlichen Tagung der Zentralkonferenz abgehalten werden, mit Ausnahme unvorhergesehener Vakanzen.»
- 6. Article 50 ist amended at the end as follows:**
«Diese Bestimmungen schliessen nicht aus, dass die Generalkonferenz Beschlüsse fasst, die es dem Bischofsrat ermöglichen seine Mitglieder in ihrem Leitungsdienst der gesamten Kirche, sowie als Vorsitzende und Verantwortliche für ihre bischöflichen Gebiete zur Rechenschaft zu ziehen.»

Serge Frutiger: Our church order is written in German. We have found that in non-German speaking countries this text needs to be translated, but this always leads to inaccuracies and raises questions about validity. The Executive Committee has therefore asked the Church Order Working Group to produce an English translation of our Central Conference Order, from which the various translations can then be produced. This is easier from English than from German.

Renaming of the Annual Conference Czech Republic (Document #5a)

Bishop Patrick Streiff

Bishop Streiff: At the Executive Committee meeting of November 16, 2022, we made some elections which are within the competence of the Executive Committee. You can see this on page 5. We have also received notice of the departure of the District Conference of Slovakia. Since this country is no longer part of our Central Conference, we have to rename the Annual Conference Czech Republic-Slovakia. Are you ready to vote?

The Central Conference unanimously decides that due to the withdrawal of Slovakia from the UMC as of October 15, 2022, the Annual Conference is renamed: Annual Conference Czechia.

Documents of the European Bishops (Documents #8a, #8b, #8c, #8d)

Bishop Patrick Streiff

Bishop Streiff: In documents #8a, #8b and #8c you will find various documents that regulate the leaving of the EMK for lay people, pastors and an annual conference. These documents show how our churches regulate this. Are there any questions about these three documents?

Esther Handschin: What are NIM positions (page 4 in #8c)?

Bishop Streiff: NIM is the abbreviation of "Nationals in Mission." It refers to a program of the Board of Missions of our Global Church (GBGM) to support indigenous pastors and other positions important to the ministry of the church.

Bishop Streiff: We don't have to vote on these three documents because it is informational. It is different with #8d. This shows how a district conference can leave the EMC. In earlier discussions, we intended to give countries that are organized in a district conference this option. But we also note that the conferences in Bulgaria and Slovakia have not left in accordance with the Church Order. If we vote no now, the District Conferences would have no official way to leave the Church, and they can only leave against the Church Order. The Executive Committee wants to give this possibility of leaving for a District Conference only until the next regular Central Conference. Then the Central Conference can decide again how to proceed with it.

Bishop Streiff: Are there any requests to speak on this? Can we take a vote?

The Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe (CC CSE) unanimously adopts the following new article in the Discipline of the CC CSE. Article 549 will become effective upon adjournment of the extra session of the CC CSE on November 20, 2022. It will expire at the opening session of the next regular session of the CC CSE. The guidelines for documentation and for a mutual agreement (see Document #8d.2) are an integral part of the decision to enact art. 549 within the CC CSE.

Elections of the Central Conference (Documents #9a, #9b)

Markus Bach, Secretary

Bishop Streiff: You received the final update for the elections this morning. It is two documents #9a and #9b. They are elections that we are presenting to the Central Conference today. Between regular Central Conferences, the Executive Committee can do the elections. You can see in them that there are also vacancies. If you have any suggestions on how to fill the vacancies, you can come to me at lunch.

The Central Conference unanimously elects the following persons:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| - Clergy CZ in Executive Committee | Ivana Procházková |
| - Lay person CZ in Executive Committee | Miluše Šálková |
| - Lay person HU in Executive Committee | Dávid Csernák |
| - Lay person PL in Executive Committee | Bożena Daszuta |
| - Representative CZ in WG Episcopacy: | Ivana Procházková |
| - Representative HU in WG Episcopacy: | László Khaled |
| - Representative PL in WG Episcopacy: | Bożena Daszuta |

- Chairperson WG Liturgy: Erica Stalcup (CH)
- Chairperson WG Church Society: Marietjie Odendaal (CH)
- Chair WG Church Order and Legal Affairs: Wilfried Nausner

We have thus fulfilled all our tasks that we have to do.

Bishop Streiff: If you were asleep in your beds during the Central Conference, one of you was still awake and working on the minutes and revising documents that he sent to us in the middle of the night or early in the morning. I am talking about our secretary Markus Bach. There was also an above-average amount of work in the run-up to the meetings of the Executive Committee and the Central Conference, and I would like to thank you very much for that.

The Central Conference gives a long applause.

Bishop Streiff: Before we go into a break now, we are listening for information from our hosts about what will happen in the afternoon and tomorrow.

Andreas Stämpfli passes on the relevant information.

We take a break.

Saturday, November 19, 2022, 11.00 a.m.

Window to the World and Prayer at Zwinglihaus Basel

Bishop Streiff: First I ask Bishop Harald Rückert for a word of greeting.

Bishop Rückert: First of all, I would like to thank you very much for allowing me to be with you and to take a seat in the back of the hall and not to have to preside in the front. I send you warm greetings from the Central Conference Germany. There are many people who are following your decisions intensively and praying for you. We as the EMF in Europe are on the road together. Therefore, it was important for us that we four active bishops have exchanged ideas again and again and have promoted contact in the last two years. We also participated in each other's executive meetings online. We wanted to know about each other so we could participate in what was going on. It was helpful for me to be there with you in yesterday's roundtable session. It was an impressive result that you expressed, "We want to stay together."

We have our Central Conference next week. We have already started the process around the issues of human sexuality two years ago. Next week we will hopefully have this path confirmed. We have decided to remove everything discriminatory from our church order. We want to be an open church for all people. For people for whom this openness goes too far, we have founded the Community Federation within the EMK. The "within" is important to us. We have decided, "We want to believe each other's faith." On this basis we have conducted our discussions.

The second big issue is a major structural change in the relationship between Annual Conferences and the Central Conference. How can we change our structures from a too big dress to a more slim and flexible dress so that we can focus more on our mission to lead people to follow Jesus Christ. Please pray for us as well.

The conference gives a warm round of applause.

Bishop Streiff: Thank you very much, Harald, for sharing this with us. We are now very happy that Bishop Eduard Khegay from the Eurasian part of the North European Central Conference can be with us. May I ask you to give us your greeting?

Bishop Khegay: Thank you for allowing me to be with you. It is a great sign of solidarity that I can experience again and again in our church. It is beautiful that I can be in a place where, despite different political situations, the grace of God is palpable and can be experienced.

We have a difficult time behind us and ahead of us. It is the most difficult time I have ever experienced. We are experiencing division in the Church and the war in Ukraine. We have friends and families in Ukraine and Russia. My personal view is that as Methodists we are always against war, oppression and violence. I was shocked that many of my brothers were disappointed in me for opposing war and violence. They emphasize that there are Nazis living in Ukraine. I have many friends in Ukraine. It is a tragedy. On the other hand, I love my home in Russia and live there with very different views. At home, there are many who warn me not to be too public because many fear that I would face reprisals. The more sanctions come from Europe, the more people get behind our government. In my experience, the escalation is growing stronger. Since 1960, we have been hoping that world peace is possible. The war is not really between Russia and Ukraine, but between Russia and the U.S. and other Western countries. We live in a crazy world, and the danger of nuclear war is great. There are extremists on all sides, which is heating up the climate more and more. Instead of talking to old friends in Ukraine, many just watch the news and get information from them. This is a big danger from the media. Sometimes I have nightmares and my wife has to wake me up. There are many friends of mine, for example the Archbishop of the Lutherans and many others who have left Russia. When I went to the European Methodist Council, a friend told me: You are going to Europe? They will not let you go! Another told me when I was in Germany to stay there and not to come back. A lot of people have emigrated from Russia. I don't want to go to prison, but even if this is the price: I want to stay. It is important that we find hope again in this very difficult time. My hope and dream is that we can be together again in peace as Russians and Ukrainians. Thank you very much for your prayers. We are a very conservative conference and therefore we will leave the EMC and join the new denomination. I ask for prayers for us and I am glad when we can have fellowship. Thank you for your hospitality.

Bishop Streiff offers a prayer asking for God's peace and God's Spirit.

Bishop Streiff: I now ask Bishop Christian Alsted to address us.

Bishop Alsted: Good morning and warm greetings from Northern Europe. It is very nice to be with you. I have great respect for the great task that Bishop Khegay has to do in his area. In our Central Conference, because of the debate about homosexuality, there is a big rift that goes right through our congregations and conferences. Estonia has decided to leave the Evangelical Methodist Church. There are also congregations leaving the church all the time. We have to find a way to move forward. We cannot go back to a time, we have to look forward. And in this situation we have to live our mission. We have to do this with new methods and offers, like Fresh Expression, new youth groups, new music groups.

I am temporarily responsible for the work of the EMK in Ukraine and experience a great willingness to help. It will be a big challenge now when winter comes, especially with

the heaters. The infrastructure is not available in many places or only during a few hours. We are experiencing a lot of help from many countries, for example from Romania. UMCOR is providing us with 7.5 million USD. During my visit to Ukraine, I was in Lviv, a very beautiful city, where people were sitting in restaurants and bars. When you talk to them, you feel a great fear. But there are also people who return from the West of Europe despite this fear. Thank you for your attention and for letting me be with you.

The Central Conference gives a warm applause

Urs Schweizer: We have now heard about some difficult situations. I read verse 6 of Psalm 42 this morning: "Why am I so sad? Why is my heart so heavy? In God I will hope, for I know: I will thank him again. He is my God, he will stand by me! " On this background, I invite you to sing the song "10,000 Reasons" already now. We will not do this in German or English, as we have always done during the conference, but in different languages of our Central Conference.

Urs Schweizer: We now always see two or three videos in succession, which were created by you as a welcome for the new bishop. Afterwards, we always have the opportunity to pray at the table for these countries and churches.

We see videos from

- Switzerland
- France
- Czech Republic
- Hungary
- Serbia
- Albania
- Poland
- Romania
- Austria

Urs Schweizer: I would now ask Freddy Nzambe and Marjan Dimov to come forward and tell us in two or three sentences what we can be grateful for in their country.

Marjan Dimov: We are grateful that it has been possible to carry out a major change in the responsibility of our church. Younger people are ready to share the work. It is also nice that we have young pastors, but also many lay pastors.

Freddy Nzambe: In Algeria we currently have one pastor, and for next year we may even have two. We welcome the new bishop to North Africa. Algeria and Tunisia are good countries to pray for.

Urs Schweizer: Something that unites us as countries in the Central Conference is the aid for Ukraine. We now also see a video about this, which my daughter put together.

We see the video on aid in Ukraine.

Stefan Zürcher: Thank you very much for this insight into your work in your countries. You have impressed me. Thank you for the invitations to your countries, which I will gladly accept.

Stefan Zürcher invites us to pray the Our Father prayer together.

We then sing the song "Bless, the Lord, my soul".

Bishop Streiff: Many thanks to Urs for this window to the world and prayer. And take the thanks also back to your parishes.

Bishop Streiff: We have now come to the end of our extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference. Once again, I would like to thank our translators, who have worked hard. We will thank several of them this evening. But I would like to ask two of them to come forward now. Marius Baumann and Natscha Bertschinger.

Bishop Streiff: In the bishop's office we only have a small staff. Sometimes we are at the limits of what we can do. For a Central Conference, we need more. We depend on specialists from the Annual Conference Switzerland-France-North Africa to support us. Natascha Bertschinger is the leader of the project team in Switzerland and was also a great help here, along with the local OC. A second heartfelt thank you goes to Marius Baumann. He was responsible for all the technology. As a result, many people can now follow what we are celebrating here. A very heartfelt thank you.

The bishop presents them with a Basel gift.

Bishop Streiff: With this I close the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference. In the afternoon the Executive Committee will meet and in the evening we are invited to a festive evening on the Dietisberg. The consecration service with the newly elected bishop will take place tomorrow at 2 p.m. in the cathedral in Basel.

Saturday, November 19, 2022, 12:30 p.m.

Lunch at L'ESPRIT Basel

In the afternoon, the Executive Committee meeting will be held at Zwinglihaus.

Saturday, November 19, 2022, 6 p.m.

Festive evening on the Dietisberg

The festive evening will take place at Dietisberg near Sissach (Baselland). Dietisberg is a social institution specialized in the care of men with various disabilities. The delegates will be driven there by two buses.

The evening will be led by *Lea Hafner*. *Manuel Zimmermann* is responsible for the musical accompaniment.

After a welcome aperitif, we are seated at round tables. During the meal, various people deliver a word of thanks to Bishop Patrick Streiff:

- László Khaled from Hungary
- Esther Handschin from Austria
- Roland Affolter from Switzerland
- Alfred Hummel from France

- Daniel Sjanta from Serbia
- Andrzej Malicki from Poland
- Marjan Dimov from North Macedonia
- Ivana Procházková from Czech Republic
- Wilfried Nausner from Albania
- Freddy Nzambe from Tunisia and Algeria
- Urs Schweizer as assistant to the bishop
- Bishop Rosemarie Wenner
- Bishop Eduard Khegay
- Bishop Mande Muyombo
- Lea Hafner for Heidi Streiff



Each greeting is accompanied by the presentation of a stone from the corresponding country. These stones are assembled into a stone tower, which the bishop can place in the garden. It will remind him of the gratitude of the Central Conference.

With a short word of thanks, Bishop Patrick Streiff shows himself visibly moved for the various stones and corresponding words of greeting. The Central Conference gives Patrick Streiff a long standing ovation.

*The Secretary:
Markus Bach*

These minutes of the 19th (extraordinary) session of the Central and Southern Europe Central Conference, held in Basel, Switzerland, November 16-20, 2022, were reviewed and declared correct.

The examiner of the protocol:
Andrea Brunner-Wyss and Jürg Schmid

Minutes of the Central Conference CSE of Sunday, November 20, 2022

Sunday, November 20, 2022, 2.00 p.m.

Consecration service in Basel Cathedral

In a solemn service at Basel Cathedral on November 20, 2022, the Rev. Stefan Zürcher was consecrated as the new bishop of the Evangelical Methodist Church. Around 350 Methodists came to Basel Minster on the afternoon of November 20, 2022. Around 200 people also followed the celebration via livestream.

The service was led by Bishop Patrick Streiff. Retired Bishop Rosemarie Wenner (Germany), Bishop Guy Muyombo Mande (DR Congo) and Bishop David Bard (USA) performed parts of the liturgy. Bishop Harald Rückert (Germany) gave the homily. Bishops Christian Alsted (Northern Europe and Baltic States) and Bishop Eduard Khegay (Eurasia) also participated as guests. Liturgy and sermon of the consecration service can be found in the annex of the minutes.

The service was musically arranged by Andreas Liebig (organ), Oliver Koerper (trumpet), Gudrun Sidonie Otto (soprano) and a project choir of the Methodist congregations of the Basel region under the direction of Sylvia Wilhelm.

At the aperitif that followed, there was an opportunity to personally congratulate the newly elected bishop and to engage in a brief exchange with Methodists from the bishop's area.

*The Secretary of the Central Conference:
Markus Bach*

V. Directory of decisions

of the 75th, 76th and 77th meeting of the Executive Committee of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

Unauthorized translation - Original in German

Elections

- 76.1 The Executive Committee unanimously elects Ivana Procházková as a voting member of the Executive Committee of the Central Conference CSE with immediate effect.
- 76.2 The Executive Committee unanimously elects Ivana Procházková as a member of the Working Group Episcopacy until the extra session of the Central Conference.
- 77.1 The Executive Committee unanimously elects the following individuals:
- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| - Vice Chair Executive Committee | <i>Election by new Executive Committee</i> |
| - 2 pastors EMC | Adrian Myslinski (PL)
Vladimir Fazekas (RS) |
| - 2 lay persons EMC | Lilla Kardosné Lakatos (HU)
Anna Shammás (CH) |
| - Fund for Mission in Europe (FMIE) | Lilla Kardosné Lakatos (HU) |
| - European Lay Seminar | Christa Wichers (CH) |
| - Board of Directors e-Academy | Zoltán Kovács (HU)
Christoph Schlupe (CH) |

Decisions for the Executive Committee / Central Conference

- 75.1 The Executive Committee unanimously decides to propose to the extra session of the Central Conference to replace the first sentence of Article 4.2 of the Rules of Order of the Central Conference as follows: "The Bishop shall be elected through secret ballot with a three-fifths majority of the voting delegates present who take part in that ballot and cast valid votes. Empty ballots shall also count among valid votes."
- 75.2 The Executive Committee unanimously the document "Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe - Historical Statement" and submits it to the extra session of the Central Conference 2022 for inclusion in the Discipline of the CC-CSE.
- 75.3 The Executive Committee unanimously decides to the extra session of the Central Conference to amend the Rules of Order of the Central Conference in Article 7.2 at the end as follows: "If needed, an Annual Conference may elect additional reserve delegates."
- 75.4 The Executive Committee unanimously approves the revised regulations of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe Pension Plan, rev10 of 25.5.2022 and 24.7.2022.
- 77.2 The Executive Committee unanimously decides to submit the following proposal to the Extraordinary Session of the 2022 Central Conference: Due to the withdrawal of Slovakia from the UMC as of October 15, 2022, the Annual Conference is renamed in Annual Conference Czechia.

Financial decisions

- 75.5 The Executive Committee unanimously decides that the funds included in the budget item "Youth Council (EMYC)" can also be used for youth meetings within the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe. The office of the Central Conference decides on the use of the funds upon request of corresponding initiators.

Decisions for Working Groups / Office of the Central Conference

Working Groupe Episcopacy

- 75.6 The Executive Committee unanimously decides that the above six documents, with the latest changes, be given to the delegates of the extraordinary Meeting of the Central Conference CSE on November 16-20, 2022 as a foundation for the election of a bishop.

Round Table

- 76.3 The Executive Committee votes unanimously to change the title to "Called to Unity."
- 76.4 The Executive Committee agrees with one dissenting vote to the adoption of the report and the proposals of the Round Table and submits them to the Extraordinary Session of the Central Conference 2022 with a request for approval and implementation.

Working Group Church Discipline and Legal Affairs

- 76.5 The Executive Committee unanimously approves the submission of the constitutional amendments to the 2022 Central Conference.
- 77.3 The Executive Committee approves the mandate for the Working Group on Church Order and Legal Affairs to prepare an English translation of our Church Order. It also approves the inclusion of an additional person in the Working Group who is well versed in legal matters.

*The Secretary of the CC CSE:
Markus Bach*

Directory of decisions

of the 19th (extraordinary) meeting of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe from November 16 - 20, 2023 in Basel

Unauthorized translation - Original in German

Amendments of the Church discipline and Regulations

Constitution of the Church Discipline of the Central Conference CSE

- 1 The Central Conference unanimously adopts the following changes in the Constitution of the Church Discipline of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe:

Article 6 is to be deleted entirely.

Article 14.1 shall be amended as follows:

«Die Generalkonferenz tagt alle vier Jahre, zu der Zeit und an dem Ort, wie sie selbst oder die von ihr beauftragten Ausschüsse es bestimmen.»

Article 34 is amended as follows:

«Diese Wahlen umfassen offene Nominationen in der Plenarsitzung der Jährlichen Konferenz, und die Delegierten werden durch einfache Mehrheit der abgegebenen Stimmen gewählt.»

Article 40 is amended as follows:

«Die Autorität der Jurisdiktional- und Zentralkonferenzen, die hier festgehalten ist, schränkt die Autorität des Bischofskollegiums und seine Pläne, bischöfliche Aufsicht bereit zu stellen, nicht ein.»

Article 46 is amended as follows:

«Für die Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen bestimmt die Generalkonferenz den Zeitpunkt und Ort. Die Zentralkonferenzen bestimmen diese selbst. Bischofswahlen in den Zentralkonferenzen müssen auf einer ordentlichen und nicht auf einer ausserordentlichen Tagung der Zentralkonferenz abgehalten werden, mit Ausnahme unvorhergesehener Vakanzen.»

Article 50 ist amended at the end as follows:

«Diese Bestimmungen schliessen nicht aus, dass die Generalkonferenz Beschlüsse fasst, die es dem Bischofsrat ermöglichen seine Mitglieder in ihrem Leitungsdienst der gesamten Kirche, sowie als Vorsitzende und Verantwortliche für ihre bischöflichen Gebiete zur Rechenschaft zu ziehen.»

Church Discipline of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

- 2 The Central Conference unanimously adopts the document "A Brief History of The United Methodist Church" and publishes it in future editions of the Central Conference CSE Discipline (original in German).
- 3 The Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe (CC CSE) unanimously adopts the following new article in the Discipline of the CC CSE. Article 549 will

become effective upon adjournment of the extra session of the CC CSE on November 20, 2022. It will expire at the opening session of the next regular session of the CC CSE. The guidelines for documentation and for a mutual agreement (see Document #8d.2) are an integral part of the decision to enact art. 549 within the CC CSE.

Rules of Order of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

- 4 The Extraordinary Central Conference decides, with four votes against, to replace the first sentence of Article 4.2 of the Rules of Order of the Central Conference as follows: "The Bishop shall be elected through secret ballot with a three-fifths majority of the voting delegates present who take part in that ballot and cast valid votes. Empty ballots shall also count among valid votes."
- 5 The extraordinary session of the Central Conference unanimously decides that the election of a new Bishop has a first term of office until the regular session of the Central Conference after the regular General Conference which will follow the General Conference of 2024 (presumably GC 2028 and CC 2028/29) - in deviation of Art. 4.3 of the Rules of the CC, which provides for a first term of office of four years.
- 6 The Central Conference unanimously decides to amend the Rules of Order of the Central Conference in Article 7.2 at the end as follows: "If needed, an Annual Conference may elect additional alternate delegates."

Elections

- 7 The Central Conference unanimously elects the following persons as scrutineers, or electors office:
Chair: Matthias Büniger (CH-FR-NA) Clergy
Members: Julia Stekla (PL) Layperson
Miluse Salkova (CZ) Layperson
Marjan Dimov (RS-NMK-AL) Clergy
Dávid Csernák (HU) Layperson
Esther Handschin (AT) Clergy
- 8 The Central Conference unanimously elects Andrea Brunner-Wyss and Jürg Schmid as examiners / reviewers of the negotiation report.
- 9 The Central Conference unanimously elects Urs Schweizer with a media team as rapporteurs.
- 10 The Central Conference elects Stefan Zürcher in the 4th ballot with 41 of 68 valid votes as bishop in the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe. Stefan Zürcher accepts the election.
- 11 The Central Conference unanimously elects the following persons:
- Clergy CZ in Executive Committee Ivana Procházková
- Lay person CZ in Executive Committee Miluše Šálková
- Lay person HU in Executive Committee Dávid Csernák
- Lay person PL in Executive Committee Bozena Daszuta

- Representative CZ in WG Episcopacy: Ivana Procházková
- Representative HU in WG Episcopacy: László Khaled
- Representative PL in WG Episcopacy: Bożena Daszuta
- Chairperson WG Liturgy: Erica Stalcup (CH)
- Chairperson WG Church Society: Marietjie Odendaal (CH)
- Chair WG Church Order and Legal Affairs: Wilfried Nausner

Financial decisions

- 12 The Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe unanimously approves the budget for 2023-2024.

Decisions for the Executive Committee / Central Conference

- 13 The detailed program for the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe, November 16-20, 2022 in Basel (#1f) is unanimously approved.
- 14 The Central Conference unanimously approves, that the extra session of the Central conference of Central and Southern Europe shall have authority to hold an episcopal election at its session of November 16-20, 2022.
- 15 The Central Conference unanimously decides that due to the withdrawal of Slovakia from the UMC as of October 15, 2022, the Annual Conference is renamed: Annual Conference Czechia.

Decisions for Working Groups / Office of the Central Conference

Round Table

- 16 The Central Conference approves the seven motions of the Executive Committee on the Round Table with 53 votes in favor, 12 against and 3 abstentions.

The Secretary of the CC CSE
Markus Bach

VI.

Episcopal address at the extraordinary session of the Central Conference 2022

Empowered by the Spirit of Christ

Bishop Dr. Patrick Streiff

Foreword

“Empowered by the Spirit of Christ” expresses in more modern terms an early Methodist concern. Wesley literally used the concept of “scriptural holiness” as the target of a successful life. In other languages it is usually translated as “scriptural sanctification”, which is more of a growth concept. Wesley meant by “scriptural holiness” the goal of a life lived according to God’s will on the basis of the Scriptures. But this concept would not be an attractive title even for Methodists. However, anyone who has read texts by John Wesley has encountered the subject very often. That is why I am taking it as the central theme of this episcopal address. It is about the empowerment to lead a renewed life in following Christ which the Holy Spirit works in believers. In the last two episcopal addresses, I have already taken up other basic concerns of Wesley and updated them for today’s situation.

In the 2013 episcopal address, I spoke of the pivotal point in the relationship with God, based on Wesley’s tract “The Character of a Methodist”. For the “waltz of love” begins with the first big step, God’s love for us, which we can experience in our hearts as reconciliation with God. This results in a dynamic process under which, in the second step, we love God with all our hearts. And then in the third step to love one’s neighbour as oneself. The decisive pivotal point remains the relationship with God, even if changes in society as a whole over the past 200 years tend to make attractive a shift towards love of neighbour and, more recently, towards love of oneself.

In the 2017 episcopal address, I updated the commission that John Wesley, according to tradition, gave his preachers when he sent them out to America: “Offer them Christ!” In the modern, multi-religious context, such a commission is controversial and therefore needs to be updated anew from the Gospel. In the episcopal address to this present session of the Central Conference, I consciously include references to the earlier addresses and expand on what “SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS” can mean for our time. All three episcopal addresses together are a profound expression of faith in the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In the additional loops of my active ministry, made necessary by the postponements of the General Conference, I have once again experienced in an encouraging way many visible signs of an often invisible network of prayer and support. I am sincerely grateful for them. It was and is a great help to me and my wife. The Corona pandemic with travel cancellations and long home office hours has made us both realise how nice it is when I don’t have to pack my bags all the time. Nevertheless, the additional loops have been very intense, for which my wife deserves at least as much thanks as I do, even if she always prefers to stay in the background. I am grateful from the bottom of my

heart that our marriage and companionship have remained a source of joy in all the stresses and strains of ministry.

I also extend a heartfelt thank you to the two people who have always remained in Zurich. André Töngi has familiarised himself with the many challenges of accounting and finance in the Bishop's Office and is also experiencing in this area how quickly many things change again. Urs Schweizer has remained by my side throughout my ministry as an expeditious, experienced and reliable assistant. I am grateful to him from the bottom of my heart for having served me and the Church throughout the Central Conference for so long, and despite many burdens. And for both of them, their family members have had to "swallow" many additional loops of work. I would also like to thank them warmly for this. Nicola and Nina Schweizer relieve us in the bishop's office in connection with many necessary work steps, in particular with reference to this extraordinary Central Conference. Thank you!

I myself have learned many things in my active ministry as a bishop that I would never have dreamed of and that have allowed me to mature. Despite many burdens, I remain deeply grateful for the riches that God - often through other people - has placed in my ministry. I ask for forgiveness where I have not shown the necessary appreciation to people or where my decisions have not been appropriate to the cause of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Personally, I know that I am deeply committed to Christ to walk the path of "SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS", which is the subject of this episcopal address. It gives me joy and hope in life.

The invisible advocate

1. In the Gospel of John, Jesus speaks of the mission of the Holy Spirit for the first time when, in the second main part of the Gospel, he addresses his disciples in various speeches and says: *"The Father will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. ... he will teach you everything and remind you of all that I myself have said to you."* (Jn 14:16,26). Father, Son and Holy Spirit live in reciprocal relationship, mutual support and deep unity. Therefore, the parting gift of the Son will bring about peace in the hearts of the disciples (Jn 14:27). The Spirit will be invisible like Jesus after he returned to the Father, but the Spirit will work in many places at the same time, which Jesus could not do in his earthly life. The Spirit blows where it chooses, and one only hears its murmur without being able to get hold of it (Jn 3:8). Jesus adds: *"He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you"* (Jn 16:14). Therefore, Paul writes: *"No one can say 'Jesus is Lord!' except by the Holy Spirit."* (1 Cor. 12:3)

2. For more than a hundred years, Christians worldwide have increasingly spoken of the gifts of the Spirit and sought such gifts. In the history of the church, this has built on Methodist related movements of revival and holiness. In many places, also in Europe, it has led to church splits in Methodism and the founding of Pentecostal churches. Thereafter, when people longed for the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, it often caused a counter and defensive movement in Methodist churches. Much too often, however, it was overlooked on both sides how much the testimony of the New Testament connects the gift of the Spirit with the person and work of Jesus Christ.

3. The Gospel of John describes the Holy Spirit as the parting gift of the Son. It states unequivocally what the goal of writing this Gospel is: *"...so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name."* (Jn 20:31). Both previous episcopal addresses have already

pointed out that the concretisation of God's love in the person of Jesus Christ, and thus ultimately in the mystery of the Triune God, is part of what causes offence to a generally tolerant attitude towards all kinds of religions in today's society. It will do good to us and the power of our mission to trace this mystery by which we ourselves are transformed. To the Corinthians, Paul says: *"God is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord'."* (1 Cor. 1:30-31) And to the Colossians Paul writes: *"I want their hearts to be encouraged and united in love, so that they may have all the riches of assured understanding and have the knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."* (Col. 2:2-3)

4. In essence, this is a wisdom of the heart that shapes the conduct of life. The focus of this wisdom is not on intellectual knowledge or Christian doctrine, but on building a sustainable community. *"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith"* (Col. 2:6). Your vital force comes from the place where you have your roots. That is why it is good to know the breeding ground and not to be satisfied with Christian platitudes. Even as believers, we remain longing seekers in order to fathom more deeply the mystery of God in Christ. Do we as believers admit to longing? And do we direct our longing towards Christ? I was moved to read from Karl Barth in one of his last interviews in November 1968: *"The last word I have to say as a theologian and also as a politician is not a term like 'grace' but is a name: Jesus Christ. He is grace, and he is the last thing, beyond the world and the church and also beyond theology."*

What do you long for in your faith? What longing for God is still unsatisfied?

5. We live in a time when people have a longing for many things. This is mainly connected with the expectation that a deeper longing for happiness will be satisfied with the emergence of a coveted material thing. And even where the longing relates to another person, people want – if possible themselves – to grab hold of what they dream of as fulfilment. Do people ever express a longing for God? And if they do, it is rarely with the expectation that the Christian faith will satisfy this longing. In the book of a recently deceased eminent marriage therapist, I came across the observation that people find it most difficult to talk about longing for love because it concerns the deepest longings of the heart.¹ It becomes very personal. You feel vulnerable. You expose yourself in some ways. And people don't know if they can really put their own longing for love into words. The marriage therapist writes that the longing for love is usually kept to oneself and hushed up, that our modern culture has a bad relationship with longing. Longing for love has something lingering, waiting and expecting about it, which people do not want to give themselves the time and patience to do. While reading these experiences of a couples' therapist, I was struck by parallels to the longing for love of God, to the longing for a deep well-being with God. On the one hand, it is difficult for us to speak of such longing. On the other hand, it is part of the deep mystery of faith that even in people of

¹ Jürg Willi, Was hält Paare zusammen? Der Prozess des Zusammenlebens in psycho-ökologischer Sicht. Rowohlt 1991, 12th edition 2013, particularly pp. 27-40 (On longing for love and longing for partnership).

faith the longing for God is not simply satisfied, but - similar to a good marriage relationship of many years - remains a kind of "sweet longing for more" that is conducive to a deepening of the relationship. Beyond Eden, unquenched longings always remain.

6. In a UMC news report in early 2018 from a camp for young adults in Switzerland, the question was asked whether the United Methodist Church (UMC) was still needed at all and whether there were not enough youth churches. The answer was: "Where there are no easy answers to all questions of life and faith, where faith leads to freedom and people stay together on a journey, the UMC can become a spiritual home - especially for young people." Christian faith must be characterised by the fact that it leads to a new freedom, which becomes visible in acts of love (Gal. 5,1+6). Then faith opens up a space of thinking and living that transcends ordinary everyday life and keeps alive the great questions about the ultimate things. Those who, like our own Church, refer to the Reformation do well to enable people to have a liberating faith.

What would be your answer to the question whether the United Methodist Church is still needed at all?

7. Protestant identity, however, does not have its core in human life by being liberated to himself or herself, but being liberated from circling round and round oneself. People are first and foremost concerned about themselves. They tend to make other people subservient to their own desires. But Christ wants to free us from this fixation on ourselves. For God accepts us unconditionally, even though we are as we are, so that - empowered by the Spirit of Christ - we may become new.²

When is faith constricting and how can it become liberating?

8. This gives special opportunities and burdens for the ministry of pastors. A German evangelical study on pastors from late 2019 describes the downside of freedom and diversity as "paralysis of possibilities".³ The job profile has become more varied and demanding, especially in the non-specialised form of the parish ministry. At the same time, a parish ministry is no longer associated with a valued status in society and has - at least in our church - always been compensated only with a basic salary, which is by no means sufficient for a modest family income in every country of our Central Conference.

9. In almost all countries of the Central Conference, the number of candidates for pastoral ministry has declined in recent years. Soon, however, pastors will reach retirement age. Gaps will become noticeable if we do not succeed in approaching capable people about their calling, encouraging them to serve full-time in the church. A holistic practice of theological training, undergraduate, graduate and ongoing during the ministry is also important. It is well expressed in the guiding principle of the Reutlingen Theological School: "lived faith - liberated thinking - active love". In my ministry I have promoted theological education with various initiatives - also beyond our Central Conference. The establishment of an endowment fund for theological education will also remain a concern of mine in retirement.

What is your contribution in motivating people to consider their vocation for pastoral ministry?

² Cf. the illuminating remarks in Ulrich H.J. Körtner, *Evangelische Identität in säkularem Kontext - eine systematisch-theologische Perspektive*. In: Materialdienst, Bensheim, MD 01/2018, pp. 4ff.

³ See the journal: *Zeitzeichen* 11/2019.

10. It is a beautiful sign when the “*fire of God's gift*” remains burning and the promise of the “*spirit of power, love and self-discipline*” is fulfilled in everyday ministry (cf. 2 Tim. 1:6-7). Our Church needs pastors in all countries who live their vocation with passion and from their heart. To have such pastors among us is a reason for deep gratitude to God. At this Central Conference, we will also remember deceased pastors and lay people who have played a significant role in shaping the work of the episcopal area in the past. May we build wisely on what others have laid down as a foundation for our work, often under much more adverse circumstances.

11. In recent years, I have been able to appoint new superintendents in very many countries of the Central Conference, including one woman superintendent in Switzerland and one in the Czech Republic. Whenever possible, it is my concern to respect the time limit of ten years under the Church Order, even in smaller conferences. I am pleased that it has been possible to appoint some younger ordained elders to this leadership task. However, it was important to me that they are not left on their own as much as in the past. Therefore, I have formed a “Cabinet South” across different annual conferences, which now includes all superintendents who do their ministry alone for an entire country, with the exception of Albania, France and Austria. The regular monthly sharing among us creates a good network among them and helps them grow into the leadership task. Rev. Claudia Haslebacher has been very helpful in supporting me as an SLI coach in building up the “Cabinet South”.⁴

The fruit of the Spirit of Christ in heart and life

12. The motto of this Central Conference is “*The fruit of the Spirit is...*”, alluding to what is said in Galatians 5:22-23. The morning meditations during these days take up what return God wants to obtain by working in and through us for others. What Paul writes about this in Galatians is the best-known short version on this topic. There are similar statements about the work of the Spirit of Christ in other texts of the New Testament. They are all about spiritual renewal, which begins in the heart of a person and has an impact in life for the benefit of others.

13. The Gospel of John also speaks of bearing fruit. It is unfolded in the well-known image of Jesus as a vine and the disciples as branches (Jn 15:1-8). The branches that remain connected to him bear abundant fruit. What this fruit looks like is not described at first. But the image is immediately followed by a speech of Jesus in which he applies the image of fruit to remaining in love: “*As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love! If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, ... This is my commandment, that you shall love one another as I have loved you. ... And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, ...*” (Jn 15:9-10+12+16). Bearing fruit is related on the one hand to abiding in the vine, abiding in the love from God and for God (cf. Jn 17:26), and on the other hand also to the effect of obeying the commandments, in particular of working through love (cf. Jn 13:34-35). The Epistles of John further unfold how love of God and love of neighbour belong together. The Johannine message, whether in the Gospel or in the Epistles, emphasises that abundant fruit is shown in the acts of love. This is by no means only effort and burden, but it brings joy. The joy that Jesus radiates spills over to the disciples (cf. Jn 16:11; 17:13).

⁴ On SLI (Spiritual Leadership Inc.), cf. also the remarks in the 2017 episcopal address.

What do you do in everyday life to be able to remain in God's love and hold on to it?

14. The Letter to the Colossians clothes the talk of the effects of a life with Christ with another image. It speaks of putting off the old man who is still in our limbs (cf. Col. 3:5-9) and putting on the new man like a new garment (cf. Col. 3:10-15). For Christ lives in the new man. The characteristics of the new garment take up all the qualities that, in the biblical testimony, are qualities of God or of Jesus. They are not only good moral values, which would of course also be valuable; the new garment bears the characteristics of Jesus Christ. In an outstanding way, love is again referred to as the belt that binds the disciples together in perfect unity. In a garment in Roman times, the belt forms such an indispensable bond that holds the whole garment together.

**Which characteristics of God or Jesus are visible in your new garment?
Which qualities do you wish would become even more apparent?**

15. Wesley takes up these central biblical texts when he describes "The Character of a Methodist". In my visits to the countries of the episcopal area, I discover with joy and gratitude how these characteristics are flourishing in many places. People have been transformed in their hearts by this message and are now living it with joy and conviction, in word and deed. But living such characteristics is always subject to a stress test. In addition to the usual challenges of coping with everyday life situations in family and work, there have been additional stresses in recent times, on the one hand the Covid pandemic in society as a whole and on the other the hotly discussed issue of human sexuality within the church. Both additional pressures have subjected our living of the character of a Methodist to a severe stress test. We must ask ourselves self-critically whether and how we have lived these biblical characteristics, the characteristics of Jesus Christ, in a polarising society. The words of Jesus also apply here: "*Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. ... Why do you see the speck in your neighbour's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?*" (Matth. 7:1+3).

16. In this episcopal address, I will not expound on the topic of marriage and same-sex love. In the additional time span created by the outbreak of the pandemic and postponement of the 2020 General Conference we have succeeded in rebuilding a basis for discussion in the governing bodies of the Central Conference with all those who want to commit themselves to a common path into the future. I would like to sincerely thank all those who have worked towards this. Results will continue to depend on each individual - in the knowledge of his or her own conviction - wearing the new garment of Christ and living the fruit of the Spirit of Christ, even in situations of stress, out of an inner rootedness in faith in Christ. This is the Methodist way of being a church.⁵

17. Throughout a person's life as a Christian, the concern is about a spiritual renewal that begins in the heart of the person and has an effect in life. This basic concern shapes "The Character of a Methodist". In contrast, the "General Rules", which are just as well-known and are even mentioned in the doctrinal standards, are everyday moral rules. They are summarised simply and neatly in the three basic rules "Do no harm, do

⁵ See the valuable reflections written for local churches on the Methodist way of being church in David N. Field, *Our purpose is love: the Wesleyan way to be the church*. Abingdon Press, Nashville 2018.

good, and stay in love with God".⁶ In the Central Conference, we transferred these "General Rules" many years ago to today's social situations and published them as "Guidelines for a Responsible Lifestyle" (in German). Originally it was planned that these guidelines would be available in a new edition for the Central Conference. It will be good if this can be done in a next phase of work. In today's society, what does it mean to do no harm, to do good and to stay in love with God? The updated guidelines should show in a concrete way what it means to live empowered by the Spirit of Christ.

18. "We do not place the whole of religion (as too many do, God knoweth) either in doing no harm, or in doing good, or in using the ordinances of God. ... wherein we know by experience a man may labour many years, and at the end have no true religion at all, no more than he had at the beginning. ... May the Lord God of my fathers preserve me from such a poor, starved religion as this!" This is what John Wesley says about his own "General Rules". He then goes on to describe Methodists by saying, "A Methodist is one who has 'the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him'; one who 'loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength'."⁷ When Wesley says "we know by experience" in the first quote, he is referring to his own life before he personally experienced saving faith, justification by grace. "Holiness of heart and life" was something he strove for even before that in Oxford and Georgia. But it was only in his evangelical conversion experience of 1738 that he discovered the biblical basis of "holiness of heart and life": God first loved us and forgives us out of pure grace. Therefore, after his 1738 evangelical conversion experience, Wesley spoke of "SCRIPTURAL" as a new, essential description of "HOLINESS". In "The Character of a Methodist", Wesley first lists the marks in the heart: peace, joy, new life, hope, prayer. For holiness of heart is a joyful thing and drives out grumpiness. Only then does he also describe the effects in life, i.e. in love for one's neighbour as well as for oneself. As the tree is known by its fruit, Wesley was never concerned with a merely inner piety, but with a renewal in heart and life. However, without the renewal in the heart through the experience of God's love, all outward godliness of life lacks the inner fire that brings joy and hope.⁸ It would then not be "SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS".

What gifts are you striving for in your local churches? What is your common goal?

19. Where a longing for God breaks out in a person, outward signs of piety are no longer enough. The longing to experience God more, and more deeply, often emerges at transitions of life and in crisis situations. They confront us with basic questions of life that usually remain covered by much business in everyday life. In a society that is shaped by the ideal of prosperity - regardless of whether one already has prosperity or is only striving for it - this also affects religious longing. Faith is then perceived as the better, higher path to well-being. This is the temptation of the prosperity gospel, which has been very successful in many places for several decades. But it is a cultural copy of

⁶ The third rule is originally called "attending upon all the ordinances of God". In modern translations, the rule is entitled "Stay in love with God", cf. Rueben P. Job, *Three Simple Rules: A Wesleyan Way of Life*. Abingdon Press, Nashville 2007.

⁷ John Wesley, *The Character of a Methodist* (1742). The Works of John Wesley, Vol. 9. Abingdon Press, Nashville 1989. Sections 4 and 5, p. 35.

⁸ Cf. from today's Roman Catholic Church also the spirit of Pope Francis' exhortation on the theme of holiness: Pope Francis, *Rejoice and be glad: The Apostolic exhortation GAUDETE ET EXULTATE on the Call to Holiness in today's world* (2018).

current social currents and thus no more gospel-like than earlier copy forms of social currents. Pentecostal and charismatic awakenings that long for the work of the Spirit are in particular danger here. For they often neglect the connection of the Spirit to the life and work of Jesus Christ. But the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, that wants to make us more like Christ. The new garment in Colossians 3 describes impressively what this looks like and what consequences it has in life. And to the Corinthians Paul writes: "*since you are eager for spiritual gifts, strive to excel in them for building up the church.*" (1 Cor. 14:12) For, "*To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*" (1 Cor. 12:7) By what criteria does it become clear whether something builds up the church and brings benefit to all? It is shown by the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), especially by love, as Paul impressively explains in 1 Cor. 13.

20. We live in a society in which individualisation is taking on ever new forms. With regard to social media, it has often been described how they not only have a community-building effect but are also susceptible in a hitherto unimagined way to promoting a completely ego-centred need to communicate without having to listen to a counterpart. One can spread one's own aggression or frustration free of charge over the net. The more emotional, the more it is promoted algorithmically. This is irresponsible in a double sense: one does not take any responsibility oneself and also feels rid of any responsibility of one's own because one has no concrete counterpart to look into the eyes of. Although they euphemistically call themselves "social media", there is no communal possibility to limit excesses or to demand an appreciative way of dealing with each other.

21. The cultural sociologist Andreas Reckwitz describes in a comprehensive way further interrelationships of individualisation with other processes in society in his readable book on the "Society of Singularities" (in German).⁹ In late modern times, the economy and technology have become large-scale promoters of singularisation. This leads to the paradoxical phenomenon of a mass production of what is particular. This leads to a search for happiness, success and self-realisation tailored to the individual, but at the same time all too often to excessive demands, burnout, depression and growing social inequality. Singularisation goes hand in hand with an intensification of emotion - social media are the most obvious example of this. The more emotional the messages are that are written, the more attention they attract, regardless of whether the content is true or fake news. Reckwitz describes the change in the various areas of society, in the economy and the world of work, in digitalisation and lifestyles, in culture and politics. At the end of his book, Reckwitz succinctly mentions the problems arising from singularisation for the cohesion of society and for dealing with experiences of loss and suffering.

22. The analysis of Reckwitz also helps us to understand the shift towards an identity culture in politics that wants to differentiate itself from others. A delimiting politics of identity fuels polarisation in society. We are experiencing it in varying degrees of intensity in all European countries, but also in the USA. And as a large part of the worldwide membership and finances in our church are still related to the USA, this development has a drastic influence on our church. In the 21st century, the USA is experiencing a dramatic change in its population structure and in the relevance of Christian churches in the public sphere. It is still a widespread myth that liberal churches are declining, and evangelical movements are growing in the USA. The reality, however, is that evangelical

⁹ Andreas Reckwitz, *Die Gesellschaft der Singularitäten: Zum Strukturwandel der Moderne*. Suhrkamp, Berlin 2017.

movements are declining less rapidly. The reality is also that they are struggling to pass on the faith to a younger generation just as much as the more liberal "main-line" churches. And the reality is also that a younger generation in evangelical churches in the USA is less unified in their thinking on ethical issues than those over 50 years of age.¹⁰

Why is it so difficult to pass on the faith to a younger generation? What needs to be considered so that it can succeed better?

23. What Reckwitz describes as an impetus towards singularisation also influences the churches. As a global church with a connectional structure, we are still largely living in the mode of modernity. Objectification, rationalisation and standardisation have prevailed in modern times. Congregationalist associations of local churches will have an easier time jumping on the bandwagon of singularisation in late modernity. But it also brings other dangers of being ephemeral. As the United Methodist Church, active in almost every country in Europe but also a minority church everywhere, we will do well to promote common identity in essentials and singularity in the local implementation. "The Character of a Methodist" as well as the "General Rules" give room for singularisation, and at the same time the communal leadership in conferences ensures the building up of a community of solidarity.

24. By their very origin, Methodists should be able to respond well to this singularisation impetus. Wesley always kept his local meetings ("United Societies") open for seekers and believers. In the growing movement there were usually more seekers than believers. Their only basis for being together were the "General Rules", with the aim of having a transforming experience of faith that God is pouring out his love into their hearts and enabling them to live a new life with God. In order to accompany this search in a personal way and at the same time make regular financial participation possible, Wesley created the small groups ("classes"). Only regular participation in these small group meetings carried entitlement to belong to the Methodist movement. This was reviewed quarterly and either confirmed or dropped. Only with the transition to an independent church, which became necessary in 1784 in the USA, was membership tied to baptism and baptismal confession ("confirmation").

Was becoming a "Professing Member" of the church a hurdle for you? What problems did you have or did you experience with others?

25. In the United Methodist Church in Switzerland, we have been experiencing for some time that - for various reasons - becoming a "Professing Member" of the church represents a high threshold and is difficult to communicate, especially in new forms and configurations of church. With respect to "Professing Membership" a clearer distinction should be made between a fundamental belief in Christ and belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ on the one hand, and a willingness to actively participate in the United Methodist Church on the other. In the Annual Conference of Switzerland - France - North Africa, a process of discussion is underway as to whether the promise of active participation in our church can also optionally be made for a limited period and in a renewable way. It may be one of many possible steps towards accommodating the singularity of late modern lifestyles more appropriately, and to open full participation in the ministry of the church, including voting rights, even with a time limit.

¹⁰ Cf. Robert P. Jones, *The End of White Christian America*. Simon & Schuster, 2017.

Church and the common good

26. The Spirit of Christ aims to build up a community, first the Body of Christ, the Church, and then also a community beyond the believers gathered in the Body of Christ. To do this, the Spirit will always begin with the individual. But it is an aberration of individualism - unfortunately an all-too-common Protestant and Free Church phenomenon - to think that it is only about my longing for God that needs to be satisfied.

27. On one hand, Christ inserts us into a community with other people whom we did not choose ourselves. Some of the first disciples of Jesus did point out Jesus to friends (cf. Jn 1:35-51), but even the first circle of the twelve was a colourful group of people, often at odds with each other. They would never have chosen each other out of mutual friendship based on feeling. And in the newly emerging churches after Pentecost, the different origins led to many tensions (cf. the Epistles to the Corinthians). Christ unites the most diverse people into a new kind of community of equal people (cf. Gal. 3:26-28; Col. 3:11).

28. On the other hand, the Spirit does not set aside our individuality and different personalities. It does not want to create a homogenous mass. Even the Spirit of Christ brings about differences in each person - always with the goal of building up community in the body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 12:4-13). This can lead to pride in some and envy in others, as the apostle Paul already described (cf. 1 Cor. 12:14-18). In a society of singularities in late modernity, the aberration of individualism becomes particularly tempting. One then forms congregations according to common interests or target groups. But if the spirituality lived among us remains shaped by the Spirit of Christ, it will promote our diversity in such a way that it serves to build the community of diverse people.

How do you live out your different personalities in your community? Where do you experience potential for conflict and where for enrichment?

29. Among the means of grace listed by Wesley in his "General Rules", it is interesting to note that the communal means are mentioned first, before being followed by individual ones.¹¹ Holy Communion is one of the communal means. Baptism is missing from the list because it is the sacrament of entrance into the body of Christ and cannot be repeated. But both sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper, have a fundamentally communal character. They are not merely an expression of existing community that would be celebrated by them. Rather, they create community by being celebrated. "*For in the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and were all made to drink of one Spirit.*" (1 Cor. 12:13). In baptism, a new community, an incorporation into the body of Christ, is created. And in the liturgy of the Lord's Supper (cf. A Service of Word and Table I) we pray: "Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

¹¹ On the third of the General Rules, Wesley says: "It is expected of all who desire to continue in these societies that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation. / Thirdly: By attending upon all the ordinances of God such are: The public worship of God. The ministry of the Word, either read or expounded. The Supper of the Lord. Family and private prayer. Searching the Scriptures. Fasting or abstinence." *The General Rules of the Methodist Church*. The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church. The United Methodist Publishing House, Nashville 2016.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honour and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and for ever."¹² The Lord's Supper establishes and renews the covenant community with Christ and with each other for being equipped for service to the world.

30. The biblical image for building community is the covenant. Jonathan Sacks, former Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, vividly describes the difference between the biblical idea of covenant and a modern contract: "In a contract, two or more individuals, each pursuing their own interest, come together to make an exchange for mutual benefit. So there are commercial contracts that create the market, and the social contract that creates the state. A covenant is something different. In a covenant, two or more individuals, each respecting the dignity and integrity of the other, come together in a bond of love and trust, to share their interests, sometimes even to share their lives, by pledging their faithfulness to one another, to do together what neither can achieve alone. / A contract is a transaction. A covenant is a relationship. ... That is why contracts benefit, but covenants transform."¹³ Contracts lead to the cooperation of "I's" that remain independent. Covenants create a "we". A church as the body of Christ can only be properly understood in the context of a covenant. Therefore, the church is and remains "community-relevant"¹⁴ in society and state.

31. The distinction between covenant and contract is also important for the relationship between church and state. On the one hand, both covenant and contract overlap in the area of marriage. For the state, marriage is a contractual relationship. In the church, it is a covenant relationship. And in both areas, marriage and the resulting family form the core cell of community. On the other hand, there is also the basic distinction that the state must remain neutral with regard to religious content. As a United Methodist Church, we came relatively late to the European continent and had to fight to be allowed as an independent church in former state-church structures. During the communist period in Eastern Europe, the church had to fight to be able to regulate its own internal affairs. And today there is a danger that nationalist-minded regimes want to refer to the country's Christian roots and define what is "Christian". They want to use the churches for their own purposes and prevent prophetic objection.

Within a covenant, how can you deal with a situation when one part is striving for a change and the other is not?

32. Church fellowship is built on the concept of covenant. However, in our own church we are struggling with the preservation of the covenant community. The way in which Bulgaria departed from The United Methodist Church at the beginning of April this year - almost like a raid - has been painful for me personally. Romania at present remains a district of the United Methodist Church under the direct supervision of the bishop until its members have decided about their way into the future. For some time now, various

¹² *The United Methodist Book of Worship*, p. 38. The United Methodist Publishing House, Nashville 1992.

¹³ Jonathan Sacks, *Morality: Restoring the Common Good in Divided Times*, pp. 64+326. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2020.

¹⁴ In the Covid pandemic, there was a heated discussion about whether the church was "system-relevant" in the state. In his response, Bishop Huber, former chairperson of the Council of the Protestant Church (EKD) in Germany, coined the term that the church is "relevant to existence". It certainly is, but this is too individualistic. That is why I have chosen in my own statements the term "community-relevant". Churches, together with other players in society, belong to those bodies that build community. The state is dependent on such bodies but cannot create them itself.

threats to the covenant community have surfaced in connection with the dispute over same-sex relationships. On the one hand, there is the accusation that the other side is revoking the covenant community. But in fact, it is a question of whether and how we find a common way into the future when the desire for change becomes strong in one part of the covenant community. On the other hand, there is the temptation to try to preserve the covenant community by parliamentary methods with narrow majority decisions or by judicial methods with decisions of law and sanctions. But both methods are instruments from the world of political treaties. And thirdly, there is the difficulty that a covenant community is always based on mutual trust and reliability, which can only be maintained if its members meet, do not put pressure on one another and live a respectful relationship. In the connexional structure of our worldwide church, this is associated with greater difficulties at every higher level. Therefore, the understanding in the "Book of Discipline" that the basic body of the church is formed at the level of the Annual Conference, makes a lot of sense. Consequently, however, we would also need to put an end to much over-regulation at the level of the General Conference, and we should use the right to adapt the Discipline at the level of the Central Conference wisely. At this extraordinary session of the Central Conference, the question of the common way forward will be a major concern of our deliberations. I hope and pray that we will be able to describe and then follow a common path into the future with as much unity as possible. At the same time, we will have to allow each other the freedom that those who so choose may part ways in mutual respect. This session of the Central Conference should find helpful arrangements for this.

How does your local church or the UMC in your country live the connection to other countries? What does it mean to you that the United Methodist Church is a worldwide church?

33. The current difficulties as to whether we can maintain and further strengthen the covenant community within the framework of the Central Conference should not obscure the view that some progress has been made in Annual Conferences in recent years. In the Poland Annual Conference in 2017 - shortly after the last regular Central Conference - a long process for a new internal regulation ("Internal Law") was adopted without a dissenting vote and with few abstentions. In the Annual Conference of Serbia - Macedonia, we have had repeated discussions on how Albania can be included and what the new name of such a conference should be, given all the political tensions in that region. In 2018, former Superintendent Martin Hovan said that the church must live reconciliation and should not wait for politicians. Then in 2019, it was decided that Albania would become a separate district within the Annual Conference. The Executive Committee of the Central Conference confirmed the new name of the Annual Conference of Serbia - North Macedonia - Albania in its meeting in autumn 2021. Also in 2019, Romania became a separate district in the Annual Conference of Bulgaria - Romania. In the area of the United Methodist Church in Switzerland (according to the Discipline having the status of a district conference within the framework of the Annual Conference of Switzerland - France - North Africa), a process of reorganisation concluded in 2017 with the formation of "central ministries". This means that there are no longer independent commissions for different branches of work, but four areas (development of local churches, communication, central administration, and real estate management) that work together in a completely new and creative way under the leadership of a general secretary. Due to legal requirements, Connexio has founded two independent associations: Connexio hope for the church-related work and Connexio develop for the social-diaconal work. It was a division that was unfortunately necessary due to state legislation that

sees a holistic approach to mission and ministry through a negative perception of mission as a religious indoctrination of social-diaconal work, and that is blind to the positive, dynamic power which the Spirit of Christ kindles in believers for ministry in the world.

34. In order to strengthen the lived covenant community, two initiatives in particular have been underway in recent years. Firstly, at the level of the Annual Conferences: already in the episcopal address of 2009, I pointed out that reporting at Annual Conferences should not be limited to an account of past activities and decisions but should also increasingly look to the future and discuss how the future should be shaped. And I have pointed to good experiences with the design of focal themes that contribute to the promotion of common identity. Both have shown positive effects in many conferences, even though there is definitely room for further development. Austria even worked on Wesley's original questions for conferencing over a three year period in preparation for the 150th anniversary. However, in Annual Conferences consisting of several countries with their own district conferences, the situation has often arisen that too many reports have remained limited to a single country and too little work has been done on what the Annual Conference could build in terms of covenant community and mutual support beyond national borders. This will be an important task for the future.

35. On the other hand, it is important also to strengthen the covenant community at the level of the Central Conference. On the level of the Executive Committee of the Central Conference, this has been improved through choosing varying locations for the sessions and including meetings with local churches in the respective countries. Another improvement came with theme days with additional people who are not already members of the Executive Committee. And guest delegates have been sent to other Annual Conferences, in a reciprocal arrangement. But this is not enough to enable new, and especially younger, people to have enriching experiences and relationships beyond their own country. While digital media provide some helpful networking opportunities, they cannot replace real physical encounters. The Central Conference or its Executive Committee will do well to promote such targeted offers of encounters.

What challenges does your local church face in implementing the motto "open hearts - open minds - open doors"? And what enrichments?

36. The Spirit of Christ aims to build community. This always points beyond the circle of the church to strengthen the common good in society. In my visits to congregations, I see many impressive examples of congregations "*letting their light shine*" (Matth. 5:16). They have open ears and hearts for the concerns of people outside the congregation. I also experience such openness and willingness to serve in countries that call themselves traditional in ethical issues. In these countries, the United Methodist Church is usually the church that most strongly implements the motto of "Open Hearts - Open Minds - Open Doors"¹⁵. I often experience such open, fearless outreach to the world in more recently founded churches more convincingly than in older, more long-standing congregations. Such a ministry for the common good is, for me, a beautiful example of Methodist identity, empowered by the Spirit of Christ. I often wish that congregations that hardly make contact with new people any more could be inspired by them. It also shows me how inappropriate characterisations like "traditional", "liberal", "open", "closed" are.

¹⁵ In English, "Open Hearts - Open Minds - Open Doors" has a double meaning: both as an adjective "open" and as a verb "to open" in the imperative.

Therefore, I have begun to pay attention to whether I discover fruit of the Spirit in the common witness of congregations.

Growing in love towards Christ

37. In his sermon on Matthew 5:13-16, Wesley asks, regarding the social aspect of a sanctified life: "The beauty of holiness, of that inward man of the heart which is renewed in the image of God, cannot but strike every eye which God hath opened, every enlightened understanding. ... Is it not better that the whole extent of our thought should be taken up with high and heavenly contemplation? And that instead of busying ourselves at all about externals, we should only commune with God in our hearts?"¹⁶. Apparently, Wesley was already struggling with many forms of mystical withdrawal from the world in his day. Such a withdrawal was often backed up with biblical justifications. Therefore, in the same sermon, Wesley clearly takes a stand against a form of a God-pleasing life in "holiness" lived only inwardly and in withdrawal from the world. Both the biblical images of the salt of the earth and the light of the world as well as many examples from the life of Jesus confirm Wesley in his conviction that the Christian faith is in its essence a social, i.e. community-oriented, religion. To turn the faith into an individualistic private religion would destroy it. Wesley wants to promote "holiness of heart and life".

There is an individual and a communal aspect of faith: which one predominates for you? And why?

38. In his occasional writings, Wesley often wrote concise summaries of what the basic teachings were. Methodists should not just live an outward form of religion but experience its power. This was already the goal in the "General Rules". Wesley emphasised it in "The Character of a Methodist", as I have already explained above. He repeated it in a little tract in 1786: "What was their fundamental doctrine? That the Bible is the whole and sole rule both of Christian faith and practice. Hence they learned: (1) That religion is an inward principle; that it is no other than the 'mind that was in Christ'; or in other words, the 'renewal of the soul after the image of God', in 'righteousness and true holiness'. (2) That this can never be wrought in us but 'by the power of the Holy Ghost'. (3) That we receive this and every other blessing merely for the sake of Christ; and (4) that whosoever has 'the mind that was in Christ', the same is our 'brother, and sister, and mother'."¹⁷

39. With different biblical turns of phrase, Wesley affirms that "SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS" is shaped by Christ, the true image of God. It is a growth process when believers remain Christ-centred in their lives. They owe their growth in love towards Christ to the work of the Spirit of Christ. Growing in love gives the Christian life an excellent perspective. For Wesley it was the great treasure entrusted to Methodists. Wesley linked such growth with the expectation of perfect love or Christian perfection.

40. The concepts of "Christian perfection" or "perfect love" have often been misunderstood and have led to legalistic excesses in our own tradition. The hope of Christian faith

¹⁶ John Wesley, *Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Discourse the Fourth* (Sermon 24; 1748). Preface § 1+2, in: *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 1, Sermons I. Abingdon Press, Nashville 1984, p. 531 + 532.

¹⁷ John Wesley, *Thoughts upon Methodism* (1786). *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 9: The Methodist Societies, History, Nature, and Design. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989, p. 527.

and life that Wesley was concerned with is probably closer to an orthodox spirituality than a Protestant one. In recent times, publications by Christoph Klaiber¹⁸ and David Field¹⁹ in particular have revived the living core of such Methodist identity. I will mention only a few thoughts that may inspire further study: (1) For Wesley, Christian faith and growth in love is and remains embedded in a living relationship with God. It is never an attainable state or status. But when the relationship with God is faithfully lived out, it shapes a person's character, even in desert experiences in life.²⁰ (2) The expectation of growth in love is grounded in the gracious work of the Spirit in the believer and is therefore characterised as much by gratitude as by modesty and humility. It is incompatible with pride. (3) Because the pursuit of sanctification aims at the renewal of the image of God in a person, it is characterised by joy and hope. "Holiness and happiness" are standing phrases for Wesley and always go hand in hand for him! Being a Christian is a joyful experience. (4) One can never be filled enough with love for God, fellow human beings and oneself. Perfect love is not a final state, for love can always continue to grow. (5) Those who argue from the negative perspective of overcoming sin get entangled in inappropriate argumentation schemes.²¹ Christian perfection or perfect love unfolds its power from the positive perspective that "God is love" (1 Jn 4:8,16) and "In love there is no fear, but perfect love casts out fear" (1 Jn 4:18).

If for Wesley "holiness and happiness" went hand in hand and being a Christian was a joyful thing - what is your experience and what is visible in your local church?

41. Christoph Klaiber writes: "Methodist explanations of the Holy Spirit fundamentally assume that God acts through his Spirit to change reality and that there are no limits to the work of the Spirit other than those set by creation, if man does not resist. If God's Holy Spirit is permanently weaker than the powers of evil and can never overcome and drive them out in this life, then the spirit is a lukewarm breeze and not the life-transforming power of God."²² For Wesley, Christian perfection was the great treasure that God gave to the Methodists and why he caused them to come into being.²³

¹⁸ In my view, the best presentation of Wesley's understanding of the Holy Spirit comes from Christoph Klaiber, *Von Gottes Geist verändert: Ursprung und Wirkung wesleyanischer Pneumatologie*. Reutlinger Theologische Studien, Band 8. Edition Ruprecht, 2014. Klaiber has also critically reviewed Wesley's doctrine of perfection in a concise form and elaborated its yield for today in an article: Christoph Klaiber, *Vollkommenheit - die Botschaft John Wesleys an Martin Luther?* In: *Theologie für die Praxis*, Jg. 42, 2016 (Edition Ruprecht), pp. 16-33.

¹⁹ For the study of Methodist identity in congregations, the following book is helpful in a generally understandable way for church people: David N. Field, *Our purpose is love: the Wesleyan way to be the church*. Abingdon Press, Nashville 2018. A theological reflection on the understanding of church and church unity is offered by David N. Field, *Bid Our Jarring Conflicts Cease: A Wesleyan Theology and Praxis of Church Unity*. Foundery Books, GBHEM 2017.

²⁰ Wesley does not speak of this often, but impressively in Sermon 47 (1760) with the title *Heaviness through Manifold Temptations*. Cf. Patrick Philipp Streiff, *John Wesley: Theologie in Predigten*. Reutlinger Beiträge zur Theologie 1. EVA, Leipzig 2019, p. 115. Similarly then also in *The Witness of the Spirit, Discourse II* (Sermon 11, 1767). After more than twenty years of the Methodist movement, Wesley increasingly includes such desert experiences.

²¹ This is also the case with Wesley himself in some statements.

²² Christoph Klaiber, *Vollkommenheit - die Botschaft John Wesleys an Martin Luther?* op. cit., p. 25.

²³ Letter from the last years of his life to Robert C. Brackenbury, 15 September 1790, In: *The Letters of John Wesley* (Telford Edition), vol. 8, p. 238: "This doctrine is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists; and for the sake of propagating this chiefly He appeared to have raised us up."

42. For Methodists, love for God and fellow human beings is at the core, because God first loved us. This also affects the understanding of Christian doctrine. Already in his tract on "The Character of a Methodist", Wesley takes up the basic rule "think and let think" for everything that does not concern the roots of Christianity. The older Wesley got, the more relaxed he became about what he considered as false doctrine. It is shown, for example, in his attitude towards Calvinist Methodists who hold the doctrine of predestination. Wesley admitted that at the beginning of the Methodist movement he and his brother Charles thought they had to resist the doctrine of predestination with all their might. They saw it not as an opinion but as a dangerous error that undermined the very foundation of Christian experience. But he had learned that people who hold this doctrine showed both love for Christ and signs of God's grace in their lives. Indeed, with many of them he hoped to lie at their feet on the day of Jesus Christ.²⁴ Many doctrinal differences became less important for Wesley in his old age. The central question, however, remained whether there is an inner renewal in the heart of a person, which then also manifests itself in the way he or she leads his or her life.

How do you deal with "false teaching" when people hold different beliefs from you?

43. Wesley objects strongly to equating his emphasis on love with vague ideas or mere feelings, with clouded thinking or with ignorance of the basics of the Gospel of Christ. He distances himself from this in his well-known sermon on "Catholic Spirit".²⁵ A person of a truly "catholic", i.e. ecumenical, spirit is in fact closely bound to his or her principles and church. At the same time, however, the person lives in a spirit of love with his own brothers and sisters in faith and with those from other churches who may have different convictions. Different convictions may prevent one from joining together to form a united church. But they should not prevent meeting each other with appreciation and encouraging each other in good works.

What do you think of Wesley's statement that God "respects the goodness of the heart rather than the clearness of the head"?

44. In one of his last sermons, Wesley repeats again what he regularly emphasised when he was at an advanced age: "I believe he [the merciful God] respects the goodness of the heart rather than the clearness of the head; and that if the heart of a man be filled (by the grace of God, and the power of his Spirit) with the humble, gentle, patient love of God and man, God will not cast him into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels because his ideas are not clear, or because his conceptions are confused. 'Without holiness,' I own, 'no man shall see the Lord'; but I dare not add: or clear ideas."²⁶ For Wesley, growing in love towards Christ is at the heart of the Christian faith. A life shaped by the Spirit of Christ makes people more like their Lord, Christ. This is worth striving for and fills with happiness. Or in words from the sermon in the opening service: "Faith in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit remains invigorating at its core and allows believers to remain persons who both seek and believe." May the people

²⁴ John Wesley, Letter to John Newton, 14 May 1765. In: *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 27, pp. 426-27. John Newton was himself such a proponent of the doctrine of predestination.

²⁵ Cf. John Wesley, *Catholic Spirit*, (Sermon 39, 1750). In: *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 2, Sermons II. Abingdon Press, Nashville 1985.

²⁶ John Wesley, Sermon 130, *On Living without God*, (1790), § 15. In: *The Works of John Wesley*, vol 4, Sermons IV. Abingdon Press, Nashville 1987. p 175.

in our congregations track the mystery of God in Jesus Christ and bear witness to it, so that it causes wide ripples and invites new people to follow Jesus Christ.

45. Therefore, I would like to conclude this episcopal address - as I did the last one - with the intercession and praise from the Letter to the Ephesians: *"I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he [the Father] may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."* (Eph. 3:16-19)

VII. Reports at the Executive Committee and the Central Conference CSE

Unauthorized translation - Original in German

Reports for the constitution (#1)

Invitation to the Extraordinary Meeting of the Central Conference, November 16 - 20, 2022 in Basel (#1a)

To all delegates to the central conference of Central and Southern Europe

Zurich, August 31, 2022

Extra Session of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

Hereby I issue a **call for an Extra Session of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe** in accordance with par. 542.2 of the CC-CSE Discipline and with the concurrence of the Executive Committee in its session of August 27, 2022.

The extra session will be held November 16-20, 2022, in Basel, Switzerland.

The extra session will be limited to the agenda attached to this call. There will not be other topics, reports or motions than those listed in the agenda and programme-outline attached. The extra session will be bilingual, German and English.

Delegates can exercise their voting rights only by being present in person at the session. Please be aware that restrictions for health issues (e.g. Covid) may have to be taken by the officers of the central conference and will have to be strictly observed by all delegates. It may be wise that first reserve delegates remain available to step in as voting delegates, on short notice.

Please find attached also a document with some general information and with a link for an online registration for the extra session.

Reports and documents for the extra session of the central conference of Central and Southern Europe will be sent out separately by the secretary in due course. A first sending out is planned within the next two weeks.

May the spirit of Christ lead us in prayerful preparation for the extra session of the central conference!



Bishop Patrick Streiff

Cc: To invited guests to the extra session of the central conference.

Agenda of the Extra session of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe (#1b)

1. Opening business

- a. Official invitation (#1a)
- b. Official agenda (#1b)
- c. Provisional rough program, incl. spiritual elements and celebrations (#1c)
- d. Presence, voting rights and quorum
- e. Motion with rationale for the election of a bishop (#1e)
- f. Motion to adopt the detailed program (#1f - will be available at the meeting)
- g. Election of the ushers (counters of vote)

2. Episcopal message to the extra session of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe from October 16-20, 2022

3. Report and motions of the Office of CC CSE - general part

- a. Preparations and assignments in view of the extra session of the Central Conference (#3a - will be available at the meeting)
- b. Information on the withdrawal of Bulgaria from CC CSE (#3b)
- c. Information on the Central Conference accounts and budget proposal in the extended quadrennium (2017-2020 / 2021-2024) (#3c)
- d. Motion to adopt the CC CSE Historical Statement (#3d)
- e. Information on the right of adaptation of Central Conferences (#3e)
- f. Amendment of the Rules and Order of the Central Conference Art. 7.2 (Replacements to the Executive Committee) (#3f)
- g. Amendment of the Rules and Order of the Central Conference Art. 4.2 (Calculation of quorum of 3/5 in an election of a bishop) (#3g)
- h. Information on general-church events (#3h - will be available at the meeting)

4. Report of the Round Table on the Common Future in the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

5. Report and motions of the Office of the CC - according to meetings of the Executive Committee from August 27, October 27, and November 16, 2022

- a. Information and possible motions from the meetings of the Executive Committee of the Central Conference (#5a - will follow)
- b. Motions from the Round Table on the common future in the Central Conference CSE, incl. possible changes in the Rules and Order of the Central Conference and/or the Discipline of the Central Conference (#5c.1 - will follow) Conferencing with "consent procedure" (#5c.2)

6. Report and motions of the Working Group on Episcopacy

- a. Report on the request of the active bishop for retirement and planning of the transition phase with the newly elected person (#6a)
- b. Motion for a new election for a first term of office until the regular meeting of the Central Conference after the regular General Conference that will follow the General Conference of 2024 (presumably GC 2028 and CC 2028/29) - in suspension of the Rules and Order of the Central Conference, Art. 4.3 (#6b)
- c. Documents for the election of a new bishop (including job description; procedure for election; list of eligible persons; blank sheet for personal details of possible candidates) (#6c – several documents)

7. Episcopal election and consecration

8. Report of the European Bishops with Guideline on Possible Withdrawal from the UMC (Information and Motions)

- a. Guidelines on withdrawal of lay people (information) (#8a)
- b. Guidelines on withdrawal of clergy (information) (#8b)
- c. Guidelines on withdrawal of an Annual Conference (information) (#8c)
- d. Motion for a new article 549 in the Discipline of the CC CSE and accompanying document (motion) (#8d – two separate documents)

9. By-elections

- a. Information on necessary by-elections at the extra session of the Central Conference (#9a)
- b. Elections of substitutes at the extra session of the Central Conference (list of nominees will follow at the extra session of the Central Conference) (#9b - will follow at the meeting)

10. Constituent meeting of the Executive Committee on November 19, 2022 with new members following the by-elections

11. Information, thanks and closing of the extra meeting of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

= Attachments with documents

Provisional rough program of the extraordinary CC MSE 2022 (#1c)

Tuesday, November 15, 2022

- 16.00 Meeting of the Office of the CC-CSE
- 19.30 Meeting of the WG Episcopacy

Wednesday, November 16, 2022

- 09.00 Meeting of the Executive Committee
- 16.00 Opening service with Holy Communion
- 17.30 Plenary Session I
 - Statutory concerns
 - agreement in principle to the election of a new bishop
- 19.30 Plenary Session II
 - encounters and conversations

Thursday, November 17, 2022

- 08.30 Plenary Session III
 - Morning Prayer (Bishop Christian Alsted)
 - Episcopal Address
 - Conversation Episcopal Address
- 12.00 Midday prayer (Rev. Jana Krizova)
- 14.00 Plenary session IV
 - Report from the Round Table
 - Motions related to the report of the Round Table
- 19.30 Plenary session V
 - Continuation Round Table
 - 1st ballot of the election of a new bishop

Friday, November 18, 2022

- 08.30 Plenary Session VI
 - Morning Prayer (Bishop Eduard Khegay)
 - Various items according to the agenda
- 11.00 Memorial service (Pastor Esther Handschin)
- 14.00 Lunch prayer (still open)
- 14.15 Plenary session VII
 - Further ballots for the election of a new bishop
- 19.30 Public evening event with ecumenical guests
 - Short reports from the CC CSE and the work of the UMC in areas outside the CC

Saturday, November 19, 2022

- 08.30 Plenary session VIII
 - Morning Prayer (Bishop David Bard)
 - Various concerns according to the agenda
- 11.00 Open window to the world and prayer
- 14.00 Meeting of the newly elected Executive Committee
Other delegates to the CC and guests: "Basel Special"
- 18.00 Festive evening
 - Thanks to the outgoing bishop & welcoming the new bishop

Sunday, November 20, 2022

- Morning Church services in the region
- 14.00 Worship service with consecration of the new bishop in Basel Cathedral

Motion to the extra session of the Central conference of Central and Southern Europe (CC CSE)

Rationale for holding an Episcopal election (#1e)

Motion: In accordance with the rationale here presented, the extra session of the Central conference of Central and Southern Europe shall have authority to hold an episcopal election at its session of November 16-20, 2022.

1. Generalities

Here are a few generalities on extra sessions of central conferences and on election of a bishop. All references are according to the *Book of Discipline 2016* of General Conference. Several of the articles quoted are not part of the CC CSE Discipline (in German) or only in a much shorter version.

1. On the call of an extra session of the Central conference:

See *Book of Discipline*, par. 542.2: "

"... The Bishops resident [sc. "resident" means bishops in active service] in a central conference or a majority of them, with the concurrence of the executive committee or other authorized committee, shall have the authority to call an extra session of the central conference to be held at the time and place designated by them."

2. Concerning the election and tenure of a bishop elected at an extra session of the CC CSE:

See *Book of Discipline*, par. 543.3:

"When a central conference shall have been authorized to elect bishops, such elections shall be conducted under the same general procedure as prevails in the jurisdictional conferences for the election of bishops. A central conference shall have power to fix the tenure of bishops elected by the said central conference."

See Rules of Order of the CC CSE, article 4.2-4.4 – The Bishop:

"2. The Bishop shall be elected through secret ballot with a three-fifths majority of the voting delegates present. The Executive Committee can define a preparatory process for the election of a bishop. All ordained elders in full connection, who belong to an annual or provisional annual conference of the Central Conference, may be elected.

3. The newly elected Bishop has a term of four years. When the Bishop's first term of office is closing, the executive committee shall determine whether a re-election for life or an election of a new Bishop shall take place and makes the appropriate motion to the Central Conference. For a re-election for life a three-fifth majority is required.

4. If the office of Bishop becomes vacant (due to death, retirement or resignation) the executive committee in accordance with the Discipline shall determine

the necessary steps. The executive committee shall decide whether an extraordinary session of the Central Conference shall be announced and makes the motion to elect a new Bishop."

With an extra session of the CC in 2022 and a regular session late in 2024 or early 2025, the regulation of a first term of four years is not practicable. **The Working Group on Episcopacy will need to propose to the extra session of the CC the term of the newly elected bishop, either up to a regular CC in 2024/25 or in 2028/29.** The extra session of the CC will need to decide on it prior to the election process.

2. Regulations of the BOD 2016 for episcopal elections in extra sessions of the central conference

Here are the relevant parts of the BOD 2016 on episcopal elections in extra sessions of central conferences:

1. Constitutional paragraph on "unexpected vacancies" in central conferences

General Conference 2016 voted on a revision of par. 46 in the Constitution. After the votes of all annual conferences on the constitutional revision, the Council of Bishops validated the new text in its meeting in May 2018. The BOD 2016 still has the old text. You have to look at the errata sheets for finding the new text that is now in effect.

See *Book of Discipline* with latest updates, par. 46 (Constitution – New added text is underlined):

"The bishops shall be elected by the respective jurisdictional and central conferences and consecrated in the historic manner at such time and place as may be fixed by the General Conference for those elected by the jurisdictions and by each central conference for those elected by such central conference, provided that episcopal elections in central conferences shall be held at a regular, not an extra, session of the central conference, except in the case where an unexpected vacancy must be filled."

2. On vacancy in the office of bishop

Up to 1992, there were no restrictions and no particular paragraphs that would prevent the election of bishops in extra sessions of central conferences. General Conference 1992 decided that in all the chapter on superintendency, regulations made for Jurisdictional conferences shall equally be valid for Central conferences. In all relevant parts of that chapter, "Central conferences" was added to "Jurisdictional conferences". Thus, par. 407 on "Vacancy in the Office of Bishop" includes a complicated restriction on elections of bishops, also valid for central conferences. The restriction for not having episcopal elections in extra sessions historically comes from some problems of delay of episcopal elections in regular sessions. Regular sessions of a central conference have to occur within one year of General Conference.

See *Book of Discipline*, par. 407. *Vacancy in the Office of Bishop*:

"A vacancy in the office of bishop may occur due to death, retirement, resignation, judicial procedure, leave of absence, or medical leave. In case assignment of a bishop to presidential supervision of an episcopal area is terminated by any of the above causes, the vacancy shall be filled by the Council of Bishops on nomination of

the active bishops of the College of Bishops of the jurisdiction or central conference concerned, after consultation with the jurisdictional or central conference and annual conference committees on the episcopacy and the cabinet(s); or, if the vacancy should occur within twenty-four months of the episcopal assumption of presidential supervision of that area, the College of Bishops of the jurisdiction or central conference concerned may call a special session of the jurisdictional or central conference as provided in par. 521.2. When a bishop is elected under the provisions of this paragraph, the years remaining in the quadrennium within which the election occurs shall count as a full quadrennium for purposes of assignment. It is recommended that the previous bishop serving the vacant episcopal area not be appointed to serve in the interim."

Par. 407 refers to par. 521 which is in the section on Jurisdictional conferences and has no similar paragraph in the section on central conferences, as follows:

See *Book of Discipline*, par. 521. *Special Sessions [of Jurisdictional Conferences]*

"1. The jurisdictional conference may order a special session in such manner as it shall determine.

2. The College of Bishops of a jurisdiction by a two-thirds vote shall have authority to call a special session of the jurisdictional conference when necessary; provided, however, that if an episcopal area is left vacant by reason of death, retirement or other cause within twenty-four months of the episcopal assumption of presidential supervision of that area, the College of Bishops may by majority vote convene within three months, after giving not less than thirty days' notice, a special session of the jurisdictional conference for the purpose of electing and consecrating a bishop and of considering any other matters specified in the call; ...

3. The delegates to a special session of the jurisdictional conference shall be the delegates last elected by each annual conference.

4. A called session of the jurisdictional conference cannot transact any other business than that indicated in the call."

In the case of an extra session (also called "called session"), par. 407 limits the possibility for electing a new bishop to a vacancy that occurs within the first 24 months of the quadrennium. In a regular quadrennium of 4 years, this may be reasonable for jurisdictional or central conferences with several bishops. It places any extra session for election of a new bishop at the latest very early in the third year of the quadrennium. If the vacancy occurs only in the second half of the quadrennium, the newly elected bishop would have less than two years up to the next regular session. In such case, the vacancy shall not be filled by election of a new bishop, but by another bishop (active or retired) who will be assigned for the rest of the quadrennium.

3. Rationale for the election of a bishop at the extra session of CC CSE in November 2022

The newly revised paragraph 46 in the Constitution adds the following words concerning episcopal elections in central conferences:

"... provided that episcopal elections in central conferences shall be held at a regular, not an extra, session of the central conference, except in the case where an unexpected vacancy must be filled."

What is an unexpected vacancy?

In a normal quadrennial rhythm, an unexpected vacancy may occur through death, health reason, resignation, or judicial procedure. In a normal quadrennial rhythm, retirements would occur with regular sessions.

At present, we are no more in a normal quadrennial rhythm. The quadrennium will extend over eight years if General Conference will meet in May 2024 (Jan. 1st 2017 to Dec. 31st 2024). Therefore, even those bishops who had the intention to retire at General Conference 2020, are pushed into unexpected circumstances. Most of them have extended their active ministry first by one year with the announcement of the postponement of General Conference for late summer 2021. Then, many have again extended for another year with the announcement of the postponement of General Conference for late summer 2022. Now they all face the personal decision whether they finally retire within this prolonged quadrennium or continue in active service up to a General Conference in 2024. In the US, all Jurisdictional conferences are called to a regular session in November 2022 for the election of bishops. Furthermore, regular Jurisdictional Conferences have to be called by the Council of Bishops for all five Jurisdictions together, at the same date. However, outside the US, regular central conferences can only be held within one year of the General Conference 2024, at a date chosen by its own College of Bishops. Therefore, the CC CSE has to call for an extra session of the Central Conference.

What about the restrictions in place in par. 407 and 521.2?

The restrictions on episcopal elections within the quadrennium, as stated in par. 407 and 521.2, make sense in a normal quadrennium of four years, but not in an unexpected and unforeseeable long quadrennium of eight years.

Furthermore, it is to be observed:

- The addition of "central conferences" was made throughout the chapter on Superintendency (par. 401-450) in all relevant articles, including par. 407, in order to bring central conferences to an equal level of jurisdictional conferences. The addition of "central conferences" in par. 407 has not been made because of a specific situation or need in a central conference, whereas par. 46 in the Constitution is very specifically only relevant to central conferences.
- Par. 521.2 has a restriction of 24 months of assignment because it wants to prevent holding a Jurisdictional Conference as extra session with election that would be time-wise too close to the next regular session of a Jurisdictional Conference.
- The revision of par. 46 says that an extra session of the central conference may be called "*in the case where an unexpected vacancy must be filled*", without any further restrictions on process or timing of such an unexpected vacancy in central conferences.
- The revision of par. 46 is more recent than par. 407 & 521.2.
- The Constitution always takes precedence over other parts of "Organization and Administration".

There is at present an unexpected and unprecedented situation of a quadrennium that will last over eight years. Bishop Streiff planned to take retirement at the regular session of the CC in March 2021, then prolonged twice for an additional year. He does not want to prolong

up to a regular session of the CC CSE in 2024/2025. And the time between an extra session of the CC CSE in November 2022 and a regular CC CSE in 2024/2025 will be at least two years long.

Therefore, in the unexpected and unprecedented situation of the further postponement of General Conference to May 2024 with a further extension of the quadrennium to eight years, any vacancy – including a retirement earlier planned for General Conference 2020 – allows for calling an extra session of the CC CSE with election of a bishop.

July 21, 2022 – Bishop Patrick Streiff

(This paper is a shortened version, adapted to the CC CSE, of an earlier scenario planning in the Council of Bishops in March 2022, originally drafted by Bishop Patrick Streiff and reviewed by Bill Waddell, legal counsel for the Council of Bishops)

Detailed program of the 19th meeting of the CC CSE (#1f)

		Traktandum / Agenda	Dok / Doc	mitverantwortlich / co-responsible
Dienstag / Tuesday, Nov. 15, 2022 - Zwinglihaus				
Anreise / Arrival: ZK-Büro / CC Office & AG Bischofsamt / WG Episcopacy				
16.00	ZK-Büro			
18.15	Abendessen / Dinner			
19.45	AG Bischofsamt / WG Episcopacy			J. Niederer
Mittwoch / Wednesday, Nov. 16, 2022 - Zwinglihaus				
09.00	ZK-Exekutivkomitee / CC Executive Committee			
10.15	Pause / Break			
10.45	ZK-Exekutivkomitee / CC Executive Committee			
12.30	Mittagessen / lunch			
Anreise / Arrival: ZK Delegierte und offizielle Gäste / CC delegates and official guests				
16.00	Eröffnungsgottesdienst mit Abendmahl / Opening worship with Holy Communion			E. Stalcup
17.30	Plenarsitzung / Plenary	1; 3.a; 3.e	1.a-c+e-f; 3.a; 3.e	M. Bach
18.15	Abendessen / Dinner			
19.45	Begegnungsabend / Community evening			Team
Donnerstag / Thursday, Nov. 17, 2022 - Zwinglihaus				
08.30	Morgenandacht / Morning devotion			Bp. Ch. Alsted
09.00	Bischofsbotschaft & Gespräch / Episcopal Address & discussion	2		Bp. G. Mande, pres.
10.15	Pause / Break			
10.45	Bischofsbotschaft & Gespräch / Episcopal Address & discussion	2		Bp. G. Mande, pres.
12.00	Mittagsgebet / Mid-day prayer			J. Krizova
12.30	Mittagessen / lunch			
14.00	Plenarsitzung: Runder Tisch / Plenary: Round Table	4; 5	4.a2; 5.a; 5.b	RT team
16.00	Pause / Break			
16.30	Plenarsitzung: Runder Tisch / Plenary: Round Table	4; 5	4.a2; 5.a; 5.b	RT team
18.15	Abendessen / Dinner			
19.45	AG Bischofsamt / WG Episcopacy	3.g; 6	3.g; 6.a; 6.b; 6.c1-5	J. Niederer
	1. Wahlgang / 1st ballot	7		Bp. D. Bard, pres.
Freitag / Friday, Nov. 18, 2022 - Zwinglihaus				
08.30	Morgenandacht / Morning devotion			Bp. E. Khegay
09.00	Plenarsitzung / Plenary (RT continued or other agenda items)	5 (cont.); 3	5 (cont.); 5.a; 5.a1+5.a2; 3.b-d+f+h	RT team; M. Bach
10.30	Pause / Break			
11.00	Gedächtnisfeier / Memorial Service			E. Handschin
12.30	Mittagessen / lunch			
14.00	Mittagsgebet / Mid-day prayer			D. Sjanta
14.15	Bischofswahl / Episcopal election: process	7		M. Bach
	Weitere Wahlgänge / further ballots	7		Bp. Mande & Bard, pres
16.00	Pause / Break			
16.30	Weitere Wahlgänge / further ballots	7		Bp. Mande & Bard, pres
18.15	Abendessen / Dinner			
19.45	Willkomm / Welcome - newly elected bishop mit ökumenischen Gästen / with ecumenical guests			B. Moser
Samstag / Saturday, Nov. 19, 2022 - Zwinglihaus				
08.30	Morgenandacht / Morning devotion			Bp. D. Bard
09.00	Plenarsitzung / Plenary	8; 9	8.a-d; 9.a-b	
10.00	Pause / Break			
10.30	Plenarsitzung / Plenary	11	--	
11.00	Fenster zur Welt & Gebet / Open window & prayer			U. Schweizer
12.15	Mittagessen / lunch			
14.00	ZK-Exekutivkomitee / CC executive committee	10		
14.00	"Basel special": übrige Delegierte & Gäste / other delegates & guests			OK / local team
17.00	Abreise mit Bus / Departure with bus			
Festlicher Abend - festive evening - Dietsberg				
	Rückkehr mit Bus / Return with bus			L. & M. Hafner
Sonntag / Sunday, Nov. 20, 2022 - Münster / Cathedral				
	Gottesdienste in der Region / Worship in the region			
14.00	Gottesdienst mit Bischofsweihe - Worship with Episcopal consecration			

Report of the Office of the Central Conference to the Executive Committee from August 27, 2022

1. Presence and negotiation reports

1.1 Meetings of the Bureau

The Office of the CC met three times since the March 2022 meeting of the Executive Committee of the Central Conference: on May 4, 2022, June 9, 2022, and August 10, 2022. Jörg Niederer, chair of the Working Group on Episcopacy, also attended some of these meetings.

1.2 Proceedings of the 72nd-74th Meeting of the Executive Committee

The proceedings of the last meetings of the Executive Committee of March 12-13, 2021 (online), October 21-24, 2021 (Budapest), and March 25-26, 2022 (Mulhouse), written by Secretary Markus Bach, are available for download on the website of the CC MSE (<https://www.umc-cse.org/en/downloads--links/documents-studies-and-lectures/minutes-cse.html>)

1.3 Composition of the Executive Committee

Due to the withdrawal of the Bulgarian Methodists from the EMK, the Bulgarian members also left the Executive Committee. Superintendent Rares Calugar will continue to participate in the meetings of the Executive Committee with voice but no vote as Superintendent responsible for Romania.

2. Planning for the meetings of the Executive Committee and Central Conference

2.1 Meeting of the Executive Committee on August 27, 2022

Online meeting

The 75th meeting of the Executive Committee will be conducted online via Zoom. The Zoom link is the following: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83496192293?pwd=MDVWZ3E4bW1re-ThxUnRndUUxYnc5QT09>

Meeting ID: 834 9619 2293 / ID Code: 511502

The following meeting times are scheduled:

Morning: 09:00 - 12:00 (with break).

Afternoon: 13:00 - 16:00 (with break)

Finalization of the program

The agenda can be found in the attachment to the report of the office of the CC (see attachment 1.2).

The focus of the meeting will be the report of the Round Table on the Common Future in the Central Conference CSE. Since the Roundtable meets immediately prior to the Executive Committee, the report is expected to be oral.

No reports from the working groups have been solicited (with the exception of the Working Group on Episcopacy) - rather, the focus of the discussions will be on the Round Table report and on preparations for the extra session of the Central Conference in 2022.

Mandates for the meeting

The office of the CC issues the following mandates:

As assistant to the secretary:

Urs Schweizer

For the examination of the minutes:

Lea Hafner and Jörg Niederer

2.2 Extra session of the Central Conference, November 16 - 20, 2022

Preparatory work for the extra session of the Central Conference

The local organising committee in Basel has started its work. It is still being clarified how great the effort in the area of technology (possibly incl. livestream?) must be. A sufficiently large restaurant is still being sought for the festive evening. Lea and Markus Hafner have agreed to organize this event with thanks to the present bishop and a welcome for the new bishop.

Invitation to the extra session of the Central Conference

The call letter for the extra session of the Central Conference is available and has been approved by the Office of the CC (see attachment 2.1a). Since it will be an extra session of the Central Conference, the agenda must be sent out with the invitation and no new agenda items can be added at the meeting (see attachment 2.1b).

The Executive Committee is asked to review this agenda and note any necessary changes. There is also a provisional rough program (see attachment 2.1c)

Holding of a bishop election at the extraordinary meeting

At the extra session of the Central Conference, it will be possible to hold an election of a bishop. Bishop Patrick Streiff has prepared a document for this purpose, which is an abbreviated version, adapted to the CC CSE, of a scenario that was planned in the Council of Bishops in March 2022 and reviewed by Bill Waddell, legal counsel to the Council of Bishops (see attachment 2.1d).

How is the necessary quorum of 3/5 calculated for the election of a bishop?

The Rules of Order of the Central Conference CSE regulate elections in Art 18.5+18.6 and the election of a Bishop in Art 4.2. The difference between these two variants is the different way of counting the respective valid votes. In Art. 18, the invalid and blank votes are deducted from the votes cast, while in Art 4, the number of all voters present is calculated as the basis for the quorum. This means that votes not cast, invalid and blank votes are also counted for the calculation of the quorum.

The "Procedure for the Election of a Bishop," as formulated by the Working Group on Episcopacy, states, by analogy with the Rules of Order in Art. 4: "A person is considered elected if the number of votes in his/her favor has reached a 3/5 majority of the voting members present."

The Office of the CC has consulted with the chairperson of the Judicial Court of the CC on the interpretation of the Rules of Order. The Office of the CC does not consider it reasonable that votes not cast and invalid votes in the election of a bishop should have an influence on the determination of the necessary quorum of 60%. It therefore proposes an clarifying revision of Art. 4.2 so that only the valid votes of the members casting are decisive for the quorum. Blank votes are valid votes. Votes of persons who are not (or no longer) eligible are invalid.

Motion to the Executive Committee: The Executive Committee proposes to the extra session of the Central Conference to replace the first sentence of Article 4.2 of the Rules of Order of the Central Conference as follows: "The Bishop shall be elected through secret ballot with a three-fifths majority of the voting delegates present who take part in that ballot and cast valid votes. Empty ballots shall also count among valid votes."

If the motion is adopted, the procedure for the Electing of a Bishop must be adapted accordingly.

For the ballots, the office of the CC assumes the following procedure:

- The basis for valid votes in the 1st ballot is the list of eligible elders.
- No new persons can be elected after the 1st ballot.
- Those with only one vote are eliminated for the 2nd ballot.
- For all subsequent ballots, the person with the fewest votes shall be eliminated until only two persons remain, one of whom must achieve a 3/5 majority to be elected.

By-elections at the 2022 extra session of the Central Conference.

This summer the secretary wrote to all persons elected at or since the 2017 Central Conference asking them to announce any resignations to the November 2022 extra session of the Central Conference. The following persons have made use of this:

- Henrik Schauer mann (Executive Layperson HU / WG Episcopacy)
- Štefan Rendoš (WG Episcopacy)
- Irena Stefanova (Co-chair WG Children and Youth)
- Martin Obermeir-Siegrist (CPCE Regional Group South-East Europe)
- Judit Lakatos (General Commission on Archives and History)
- Serge Frutiger (Chair ad interim of the WG Discipline and Legal Affairs)
- (- Stefan Weller [WG Liturgy] / successor: Erika Stalcup)

The following offices/functions are vacant:

- Vice Chair Executive Committee and Office CC
- Layperson AC Czech Republic-Slovakia in the Executive Committee
- 1 member of the Judicial Council (lay person or clergy)
- 1 substitute member of the Judicial Council (clergy)
- Counsel for the Church
- 1 member of the WG Church and Society
- 2 pastors + 1 lay person in the European Methodist Council
- 1 pastor + 1 lay person in the Governing Board of the Methodist e-Academy

The list of all elected persons can be found in attachment 1.4. The members of the Executive Committee are asked to bring nominations for the election of replacements to the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference.

3. Information on the Church in Bulgaria

Bishop Patrick Streiff has written a document on the background and consequences of the decisions made in Bulgaria on April 1, 2022. This can be found in attachment 2.3b.

4. Financial

Budget 2023-24 of the Central Conference

The Treasurer, Iris Bullinger, has prepared the budget for the years 2023-2024 for the attention of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Central Conference (see attachment 1.3). The budget for the next two years anticipates additional expenses due to special working meetings and increased travel expenses. Contributions from Bulgaria will have ended. The budgets for 2021 and 2022 were already approved by the Executive Committee in April 2020 and October 2021, respectively. The budget for 2023-2024 will be submitted to the Extraordinary Central Conference for approval. Any corrections could still be made in the Executive Committee. The Office of the CC decided to present the years 2017 - 2020 separately in the overview and to present the Quadrennium 2021 - 2024 also independently.

5. Historical statement

Bishop Patrick Streiff has revised the version of the Historical Statement, which was presented to the Executive Committee in October 2021, in a few places and adapted it to the latest developments (see attachment 1.7). The Executive Committee is asked to approve this document and to submit it to the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference.

Motion to the Executive Committee:

The Executive Committee approves the document "Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe - Historical Statement" and submits it to the extra session of the Central Conference 2022 for inclusion in the Discipline of the CC-CSE.

6. Information on the Adaptions Right of a Central Conferences

Bishop Patrick Streiff has written a document "On the Adaptation Right of a Central Conference" which shows which texts can be adapted by Central Conferences and which cannot. The document serves as information (see attachment 2.3e) and will be sent to the extra session of the Central Conference as a basic text. At the end of the document, the bishop formulates some hints for the helpful handling of the right of adaptation of the Central Conference at its extra session of the CC-CSE.

7. Amendment of the Regulations of the Central Conference CSE

The position of the layperson of the Annual Conference Czech-Slovakia cannot be filled due to lack of alternate members to the Central Conference. The Office of the CC therefore proposes an addition to the Rules of Orders of the Central Conference (see attachment 1.4):

Motion to the Executive Committee: The Executive Committee proposes to the extra session of the Central Conference to amend the Rules of Order of the Central Conference in Article 7.2 at the end as follows: "If needed, an Annual Conference may elect additional reserve delegates."

8. Amendment of the Pension Plan CC CSE

The Pension Plan Regulations have been revised and are before the Executive Committee in two versions. Attachment 1.6.1 shows the changes to the text, and attachment 1.6.2 shows

the final form of the revised text. The Executive Committee is asked to approve the revised regulations.

Motion to the Executive Committee:

The Executive Committee approves the revised regulations of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe Pension Plan, rev10 of 25.5.2022 and 24.7.2022.

9. Working Group on Episcopacy

The Working Group Episcopacy has adapted the documents necessary for the election of a new bishop to the current situation and submits them to the Executive Committee with a separate report (Attachment 4.1) for approval and delivery to the delegates to the extra session of the Central Conference. The documents will be sent to the delegates of the extra session of the Central Conference in the first half of September 2022.

At the same time, the Working Group has decided to submit a motion to the extra session of the Central Conference that the re-election for life or new election of a bishop should not take place after the General Conference 2024, but should be postponed to the Central Conference (CC 2029?) following the General Conference after next (GC 2028?).

10. Documents of the European Bishops

For uniform clarification and transparency, the European Bishops of our Church have drawn up various documents with guidelines which show how a possible withdrawal from the Church is to be handled in accordance with the Book of Discipline (for information):

- Guidelines for Laity leaving the UMC (Attachment 5.1)
- Guidelines for Clergy leaving the UMC (Attachment 5.2)
- An Annual Conference desiring to leave the UMC (Attachment 5.3)

Withdrawal of a District Conference or an entire country is not provided for in our Central Conference CSE Discipline. The Book of Discipline of General Conference does provide for this in Articles 2548.2, 2518, and 2524. In order for a withdrawal of a District Conference or an entire country to be possible, the extra session of the Central Conference must explicitly agree to this possibility. The corresponding request is formulated in the Guidelines (Attachment 5.4).

In order for church property to be transferred to another Methodist Church in a consensual separation procedure, a "Comity Agreement according to par. 2548.2" should be signed. Such a possibility also requires approval by the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference. The corresponding proposal is formulated in the document (Attachment 5.5).

Markus Bach, Secretary

Planning of the extraordinary meeting 2022 of the Central Conference 2022 (#3a)

1. Detailed program for the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference CSE

The Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe has a provisional rough program (#1c) and a detailed program based on it (#1f).

Motion to the Central Conference CSE:

The detailed program for the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe from November 16-20, 2022, in Basel (#1f) is approved.

2. Theme and worship celebrations

The theme of the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference CSE is "The Fruit of the Spirit is..."

The following persons have been commissioned for thematic or worship assignments:

- Bishop Patrick Streiff: sermon at the opening worship service of November 16, 2022.
- Bishop Christian Alsted: Morning worship service of November 17, 2022
- Bishop Eduard Kheday: Morning service of November 18, 2022
- Esther Handschin: memorial service of November 18, 2022
- Daniel Sjanta: Mid-day prayer of November 18, 2022
- Bishop David Bard: Morning prayer of November 19, 2022

We thank these individuals for their service.

3. services of Sunday, November 20, 2022

On Sunday, November 20, 2022, services will be held in the following locations in the greater Basel area with the participation of delegates and guests of the Central Conference:

EMK Kleinbasel	10.00 a.m.	Bishop Christian Alsted in English
EMK Birsfelden	10.00 a.m.	Superintendent Wilfried Nausner in German
EMK Liestal:	10.00 a.m.	Reverend Esther Handschin in German

Other services with delegates and guests of the Central Conference:

EMK Aarau	Pastor Bence Vigh
EMK Lyss-Aarberg	Pastor Donát Gyurkó
EMK Baden	Pastor Üllas Tankler
EMK Muhen	Thomas Kemper
EMK Brugg-Windisch	Supt. Stefan Schröckenfuchs

4. service for the consecration of a bishop in the cathedral of Basel on November 20, 2022

The service for the consecration of the bishop will take place on Sunday, November 20, 2022, from 14.00 to 16.00 in Basel Cathedral. It will be followed by an aperitif. All delegates and guests of the Central Conference as well as the public are invited. Reverend Stefan Weller has prepared the service for the consecration of the bishop in Basel Cathedral. The sermon will be preached by Bishop Harald Rückert.

5. Commissions for the meetings

On the proposal of the Office of the Central conference and at the request of the Executive Committee, the Central Conference elect's various commissioners for the meeting of the Central Conference:

Motion to the Central Conference:

The following persons shall be commissioned as scrutineers, or electors office:

Chair: Matthias Bünger (CH-FR-NA) Clergy

**Members: Julia Stekla (PL) Layperson
Miluse Salkova (CZ) Layperson
Marjan Dimov (RS-NMK-AL) Clergy
Dávid Csernák (HU) Layperson
Esther Handschin (AT) Clergy**

Motion to the Central Conference:

That the following persons be elected as examiners / reviewers of the negotiation report:

Andrea Brunner-Wyss and Jürg Schmid

Motion to the Central Conference:

That the following persons be elected as rapporteurs:

Urs Schweizer and media team

The office of the Central Conference also gives the following assignments:

As assistants to the secretary: André Töngi and Urs Schweizer

As conference treasurer: Iris Bullinger

As translators/interpreters: David Field, Peter Caley, Maurice Weller, Sarah Bach, Matthias Gertsch

Brief information on the church in Bulgaria having joined the Global Methodist Church (#3b)

1. Preceding the annual conference 2022

In July 2021, leaders of the UMC in the countries of Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia created the "Eastern Europe Regional Chapter of the Wesleyan Covenant Association". They announced that they want to be in direct contact with the Wesleyan Covenant Association with the option to join a newly formed conservative Methodist Church, upholding the present stance of the UMC on marriage and human sexuality. Superintendent Daniel Topalski was elected President which is a function of acting general secretary. Rev. Gabriella Kopas was elected chairwoman.

In February 2022, Revs. Gabriella Kopas and Daniel Topalski were interviewed in a WCA podcast about the situation in Eastern Europe. Among other things, they explained European history, why Central Eastern European countries could not agree to be under the supervision of a Bishop from Moscow, and why a conservative Methodist Church would need to find other ways for organizing traditionally minded countries in central eastern Europe.

Shortly afterwards, it was announced that the planned General Conference in September 2022 will again be postponed and probably meet in 2024. The day after this announcement, the Wesleyan Covenant Association officially announced the creation of the "Global Methodist Church" (GMC) on May 1st 2022.

At present, as well the President as the new Chairperson of the "Eastern Europe Regional Chapter of the Wesleyan Covenant Association" are members of the Global Methodist Church.

2. Provisional Annual Conference (AC) Bulgaria-Romania, March 31st – April 2, 2022

As Superintendent Topalski has been eleven years in office, the appointment of a new superintendent was planned for the AC 2022. Therefore, I sent out an official letter of invitation to the AC on February 17, which will be needed to register at the Civil Court the change of superintendent who is the legal representative of the church and chairperson of the church council, following the appointments at the AC 2022.

I asked for a cabinet meeting for preparing the AC, set for March 11. There I heard for the first time that the AC intends to separate from the UMC. I shared with the cabinet that such action can only be based on par. 572 of the Book of Discipline. In a subsequent cabinet meeting of March 16, I explained it further, also with reference to the Judicial Council Decision 1366 on which D. Topalski grounded his argument. He promised me to send the text of the proposed motion "later this week".

Not having received a motion, I asked back on March 28 and explained that any motion not following par. 572 would need to be ruled out of order. D. Topalski wrote back: "Tomorrow I will send you the motion. You certainly may rule it out of order but this is not the end of the story. The bishop cannot silence the Annual Conference so easily and you know that. Otherwise, there is no need of division of powers or judicial control. / I don't want you to take it personally. We don't want to offend you - it is a matter of principal for us." On March 29, D. Topalski sent me the text of the resolution which was explicitly not based on par. 572, and

which stated that the AC will join the Global Methodist Church on May 1st 2022. Only later, during the session on April 1st, chaired by D. Topalski himself, I discovered that the Bulgarian delegates had received a second motion for changing the legal status of the UMC in Bulgaria, to be submitted to the Civil Court after approval.

On April 1st, the resolution was introduced to the AC. As presiding bishop, I informed the AC why such a resolution is "out of order" and that I would need to refer my ruling to the Judicial Council as a question of law. I further told the AC that I will call an extra session of the AC within 2 weeks if the Judicial Council ruled that the resolution could be put to vote before the AC. As the annual conference persisted to vote – and unanimously overturned my ruling – I told the AC that I have to report it to the Judicial Council as a question of law, that it has pending effect on the resolution, and that it ends all deliberations on this topic as an official session of the annual conference. Thereafter, I left the chair of presider and sat down in the assembly, without giving any further comment on what happened thereafter.

Thereafter, the assembly elected D. Topalski as chairperson for deliberating the resolution. After a discussion that remained respectful towards me personally, the assembly voted unanimously in favour of the resolution of separation. Then the Bulgarian members of the assembly voted unanimously on the change of statutes of the church in Bulgaria. As presiding bishop in an AC, I did not consider this assembly as being a valid session of the annual conference, but as an act of an autonomous church. Only after the end of the AC, I discovered that with electing another presiding person, the delegates acted against their own legal statutes of the church in Bulgaria which requests in article 7.2 that the Bishop, if prevented, has to authorize another person for presiding.

The regular session of the AC continued after the coffee break, as planned in the official agenda of the AC. Before reading the appointments on April 2, I shared with the AC that each of the two superintendents will have to report to me till April 6 whether they want to continue under my leadership and not enact the vote of the assembly of April 1st, or whether they want to follow and enact those decisions and thus cut all ties with The United Methodist Church and becoming in effect an autonomous Methodist Church by decision of April 1st 2022.

The newly appointed superintendent of Bulgaria, Rev. Krazimir Madzharov, confirmed to me that he wants to follow and enact the decisions taken by said assembly.

The superintendent of Romania, Rev. Rares Calugar, confirmed to me that their church council has decided that they intend to separate from The United Methodist Church after the end of my active ministry as a bishop, and want to continue under my authority for finding a respectful way of separation.

3. Consequences after the AC

3.1 Romania

Romania continues to be part of the UMC. As it is too small to remain a provisional annual conference without Bulgaria, it is at present a district under the direct supervision of the bishop. Therefore, there are no more elected delegates from the AC Bulgaria-Romania at the extra session of the CC-CSE. However, superintendent Rares Calugar will attend with voice, but without vote (CC-CSE Discipline, art. 541.1).

The UMC Romania – as also the UMC in Slovakia, and maybe the UMC in France - hopes that the extra session of the Central conference will offer a solution for a respectful way for a district conference to leave the UMC. Following the called session of the CC-CSE, the UMC in Romania will take its final decision on remaining in the UMC or joining the GMC.

3.2 Bulgaria

Bulgaria has joined the Global Methodist Church on May 1st. On May 2nd, Keith Boyette has named Rev. Daniel Topalski as superintendent of the GMC in Bulgaria and as the first "Presiding Elder" in the GMC. A "Presiding Elder", according to the present discipline in the GMC, has the authority of a bishop.

As Bishop, I have decided to consider April 1st 2022 as date when financial support from the episcopal office towards Bulgaria ends. In April, all donors and organisations in which the UMC Bulgaria was a member, had to be informed about the change. A final accounting could be made for end June. The church in Bulgaria is confident that they can pay back also the remaining loans before the end of the year. A final agreement on the pay back is being done in August. Concerning the Pension Plan, there have been helpful discussions between the CC-CSE Pension Board and Wespith (the Pension Agency of the General Church) about separating out Bulgaria from the present CC-CSE Pension Fund per end of June 2022.

Among the ordained pastors in Bulgaria, two ordained elders chose to remain with the UMC, Rev. Milen Stefanov, in active service and transferred to North Macedonia, and Rev. Vladimir Todorov, on leave in Germany and requesting a transfer to the AC East Germany (decision pending on the agreement of the AC East Germany).

The Judicial Council received my "Ruling on a Question of Law" towards end April. According to its own regulations, interested parties could submit Briefs (by early June), then Response Briefs (by end June). On August 22, the Judicial Council ruled in Memorandum 1448, that it lacks jurisdiction: "there was no question of law properly and duly submitted to the presiding Bishop upon which he could issue a ruling of law, nor was there a request for a declaratory decision that was adopted by the Annual Conference." In a concurring opinion, four members declared: "we are deeply troubled by the actions of said annual conference, which, in our view, are nothing short of a blatant circumvention of Church law" and "we also note that Bishop Patrick Streiff could have invoked par. 2609.4, which would have allowed the Judicial Council to 'hear and determine the legality of any action taken by ... any body created or authorized by a jurisdictional or central conference,...'", and that there is a possibility of an appeal sent to the Judicial Council, based on par. 2609.4. There was also one dissenting opinion that the resolution for separation was submitted against the advice of the bishop that it contradicts the Book of Discipline, and that, "absent General Conference legislation, any vote and actions taken by an annual conference to separate are unconstitutional, null and void, and of no legal force or effect." Bishop Patrick Streiff has sent an appeal to the Judicial Council, based on par. 2609.4.

August 31, 2022

Bishop Patrick Streiff

Brief information about the church in the Slovak Republic that has joined the Global Methodist Church (#3b.2)

1. Developments around the Annual Conference 2022

As already written in the short information on Bulgaria, the UMC in Slovakia has also participated in the foundation of an "Eastern Europe Regional Chapter of the Wesleyan Covenant Association" in July 2021. It has also decided from the beginning not to participate in the work of the "Round Table" of the Central Conference.

In April 2022, the Bishop had an online discussion with the two District Councils. The reason was both the founding of the "Global Methodist Church" and the departure of Bulgaria from the UMC, as well as the preparation of the Annual Conference in mid-May. At that time the feedback was that the Slovakian UMK was planning to move to the Global Methodist Church, but was waiting for a settlement of the Central Conference for a conciliatory departure. To my astonishment, there were no questions or discussions at the Annual Conference about scenarios for leaving. In personal talks, the superintendent stressed to me that it was his concern that the Methodist Church in Slovakia should find a common path if possible, because it was far too small to split up.

However, when the two district councils met again in September, the Slovakian district had already scheduled a district conference for October with motions for an immediate separation. Upon my request, I was then informed about this at the beginning of October.

2. District Conference of the UMK in Slovakia on October 15, 2022

A few days before the District Conference I wrote a letter to Superintendent Stefan Rendos for the attention of the District Conference, in which I pointed out what is and is not possible on the basis of the Church Order, as well as setting out some basic rights for those who wish to remain with the UMK. These basic rules had not been observed in the UMK Slovakia in the discussion process-up to the District Conference.

Then, on 15 October, the District Conference decided the following, according to information provided by the Superintendent in the aftermath of the decisions:

1. Leaving the UMC (16 for leaving, 0 for staying)
2. Joining the GMC (16 for joining, 0 against)
3. Date of leaving: 2 possibilities:
 - (A) Now: 12 votes
 - (B) according to the plan of Central Conference (All delegates received the Slovak translation of the plan/proposal before DC and we discussed that): 4 votes
4. After discussion: Vote about Bylaw of Slovak Methodist Church (Needed for official Authorities of our State) 16 for and 0 against

Due to the withdrawal of the Slovak District from the Annual Conference of the Czech and Slovak Republics, the Executive Committee will make a request to rename the Annual Conference.

*November 10, 2022
Bishop Patrick Streiff*

Information accounts 2017-2020/2021-2024 and budget 2023-2024 (#3c)

Einnahmen	Budget 2017 - 2020		Rechnung 2017	
Beiträge Jährliche Konferenzen				
Schweiz	180'000.00		45'000.00	
Übrige Länder	61'000.00	241'000.00	15'207.48	60'207.48
Diverse Einnahmen		2'000.00		9'322.00
Total Einnahmen		243'000.00		69'529.48
Ausgaben				
Zentralkonferenz inkl. Protokoll	60'000.00		45'784.76	
Sitzungen Büro/Exek. inkl. Prot.	55'000.00	115'000.00	0.00	45'784.76
AG Theologie u. Ord. Dienste	8'000.00		1'927.75	
AG Kirche und Gesellschaft	3'000.00		0.00	
AG Kinder und Jugend	3'000.00		0.00	
AG Liturgie	3'000.00		785.60	
AG Kirchenordnung	3'000.00		0.00	
AG Frauendienst *	0.00		0.00	
AG Bischofsamt	1'000.00		0.00	
Reserve für a.o. Aufträge	2'000.00	23'000.00	0.00	2'713.35
Superintendententreffen	30'000.00		2'836.83	
Seminare	0.00	30'000.00	0.00	2'836.83
Beiträge der Zentralkonferenz an:				
Weltrat	15'000.00		2'921.40	
Europäischer Rat	29'000.00		6'149.73	
Jugendrat (EMYC)	20'000.00	64'000.00	4'386.80	13'457.93
Verschiedenes				
Druckkosten	2'000.00		0.00	
Bibliothek / Archiv	30'000.00		7'500.00	
Übrige Kosten	2'000.00	34'000.00	1'739.30	9'239.30
Total Ausgaben		266'000.00		74'032.17
Einnahmen		243'000.00		69'529.48
Ausgaben		266'000.00		74'032.17
Einnahmen-Überschuss				
Ausgaben-Überschuss		-23'000.00		-4'502.69

* Die Kosten der AG Frauendienst werden vom FrauenNetzwerk der EMK Schweiz getragen.

Einnahmen	Rechnung 2018		Rechnung 2019	
Beiträge Jährliche Konferenzen				
Schweiz	45'000.00		45'000.00	
Übrige Länder	15'250.00	60'250.00	17'061.51	62'061.51
Diverse Einnahmen		370.85		291.20
Total Einnahmen		60'620.85		62'352.69
Ausgaben				
Zentralkonferenz inkl. Protokoll	0.00		0.00	
Sitzungen Büro/Exek. inkl. Prot.	16'181.36	16'181.36	28'738.86	28'738.86
AG Theologie u. Ord. Dienste	3'216.40		1'907.64	
AG Kirche und Gesellschaft	0.00		0.00	
AG Kinder und Jugend	0.00		0.00	
AG Liturgie	2'638.40		2'133.45	
AG Kirchenordnung	0.00		0.00	
AG Frauendienst *	0.00		0.00	
AG Bischofsamt	0.00		0.00	
Reserve für a.o. Aufträge	0.00	5'854.80	0.00	4'041.09
Superintendententreffen	5'293.70		15'515.70	
Seminare	0.00	5'293.70	0.00	15'515.70
Beiträge der Zentralkonferenz an:				
Weltrat	2'999.99		2'928.45	
Europäischer Rat	6'652.47		6'322.44	
Jugendrat (EMYC)	4'755.60	14'408.06	4'598.40	13'849.29
Verschiedenes				
Druckkosten	527.90		340.65	
Bibliothek Archiv	7'627.50		7'500.00	
Übrige Kosten	9'040.15	17'195.55	511.48	8'352.13
Total Ausgaben		58'933.47		67'497.07
Einnahmen		60'620.85		62'352.69
Ausgaben		58'933.47		67'497.07
Einnahmen-Überschuss		1'687.38		
Ausgaben-Überschuss				-5'144.38

* Die Kosten der AG Frauendienst werden vom FrauenNetzwerk der EMK Schweiz getragen.

Einnahmen	Rechnung 2020		Konsolidiert 2017-2020	
Beiträge Jährliche Konferenzen				
Schweiz	45'000.00		180'000.00	
Übrige Länder	13'414.51	58'414.51	60'933.48	240'933.48
Diverse Einnahmen		176.75		10'160.80
Total Einnahmen		58'591.26		251'094.28
Ausgaben				
Zentralkonferenz inkl. Protokoll	0.00		45'784.76	
Sitzungen Büro/Exek. inkl. Prot.	14'681.22	14'681.22	59'601.44	105'386.20
AG Theologie u. Ord. Dienste	0.00		7'051.79	
AG Kirche und Gesellschaft	0.00		0.00	
AG Kinder und Jugend	0.00		0.00	
AG Liturgie	0.00		5'557.45	
AG Kirchenordnung	0.00		0.00	
AG Frauendienst *	0.00		0.00	
AG Bischofsamt	0.00		0.00	
Reserve für a.o. Aufträge	0.00	0.00	0.00	12'609.24
Superintendententreffen	2'499.85		23'146.08	
Seminare	0.00	2'499.85	0.00	23'146.08
Beiträge der Zentralkonferenz an:				
Weltrat	2'790.45		11'640.29	
Europäischer Rat	6'158.85		25'283.49	
Jugendrat (EMYC)	4'290.40	13'239.70	18'031.20	54'954.98
Verschiedenes				
Druckkosten	311.75		1'180.30	
Bibliothek / Archiv	7'500.00		30'127.50	
Übrige Kosten	1'908.53	9'720.28	13'199.46	44'507.26
Total Ausgaben		40'141.05		240'603.76
Einnahmen		58'591.26		251'094.28
Ausgaben		40'141.05		240'603.76
Einnahmen-Überschuss		18'450.21		10'490.52
Ausgaben-Überschuss				

* Die Kosten der AG Frauendienst werden vom FrauenNetzwerk der EMK Schweiz getragen.

Einnahmen	Budget 2021		Budget 2022	
Beiträge Jährliche Konferenzen				
Schweiz	45'000.00		45'000.00	
Übrige Länder	15'250.00	60'250.00	15'250.00	60'250.00
Diverse Einnahmen		500.00		500.00
Total Einnahmen		60'750.00		60'750.00
Ausgaben				
Zentralkonferenz inkl. Protokoll	0.00		60'000.00	
Sitzungen Büro/Exek. inkl. Prot.	13'750.00	13'750.00	13'750.00	73'750.00
AG Theologie u. Ord. Dienste	2'000.00		2'000.00	
AG Kirche und Gesellschaft	750.00		750.00	
AG Kinder und Jugend	750.00		750.00	
AG Liturgie	750.40		750.40	
AG Kirchenordnung	750.00		750.00	
AG Frauendienst *	0.00		0.00	
AG Bischofsamt	250.00		250.00	
Reserve für a.o. Aufträge	500.00	5'750.00	10'500.00	15'750.00
Superintendententreffen	7'500.00		7'500.00	
Seminare	0.00	7'500.00	0.00	7'500.00
Beiträge der Zentralkonferenz an:				
Weltrat	3'750.00		3'750.00	
Europäischer Rat	7'250.00		7'250.00	
Jugendrat (EMYC)	5'000.00	16'000.00	5'000.00	16'000.00
Verschiedenes				
Druckkosten	500.00		500.00	
Bibliothek Archiv	7'500.00		7'500.00	
Übrige Kosten	6'500.00	14'500.00	6'500.00	14'500.00
Total Ausgaben		57'500.00		127'500.00
Einnahmen		60'750.00		60'750.00
Ausgaben		57'500.00		127'500.00
Einnahmen-Überschuss		3'250.00		
Ausgaben-Überschuss				-66'750.00

* Die Kosten der AG Frauendienst werden vom FrauenNetzwerk der EMK Schweiz getragen.

Einnahmen	Budget 2023-2024		Budgets konsolidiert 2021-2024	
	Beiträge Jährliche Konferenzen			
Schweiz	90'000.00		180'000.00	
Übrige Länder	27'500.00	117'500.00	58'000.00	238'000.00
Diverse Einnahmen		1'000.00		2'000.00
Total Einnahmen		118'500.00		240'000.00
Ausgaben				
Zentralkonferenz inkl. Protokoll	0.00		60'000.00	
Sitzungen Büro/Exek. inkl. Prot.	27'500.00	27'500.00	55'000.00	115'000.00
AG Theologie u. Ord. Dienste	4'000.00		8'000.00	
AG Kirche und Gesellschaft	1'500.00		3'000.00	
AG Kinder und Jugend	1'500.00		3'000.00	
AG Liturgie	1'500.00		3'000.00	
AG Kirchenordnung	1'500.00		3'000.00	
AG Frauendienst *	0.00		0.00	
AG Bischofsamt	500.00		1'000.00	
Reserve für a.o. Aufträge	10'500.00	21'000.00	21'500.00	42'500.00
Superintendententreffen	15'000.00		30'000.00	
Seminare	0.00	15'000.00	0.00	30'000.00
Beiträge der Zentralkonferenz an:				
Weltrat	7'500.00		15'000.00	
Europäischer Rat	14'500.00		29'000.00	
Jugendrat (EMYC)	10'000.00	32'000.00	20'000.00	64'000.00
Verschiedenes				
Druckkosten	1'000.00		2'000.00	
Bibliothek / Archiv	15'000.00		30'000.00	
Übrige Kosten	13'000.00	29'000.00	26'000.00	58'000.00
Total Ausgaben		124'500.00		309'500.00
Einnahmen		118'500.00		240'000.00
Ausgaben		124'500.00		309'500.00
Einnahmen-Überschuss				
Ausgaben-Überschuss		-6'000.00		-69'500.00

* Die Kosten der AG Frauendienst werden vom FrauenNetzwerk der EMK Schweiz getragen.

Einnahmen	Rechnung 2021		Rechnungen konsolidiert 2021-2024	
Beiträge Jährliche Konferenzen				
Schweiz	45'000.00		45'000.00	
Übrige Länder	15'238.00	60'238.00	15'238.00	60'238.00
Diverse Einnahmen		56.00		56.00
Total Einnahmen		60'294.00		60'294.00
Ausgaben				
Zentralkonferenz inkl. Protokoll	0.00		0.00	
Sitzungen Büro/Exek. inkl. Prot.	16'811.90	16'811.90	16'811.90	16'811.90
AG Theologie u. Ord. Dienste	0.00		0.00	
AG Kirche und Gesellschaft	0.00		0.00	
AG Kinder und Jugend	0.00		0.00	
AG Liturgie	0.00		0.00	
AG Kirchenordnung	0.00		0.00	
AG Frauendienst *	0.00		0.00	
AG Bischofsamt	0.00		0.00	
Reserve für a.o. Aufträge	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Superintendententreffen	0.00		0.00	
Seminare	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Beiträge der Zentralkonferenz an:				
Weltrat	2'722.21		2'722.21	
Europäischer Rat	6'342.96		6'342.96	
Jugendrat (EMYC)	0.00	9'065.17	0.00	9'065.17
Verschiedenes				
Druckkosten	0.00		0.00	
Bibliothek / Archiv	7'500.00		7'500.00	
Übrige Kosten	1'350.70	8'850.70	1'350.70	8'850.70
Total Ausgaben		34'727.77		34'727.77
Einnahmen		60'294.00		60'294.00
Ausgaben		34'727.77		34'727.77
Einnahmen-Überschuss		25'566.23		25'566.23
Ausgaben-Überschuss				

* Die Kosten der AG Frauendienst werden vom FrauenNetzwerk der EMK Schweiz getragen.

A Brief History of The United Methodist Church (#3d)

Remark: The Book of Discipline (BOD) begins with "A Brief History of The United Methodist Church". The Central Conferences in Europe have developed historical statements that reflect in more detail the history of the UMC and its predecessor churches in their area. The CC CSE has not yet had such a historical statement. It seems wise to write such a statement in a situation where we do not know what the future will bring as changes to the present CC CSE. The statement has taken up elements from the BOD, the CC Northern Europe and Eurasia and the CC Germany and added the specifics for the countries of the CC CSE. After the election of a new bishop, the name can be added at the end of the document. – Bishop Patrick Streiff

Motion to the Central Conference CSE:

The extra session of the Central Conference adopts the document "A Brief History of The United Methodist Church" and publishes it in future editions of the Central Conference CSE Discipline (original in German).

A Brief History of The United Methodist Church

Ecclesial Heritage of Methodism

The ecclesial heritage of The United Methodist Church is rooted in a renewal movement in the Church of England in the 18th century. Before, in the early 1500s, various reform movements emerged in Europe that created forms of western Christianity known as Protestantism, and no more in communion with the Roman Catholic pope. They emphasized a return to the sources of faith: that is, God's action in salvation and Scripture as the authority for doctrine and practice. In England, it was shaped into the particular identity of Anglicanism.

During the late 1600s, renewal movements, often referred to as Pietism, emerged in Europe, emphasizing the Christian experience of new birth, sanctification, societal transformation, and small groups. The movement affected most confessions including Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, and Anabaptist. Expressions of this movement included the philanthropic and missional work of August Hermann Franke (Germany), the growth and expansion of Moravians under the leadership of Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf (Moravia), the Religious Societies begun by Anthony Horneck (England), all of which influenced the emerging Methodist movement under the leadership of John Wesley (1703-1791) and his brother Charles (1707-1788).

For all their lives, both Wesley brothers remained faithful priests of the Church of England and considered her as the best of all churches. Early in their theological studies, they decided to live a holy life, pleasing to God. It was their conversion to holiness, loving God with all their heart. In Oxford, the older brother John led a movement of students, and they were called – among other nicknames – the "Methodists". Under the leadership of John and together with Charles and a few other students, they decided to go to the American colonies as missionaries to the Natives. They encountered groups of Pietists. Discouraged in their ministry, both brothers Wesley returned to England and again met Moravian missionaries, who were preparing to travel to the American colonies. Under their influence, Charles and John

Wesley both experienced being reconciled with God by grace alone. They had discovered justification by faith. John felt his heart "strangely warmed", filled by love from God in a way that transformed him from a zealous preacher to a love-filled evangelist of Good News to the Poor. It was their second, evangelical conversion.

Another former student among the Methodists at Oxford, George Whitefield, who briefly returned from the American colonies to England, had made a similar experience. In 1739, he began to preach outside of church buildings in the open field to poor miners, soon gathering several thousands. Many responded in repentance of their sins and wanting to lead a life transformed by Christ. As Whitefield planned to return to the colonies, he called on his former teacher, John Wesley, and his brother Charles to take over with field preaching. It was the beginning of the Methodist renewal movement within the Church of England. The goal of John and Charles Wesley was "to reform the nation, particularly the church; and to spread scriptural holiness over the land". "Scriptural" meant for them: rooted in justification by faith through grace alone. Whitefield was the initiator of this Methodist renewal, but on the long term, the movement which was connected to the Wesley brothers grew more. It became better organized in "United Societies" and smaller "classes", on both sides of the Atlantic. Publications like the collection of Charles Wesley's hymns and John Wesley's sermons, together with a multitude of tracts shaped the identity of the early Methodists.

Methodism in America from 1760 to its mission to the European Continent

Most other Protestant denominations had established themselves in the American colonies long before the Methodists. Methodism connected to the Wesley brothers began in American colonies rather late through laypeople emigrating to America around 1760. Among them was a Methodist laypreacher from Ireland (Philip Embury) who had German family origins. Methodist laypeople soon asked John Wesley to send preachers. The Wesley brothers never again travelled to America, but John sent two first preachers in 1769. Others followed thereafter, among them Francis Asbury. The American Revolution profoundly impacted Methodism. John Wesley's loyalty to the king and his writings against the revolutionary cause did not enhance the image of Methodism among those who supported independence.

When independence from England was won, Wesley recognised that changes were necessary for American Methodism to thrive. As the Bishop of London had refused ordination of Methodist preachers, John Wesley ordained two of them for the work in the newly formed United States of America. He also sent Thomas Coke, an Anglican priest and Methodist, to America for superintending the work with Asbury. Coke brought with him an abridgment of the "Book of Common Prayer" entitled "The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America" and an abridgment of the Church of England's Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, both prepared by Wesley.

In December 1784, the famous "Christmas Conference" of preachers was held in Baltimore. Most of the American preachers attended, probably including African American preachers. At this gathering the movement became organized and then known as "The Methodist Episcopal Church" in America. Its name reflected its Anglican heritage in the "Episcopal Church" with the specific denominator "Methodist". Soon the superintendents, Coke and Asbury, were considered the two first bishops of the church. A first quadrennial General Conference of all

preachers was held in 1792, but because of the growth of the movement General Conference became a conference composed only of delegates from each annual conference in 1808.

Two other churches were forming in America, which, in their earliest years were composed almost entirely of German-speaking people. The first was founded by Otterbein, a Reformed pastor, and Boehm, a Mennonite. Otterbein had been present at the "Christmas Conference" and had participated in the ordination of Asbury. Otterbein and Boehm preached an evangelical message similar to the Methodists. In 1800, the movement was organized into the Church of the "United Brethren in Christ" (UBC). The second church among German settlers was begun by Albright, a Lutheran farmer, converted by the United Brethren in Christ and nurtured in a Methodist class meeting. He wanted to reach out to fellow German-speakers and established a connection of preachers that was officially organized into the "Evangelical Association" (EA) in 1803.

Early attempts at merging these churches failed. In the USA, the two churches of German background united in 1946 into "The Evangelical United Brethren Church" (EUBC) with the "Evangelical Association" (EA) as the smaller partner. The EUBC in turn joined with the much larger "The Methodist Church" (MC) in 1968 to form "The United Methodist Church" (UMC). On the European continent, all three churches were present, but their sizes and the history of their unions were different.

The Second Great Awakening was the dominant religious development among Protestants in America during the first half of the nineteenth century. Through revivals and camp meetings, sinners experienced conversion. Circuit-riding preachers and lay pastors knit them into a connection. Methodists were strictly guided by the "General Rules", published by John Wesley for his "United Societies" in 1743. They committed not to do harm, do good, and use the means of grace supplied by God. And they had to be faithful in attending their own local small group ("class"). That formed their initial "Discipline". Those who did not remain faithful to the "Discipline" were not renewed in their membership. Through the itinerant ministry of its preachers, the church spread to the people wherever they settled. Annual conferences were the basic body of the church where the itinerating, ordained preachers met once a year. General Conference that had become a quadrennial meeting as a delegated body, kept the unity among the annual conferences and edited the "Book of Discipline" which initially included the liturgy and requirements for the ongoing education of the preachers.

In the midst of tremendous growth, there were also tensions, especially over episcopacy, race, slavery and lay membership in annual conference that eventually led to several splits. African Americans created separate churches because they were not fully recognised on equal level to white people in the existing churches. In 1830, issues of lay representation and superintendency led to the creation of the "Methodist Protestant Church" (MPC). In 1844, the issue of slavery led to the creation of the "Methodist Episcopal Church South" (MEC South), in the southern States of the USA. In 1920, the MEC South began mission in three war-torn countries of Europe where their northern counterpart had not yet been present. In 1939, the three churches (Methodist Episcopal Church, Methodist Episcopal Church South, and Methodist Protestant Church) united to form "The Methodist Church". But in Europe, celebrating this union was overshadowed by the outbreak of World War II.

In countries that have been part of the central conference of Central and Southern Europe or its predecessors, the British Methodist mission through its Wesleyan Missionary Society (WMS) was present in Austria, France, Germany, North Africa, Spain and Switzerland; the

United Brethren in Christ (UBC) only in Germany; the Evangelical Association (EA) in Austria, France, Germany, Poland, and Switzerland; The Methodist Episcopal Church South (MECS) in Belgium, the Czech and Slovak Republics, and in Poland; and the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC) in almost all countries of the central conference.

Methodist mission to the European continent

Migration was the most powerful factor in building a web of relationships for Methodist mission. In most instances, lay people were instrumental in calling for ordained preachers to help organize the work and spread it further. The mission to the European continent began with British Methodists much earlier than with American Methodists. However, British Methodists often kept to the initial aim of reviving personal faith among Protestants on the continent, similarly to their own origins as a renewal movement within the Church of England and the Church of Ireland. American Methodists usually came a few decades later. They were already a church distinct from their Anglican roots and found it natural to establish a Methodist church through their mission endeavours. Therefore, they often waited until civil laws allowed for the presence of a new denomination.

European Methodism began, as migrants, sailors, merchants, soldiers, and others who had encountered Methodism on the other side of the Atlantic, shared the message back home. Ludwig Jacoby joined the Methodist Episcopal Church after immigrating to Cincinnati in 1838. He returned to Germany as an ordained elder in 1849 and began gathering a church in Bremen. In 1845, Sebastian Kurz as a lay preacher of the Evangelical Association went back to Germany on a private initiative and began to preach. It led to the sending of a first ordained preacher, Conrad Link, in 1850. Olaf Gustaf Hedström, of Sweden, led the mission of the "Bethel Ship John Wesley" in New York harbour for over 30 years, beginning in 1845. Many seamen and emigrants who experienced conversion in the Bethel Ship, then carried the Methodist revival with them to other parts of the United States as well as to their home countries in Northern Europe. Norwegian seaman Ole Peter Petersen, after hearing Methodists in Boston and responding to an "altar call" in the Bethel Ship began preaching to Norwegians and Danes in America and Norway in 1849. Examples could be multiplied. Migration related to existing personal relationships through families and old and new friendships heavily influenced the direction of the Methodist mission on the European continent.

Hereafter follows a timeline when Methodist mission began in a country of the central conference of Central and Southern Europe of The United Methodist Church or its predecessors, indicating also the initial churches being instrumental in planting Methodism. The sign (→) and an end date is given, if the church ended its presence or entered into a larger union of Protestant churches. The ordering is according to the beginning of the mission. The country name reflects present realities. Countries with * do not belong to the present central conference of Central and Southern Europe:

- France: WMS (1791-1939, then → Reformed); EA (1868ff); MEC (1905-35, then → Reformed with MEC only remaining in Alsace); 1968/72: EA and MEC/MC united into UMC
- Belgium: WMS (1816- ca.1839), MECS (1920-69, then → United Protestant Church of Belgium, affiliated with UMC)

- * Spain: WMS (1834-1839, 1869ff, then → Spanish Evangelical Church), MEC (1919-1939, then → Spanish Evangelical Church)
- Switzerland: WMS (1840-1900, then → MEC); MEC (1856ff); EA (1866ff); 1968/72: EA and MEC/MC united into UMC
- * Germany: WMS (1830-1897 → MEC); MEC (1849ff); EA (1850ff); UBC 1869-1905 → MEC; 1968 EA and MEC/MC united into UMC
- * Bulgaria: MEC (1857ff-2022 UMC, then → Global Methodist Church)
- Austria: WMS (1870-1897, then → MEC/MC → UMC), EA (1929-34)
- North Macedonia: American Board, congregationalist (1873-1921, → then MEC/MC → UMC)
- Albania: MEC (1881 / 1920-?); UMC (1998 / 2008ff)
- Algeria: WMS (1886-1919, → MEC); MEC (1908ff → UMC)
- * Russia: MEC (1889- ca. 1931); UMC 1990/91ff)
- Poland: EA (ca. 1895-1945); MECS (1920ff, then → MC → UMC)
- Hungary: MEC (1898ff → UMC)
- Serbia: MEC (1899ff → UMC)
- Tunisia: MEC (1908ff → UMC)
- Czech Republic: MECS (1920ff, then → MC → UMC)
- * Croatia: MEC (ca. 1923-26); UMC (1995-2006)
- Slovak Republic: MECS (1924ff, then → MC → UMC)
- * Ukraine: MECS (ca. 1925ff, then → MC → UMC)
- * Kosovo: MEC (1920s / 1937-1970s)
- Romania: UMC (2011ff)

The establishment of central conference(s) in Europe

Methodist churches all had their missionary societies. In the MEC and MECS, women created their own women societies. A mission field was dependent on the missionary society. However, there was a strong intention to encourage indigenous leadership which was much easier in situations related to strong migration. In the US-tradition of Methodism, a Mission in a country soon became a Missionary Conference. When there were enough ordained elders, it became an Annual Conference with its own authority to make decisions, but usually still heavily dependent on financial support from the Missionary Society of the mother church. In the early 1900s, some countries came close to self-support like Switzerland and Sweden.

Annual conferences in territories outside the USA wanted to intensify their contact and cooperation with neighbouring annual conferences in their own region and not only relate to the mission board in the USA. In the MEC, this gave rise to the creation of a "Central Mission Conference", at first in India in the 1880s. It developed into establishing "Central Conferences" in all regions outside the USA. The MECS and the EA adopted very similar patterns of central conferences.

For the MEC in Europe, a "Central Council of the Conferences and Missions" met for a first time in Berlin in 1895. In 1900, Bishop John H. Vincent became the first Methodist bishop to take up residence in Europe, in Zurich. Under his presidency, a second MEC Congress met in Zurich in 1903. In 1904, William Burt, an American of British origin, former superintendent in Italy, was elected bishop by the General Conference, became assigned to Europe and took residence in Rome. A third European Congress, held in Copenhagen in 1907, adopted a motion to General Conference for authorizing the organisation of a Central Conference for Europe. A quarterly magazine "Methodism in Europe" was edited. The very first Central Conference for all of Europe met in Rome in 1911 under Bishop Burt. In 1912, Bishop John L. Nuelsen was assigned to Europe, after a four years-term among German speaking annual conferences in the USA. He had been born in Zurich in a first generation MEC preacher's family. He took residence in Switzerland (office in Zurich, but different places of personal residence). As the majority of Methodist members in Europe were German speaking, they appreciated to hear a bishop speaking in their own tongue, for the first time.

Between 1916-20, Bishop Nuelsen received the help of Bishop Anderson, of Scandinavian descent, for the episcopal supervision in the Scandinavian countries, in France, Italy and North Africa. In 1920, General Conference launched an impressive Jubilee mission initiative for strengthening its worldwide outreach. It increased the total number of bishops from 31 to 38 and gave to 17 of them residence outside the USA. Europe now received officially three bishops, two new ones in addition to Nuelsen. At the second session of the European Central Conference in 1922, the three episcopal areas were organized. Somehow – maybe through the effects of World War I – they became, after the General Conference 1924, three distinct central conferences, each with one bishop. Nuelsen became the bishop for the central conference of Central Europe, residing in Switzerland, with the countries of Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, and, for some years, also Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Russia. There was a second central conference of Northern Europe with the newly elected Dane Anton Bast as its bishop for the Scandinavian countries, and, since 1928 also Russia. The third central conference was for Southern Europe with Bishop Blake who took residence in Paris for the countries around the Mediterranean Sea with France, Spain, Italy, North Africa, and, after 1928, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. In 1928, Bishop Shepard became the successor for Southern Europe. But he died in 1931 while in office. The central conference of Southern Europe was dissolved in 1932 and parts of it came again to the episcopal region of Central Europe as far as mission fields were not given up due to the economic crisis during the 1930s, thus combining it into a central conference for Central and Southern Europe.

Two other important changes happened in the 1930s:

(1) In 1936, Germany became a Central Conference of its own. By that time, a central conference had received the authority to elect their own bishop and Germany used that new possibility. With the annexation of Austria by Germany in 1938, the Methodist work was transferred to the Central Conference of Germany. These events drastically reduced the countries belonging to the former central conference of Central Europe.

(2) In 1939, the union of three churches, the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC), the Methodist Episcopal Church South (MECS), and the Methodist Protestant Church (MPC) took place, forming "The Methodist Church" (MC). The MECS in Belgium, Czechoslovakia and Poland had also created a kind of central conference, but with bishops residing in the USA. The MPC never had a mission to the European Continent. A "Uniting Conference" with representatives from all European countries met in Copenhagen in August 1939, but the outbreak of World War II made it impossible to organize the addition of the three countries of the MECS to the central conference of Central and Southern Europe of The Methodist Church.

The central conference of Central and Southern Europe, re-established in 1954

With the outbreak of World War II, the remaining parts of the two central conferences of Central Europe and of Southern Europe were at first related to the South-Eastern Jurisdiction in the USA. Interim bishops took oversight, as far as episcopal visits were possible. They usually took residence in Geneva and the episcopal area became known as the Geneva Area. There were ongoing discussions on how to organize the European field and viable central conferences, linked to tensions towards Germany but also consequences of Communist take-over in countries of central eastern Europe. Finally, the central conference of Central and Southern Europe was again officially constituted in 1954 in Brussels, Belgium.

Concerning the formation of central conferences, the Evangelical Association had followed the movement of the larger Methodist sisters. The European field had petitioned the 1922 General Conference to establish a central conference structure for Europe. In 1924, a first central conference of the Evangelical Association for Europe was established with representatives of three annual conferences (North Germany, South Germany, and Switzerland). The presiding bishop always was a US citizen. For a short period, he took residence in Germany, but as he was not regularly in Europe, he did not always preside at annual conferences. With the worldwide church union of 1968, creating "The United Methodist Church" (UMC), the annual conference of the Evangelical Association for Switzerland and France was united with the annual conference of the Methodist Church in 1972. These were the only two countries where both churches were present within the central conference of Central and Southern Europe. In some regions of Switzerland, the Evangelical Association was numerically almost as strong as the Methodist Church, in France even much bigger.

At the reconstitution of the central conference of Central and Southern Europe of "The Methodist Church" in Brussels 1954, voting delegates from the following countries could be present: Austria, Belgium, Northern Africa (Algeria and Tunisia) Switzerland, and Yugoslavia. The bishop again resided in Zurich where an office had remained. The Methodist presence was by far the strongest in Switzerland. Due to its status as a neutral country, stable economy, and very generous Methodist members, it has shown a long history of solidarity with war-torn or otherwise economically much poorer Methodist churches in other countries of the central conference.

The first bishop elected in the newly formed central conference of Central and Southern Europe was Ferdinand Sigg (1954-1965 as active bishop) who died in active service in 1965. During his episcopal ministry, he was only irregularly allowed to travel to communist coun-

tries, and all over the time of communist regimes, there was no possibility to organize an annual conference in Bulgaria under the supervision of the bishop of the central conference. Bishop Sigg was strongly engaged in the ecumenical movement.

At an extra session of the central conference in 1966, Bishop Franz Schäfer (1966-89 as active bishop) was elected as successor. During his time as active bishop, travel to communist countries was mostly allowed to annual conferences, except for Bulgaria. Belgium left the central conference in 1969 for uniting with other Protestant Churches in the country. With his upright and unideological approach to every human person, including high government officials in communist countries where he had been put under pressure, Bishop Schäfer was able to establish mutually respectful relationships over time.

In March 1989, Bishop Heinrich Bolleter (1989-2006 as active bishop) was elected. No one expected the fast political changes that began in the fall of the same year. In the 1990s, inhabitants of former communist countries in eastern central Europe and the Balkans experienced a revival of interest in faith and joining Christian churches. The presence of the United Methodist Church expanded in the midst of economic and political uncertainties. Two churches in Western Ukraine were transferred to the newly established Eurasian episcopal area that had launched United Methodist churches in other parts of Ukraine. A new missionary presence began in Albania (in the 1990s, and officially established in 2008) and Croatia (for a limited time 1995-2006). Bishop Bolleter succeeded in being close to people in their journey in huge transitions in society and building up communion in the church.

In 2005 Bishop Patrick Streiff was elected (2005/6-2022 as active bishop). In 2011, independent churches in Romania joined the United Methodist Church. In early 2022, Bulgaria decided to leave the United Methodist Church.

In November 2022, an extra session of the central conference elected [Bishop XY] for leading the central conference. All over its existence, the central conference of Central and Southern Europe was a strong means for building relationships between its countries, supporting each other's mission and creating a bond of unity among United Methodists.

List of bishops with years in supervisory role in countries now belonging to Central Conference CSE (without the CC Northern Europe since 1924)

**BMK, Bischöfliche Aufsicht über ganz Europa ab 1900,
1912-1924 als ZK Europa**

John Vincent, Zürich (1900-1904)
William Burt, Rom (1904-1912)
John Nuelsen, Zürich (1912-1940)

**BMK, ZK-Südeuropa
(1924-1932)**

Edgar Blake, Paris (1924-1928)
William Shepard, Paris (1928-1931+)
Raymond Wade, Paris (1931-1932)
1932 ZK aufgelöst

**BMK, ZK-Mitteleuropa
(1924-1940)**

John Nuelsen, Zürich/Lausanne
1936 ZK reduziert

**BMKS, ZK-Europa
(1926-1940)**

James Atkins (1920-1922)
William Beauchamp (1922-1926)
Urban Darlington (1926-1934)
Arthur Moore (1934-1940)

**Evangelische Gemeinschaft / EUBC,
ZK Europa (seit 1922/1924)**

Gottlieb Heinmiller (+1922?)
Samuel Umbreit, Berlin (1926-1934)
Nach 1934 ?

1936-1940: John L. Nuelsen, Genf (1912-1940)

**1939: Die Methodistenkirche (MK),
Genfer Sprengel der Südöstlichen Jurisdiktion**

William Peele (1940-1942)
Arthur Moore (1942-1944)
Paul N. Garber, Genf (1944-1952)
Arthur Moore, Genf (1952-1954)

Seit 1954: MK, ZK Mittel- und Südeuropa

Ferdinand Sigg, Zürich (1954-1965+)
Paul N. Garber / Ralph Dodge (1965-1966)
Franz Schäfer, Zürich (1966-1989)

1968: Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche (EMK), ZK Mittel- und Südeuropa

Franz Schäfer, Zürich (1966-1989)
Heinrich Bolleter, Zürich (1989-2006)
Patrick Streiff, Zürich (2005/06-2022/23)
Stefan Zürcher, Zürich (2022/23 ff)

Unau

On the Adaptation Right of a Central Conference (#3e)

1. General Conference and the restrictions on the right of adaptation of a Central Conference

In the connectional structure of the UMC, the General Conference has "full legislative power over all matters distinctively connectional" (Constitution, ¶ 16) How far adaptation rights of Central conferences go and what parts of the BOD are not adaptable, is not yet finally clarified. But the *Book of Discipline* 2016, ¶ 101, gives some guiding. This paragraph came into the Book of Discipline 2012 as a new Part II but was not yet added in the CC CSE Discipline. It outlines the following distinction:

The following parts of the Book of Discipline are not adaptable:

- Part I: Constitution
- Part II: General Book of Discipline with ¶ 101
- Part III: Doctrinal Standards and our Theological Task
- Part IV: The Ministry of All Christians
- Part V: Social Principles (not being part of binding church law, see introduction to the Principles¹)

The present CC CSE Discipline has no adaptations in parts I, III, and V. It has not yet incorporated Part II (only added in 2012. Part IV has been shortened in 2005).

What is adaptable is the huge volume of Part VI: Organization and Administration, with the chapters:

- 1 The Local Church
- 2 The Ministry of the Ordained
- 3 The Superintendency
- 4 The Conferences
- 5 Administrative Order
- 6 Church Property
- 7 Judicial Administration

Out of Part VI of the BOD, the CC CSE Discipline only has the chapters 1 to 4, shortened and adapted, and a "Disciplinary and Arbitration Code" which takes up relevant parts of chapter 7, again shortened and adapted.

2. The right of "changes and adaptations" given to Central Conferences

General Conference gave the authority to for adaptations only to Central Conferences (and all of them are only outside the USA) and not to individual annual conferences. The Constitution states in ¶ 31 the following powers and duties, among others, given to Central conferences (cf. ¶ 31.5):

¹ From Preface of the Social Principles: "The Social Principles, while not to be considered church law, are a prayerful and thoughtful effort on the part of the General Conference to speak to the human issues in the contemporary world from a sound biblical and theological foundation as historically demonstrated in United Methodist traditions. They are a call to faithfulness and Aare intended to be instructive and persuasive in the best of the prophetic spirit. The Social Principles are a call to all members of The United Methodist Church to a prayerful, studied dialogue of faith and practice."

To make such rules and regulations for the administration of the work within their boundaries including such changes and adaptations of the General Discipline as the conditions in the respective areas may require, subject to the powers that have been or shall be vested in the General Conference.

This article of the Constitution is taken up in the section on Central conferences in Part VI, chapter 4, where ¶ 543 again talks about powers and duties given to Central conferences. It says the following on adaptation rights of the General *Discipline* in ¶ 543.7:

A central conference shall have power to make such changes and adaptations of the Book of Discipline as the special conditions and the mission of the church in the area require, especially concerning the organization and administration of the work on local church, district, and annual conference levels, provided that no action shall be taken that is contrary to the Constitution and the General Rules of The United Methodist Church, and provided that the spirit of connectional relationship is kept between the local and the general church. Subject to this restriction, a central conference may delegate to an annual conference within its boundaries the power to make one or the other of the changes and adaptations referred to in this paragraph, upon the request of such annual conference.

The intention of giving adaptation rights to Central conferences has clearly been missional (“as the special conditions and the mission of the church in the area require”).

What other authority of adaptation is given to Central conferences?

Furthermore, ¶ 543 also sets out the following powers of Central conferences that may be relevant to the present topic (¶ 543.13-16):

13. A central conference is authorized to prepare and translate simplified or adapted forms of such parts of the ritual as it may deem necessary, such changes to require the approval of the resident bishop or bishops of the Central conference.

14. A central conference shall have the power to conform the detailed rules, rites, and ceremonies for the solemnization of marriage to the statute laws of the country or countries within its jurisdiction.

15. Subject to the approval of the bishops resident therein, a central conference shall have the power to prescribe courses of study, including those in the vernaculars, for its ministry, both foreign and indigenous, including local preachers, lay servants, Bible women, deaconesses, teachers – both male and female – and all other workers whatsoever, ordained or lay. It shall also make rules and regulations for examination in these courses.

16. A central conference shall have authority to edit and publish a central conference Discipline, which shall contain in addition to the Constitution of the Church such sections from the general Discipline of The United Methodist Church as may be pertinent to the entire Church and also such revised, adapted, or new sections as shall have been enacted by the central conference concerned under the powers given by the General Conference.

Alinea 16 clearly states an authority given to Central conferences to edit a CC Discipline that contains “such revised, adapted or new sections as shall have been enacted...”, including “new sections” which definitely gives legislative power to a Central conference,

always within respecting "all matters distinctively connectional" over which General Conference has "full legislative power".

3. What flexibility does the Book of Discipline give for internal regulations in an Annual Conference or country?

"The fundamental bodies of the Church" (Constitution, ¶ 11) are the Annual Conferences. But no adaptation rights are given to an annual conference. Only a Central conference can make adaptations and edit a Discipline for the Central conference. Thus, General Conference and Central conferences shall maintain the connectional ties within the church.

The CC CSE faces the challenge that it covers a region that has in itself a variety of special conditions and missional requirements. Therefore, it is in line with the intention of the Book of Discipline that the CC CSE may agree to adaptations – where needed – in smaller "areas" (e.g. a single country) where the mission of the church so requires. This opens up the possibility of allowing internal regulations in an Annual Conference – within the framework of the CC CSE Discipline, as far as "*the particular circumstances and mission of the church in its area require it*". It is backed up by the last sentence of ¶ 543.7 ("*Subject to this restriction, a central conference may delegate to an annual conference within its boundaries the power to make one or the other of the changes and adaptations referred to in this paragraph, upon the request of such annual conference.*")

Similarly, regulations that only apply in one country – forming a District conference if being part of multi-country annual conference – could either be added to the respective edition in the national language of the CC CSE Discipline or recorded in an internal regulation for the respective country.

What other elements need to be considered for the present search for solutions within the CC-CSE?

For the CC-CSE, the following further considerations on country-specific adaptations are worth considering:

- In the CC-CSE, Annual Conferences are often composed of more than one single country, whereby each country is an independent legal entity under civil law and a "District conference" under the UMC Discipline. Therefore, in the CC CSE the possibility of adaptations in the present questions will have to be country-specific.
- If country-specific adaptations are necessary in a topic area, it will be helpful if the Central conference provides guidelines or model-text versions for such adaptations, so that each country does not have to work on its own formulations, which – thereafter – would have to be authorised by the CC.
- If country-specific adaptations are introduced in a thematic area, it should be agreed that changes can only be decided again by the country itself and cannot be imposed "from outside".

4. Conclusion by Bishop Patrick Streiff

We may of course differ whether we personally agree or disagree with having the Social Principles among the non-adaptable part of the BOD (according to Part II, par. 101). At present, the Social Principles in the CC CSE Discipline are a translation of the General Conference 2016 version. Some of the countries of the CC CSE that have translated the

CC CSE Discipline into their language, do not have the same regular updates as the CC CSE is doing concerning the Constitution and the Social Principles. They still have older versions of the Social Principles in their translation of the CC CSE Church Order.

Adaptations within the CC CSE will not only have to look at the missional context of the CC CSE and its countries, but also at the context in which regulation have been put into the Book of Discipline. Related to the topic of marriage, one striking example is ¶ 341.6 which says:

No pastor shall conduct celebrations for same-sex couples and such celebrations shall not be conducted in our churches.

The US-context which gave rise to this regulation, includes the fact that a clergy person in the US (as in England and many other countries of Catholic or Anglo-Saxon tradition) performs a legally binding marriage as a civil agent. In the US, a clergy person does not only give a religious blessing on a marriage that was already performed legally before a civil agent. Therefore, a footnote could highlight the different legal context in such countries of the CC CSE where the UMC can imagine to celebrate a blessing for same-sex couples, already legally married.

In general, we have to keep in mind that the Central conference in November 2022 will not be a regular one, but an extra session. We are in the midst of a prolonged quadrennium that will last eight years instead of four. The last edition of the Book of Discipline of General Conference, valid in Central conferences, is the Book of Discipline of 2016. Related to it, the regular Central conference 2017 implemented some revision in the Constitution and the Social Principles.

The next General Conference is only planned for 2024, and no one can foresee how many traditionally minded delegates will have left the UMC by then or will only do it after the 2024 General Conference. But certainly, the continuing UMC will look differently when those who want to join the Global Methodist Church have done so. However, it is important that the extra session of the Central conference says how they intend to move into the future together, despite the divergent convictions on marriage and human sexuality. Such a clear word of intention from the Central conference will calm uncertainties and fear about the future. It will also help my successor to begin his/her ministry with focusing on the common mission of supporting each other in our diverse ministry settings.

Therefore, I think it would be wise for the extra session of the Central conference, and it would be in line with the adaption right given to a Central conference to act along the following elements:

- Not to decide on major changes in the CC CSE Discipline that may be seen – whether inside or outside of the CC CSE – as being against “matters distinctively connectational” for which General Conference solely has authority;
 - To take the “Unity Statement” as the only change in the full text of the CC CSE Discipline, if the extra session of the Central conference wants to include it directly in a specific part of the Discipline;
- To decide on a motion of intention how the CC CSE Discipline shall be worded if some future General Conference will change its present traditional stance on marriage and/or practicing homosexuality;
- To add such wording, expressing the intention for the future, only in a footnote to the CC CSE Discipline in order to make visible in which way the Central conference wants to stay together into the future, without changing the present main

text;

- To decide on the wording that countries that want to remain with the present CC CSE Discipline, may put in their own internal regulations, for a time in the future when some coming General Conferences will change the present wording.

August 2022
Bishop Patrick Streiff

Motion to amend the Rules of Order par. 7.2 (#3f)

Motion to the Central Conference:

The Executive Committee proposes to the extra session of the Central Conference to amend the Rules of Order of the Central Conference in Article 7.2 at the end as follows: "If needed, an Annual Conference may elect additional alternate delegates."

For about a year, the lay representation of Czechia-Slovakia Annual Conference in the Executive Committee has been vacant. This is due to the fact that there are no substitute members who can take over this task.

Regarding the question of how to fill vacant seats in the Executive Committee or how to elect substitutes, our Rules of Order state the following in par. 7.1 + 7.2:

1. *The executive committee shall be composed of the following members with voting rights: the Bishop, the secretary and the treasurer, as well as one superintendent and one lay delegate from each annual and provisional annual conference, as well as the chairperson of the working group on episcopacy. Lay representatives must be elected members of the Central Conference. ...*

2. *The representatives of the annual and the provisional annual conferences shall be nominated for election for the executive committee by the Bishop after consultation with the elected delegates of those annual and provisional annual conferences. Vacancies in the interim shall be filled by election of the executive committee upon nomination of the Bishop.*

These two articles stipulate that members of the Executive Committee must be elected by the Annual Conferences on the one hand and by the Central Conference on the other

hand in order to be eligible to vote in the Executive Committee. Between ordinary sessions of the Central Conference, the Executive Committee assumes the right to vote from the Central Conference on the proposal of the bishop (after consultation with the other delegates of an AC). However, the bishop can only propose someone who has been elected by the AC to the Central Conference as a delegate or alternate delegate.

What should be done if all other delegates or alternate delegates to a Central Conference decline a possible election or are unable to serve on the Executive Committee? This situation is not specifically regulated in the Rules of Order of the Central Conference. Temporarily, it is possible to work with a vacancy. However, par. 7.1 states that one lay person and one superintendent from each Annual Conference shall serve on the Executive Committee. Vacancies should therefore be filled as soon as possible.

Normally, elections for delegates and alternate delegates to the Central Conference are held every four years. This election is for four years. The number of delegates is determined by the Central Conference, the number of alternate delegates is normally the same as the number of delegates but is not fixed. There should be enough people to avoid vacancies at a Central Conference or in the Executive Committee. However, as the above-mentioned example shows, there might nevertheless be a vacancy. An Annual Conference shall, therefore, have the possibility to elect alternate delegates even during a quadrennium. This possibility should be explicitly stated in the Rules and Order of the Central Conference in par. 7.2:

2. *Representatives of the Annual and Provisional Annual Conferences shall be nominated for election to the Executive Committee by the bishop after consultation with the elected delegates of an Annual or Provisional Annual Conference. Vacancies shall be filled on an interim basis by the Executive Committee upon the recommendation of the Bishop / Bishopess. **If needed, an Annual Conference may elect additional alternate delegates.***

Important: Elected alternate delegates are promoted directly as delegates to the Central Conference, if needed, but there is no automatic right to be promoted to the Executive Committee. This requires, on the one hand, the proposal of the bishop (after consultation with the other delegates) and the election by the Executive Committee.

The Secretary: Markus Bach

Motion to amend the Rules of Order par. 4.2 (#3g)

How is the necessary quorum of 3/5 calculated for the election of a bishop?

The Rules of Order of the Central Conference CSE regulate elections in Art 18.5+18.6

5. Ballots shall be used for secret elections. Empty and invalid ballots shall not be considered in determining the majority. The ushers shall see that each voting ballot has a different color, format or print. They shall also count the number of voting ballots passed out. If the number of voting ballots turned in to be counted is higher than the number passed out, the vote is invalid and must be repeated. The ushers shall record the result of the election as follows: number of voting members, number of invalid voting ballots, and number of empty voting ballots and distribution of valid ballots.

6. If the election is to take place without nominations, the first two votes shall be open. After the second vote no further candidates must be included. As of the third vote the Central Conference may, following a motion of a member, declare in an open vote that the candidate with the highest number of votes below the absolute majority is elected.

For the election of a Bishop paragraph 4 applies.

and the election of a Bishop in Art 4.2:

2. The Bishop shall be elected through secret ballot with a three-fifths majority of the voting delegates present. The Executive Committee may establish a preparatory process for the election of a bishop. All ordained elders in full connection, who belong to an annual or provisional annual conference of the Central Conference, may be elected.

The difference between these two variants is the different way of counting the respective valid votes. In Art. 18, the invalid and blank votes are deducted from the votes cast, while in Art 4, the number of all voters present is calculated as the basis for the quorum. This means that votes not cast, invalid and blank votes are also counted for the calculation of the quorum.

The "Procedure for the Election of a Bishop," as formulated by the Working Group on Episcopacy, states, by analogy with the Rules of Order in Art. 4: "A person is considered elected if the number of votes in his/her favor has reached a 3/5 majority of the voting members present."

The Office of the CC has consulted with the chairperson of the Judicial Court of the CC on the interpretation of the Rules of Order. The Office of the CC does not consider it reasonable that votes not cast and invalid votes in the election of a bishop should have an influence on the determination of the necessary quorum of 60%. It therefore proposes a clarifying revision of Art. 4.2 so that only the valid votes of the members casting are decisive for the quorum. Blank votes are valid votes. Votes of persons who are not (or no longer) eligible are invalid.

Motion to the Central Conference CSE: The Executive Committee proposes to the extra session of the Central Conference to replace the first sentence of Article 4.2 of the Rules of Order of the Central Conference as follows: "The Bishop shall be elected through secret ballot with a three-fifths majority of the voting delegates present who take part in that ballot and cast valid votes. Empty ballots shall also count among valid votes."

If the motion is adopted, the procedure for the Electing of a Bishop must be adapted accordingly.

For the ballots, the office of the CC assumes the following procedure:

- The basis for valid votes in the 1st ballot is the list of eligible elders.
- No new persons can be elected after the 1st ballot.
- Those with only one vote are eliminated for the 2nd ballot.
- For all subsequent ballots, the person with the fewest votes shall be eliminated until only two persons remain, one of whom must achieve a 3/5 majority to be elected.

The Secretary: Markus Bach

Information and dates on general-church events (#3h)



Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche
Zentralkonferenz von Mittel- und Südeuropa

United Methodist Church
Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

Termine / Dates 2023-2024

2023

16.-20.1.	<i>New Bishops Orientation</i>	US-Dallas
22.-26.2.	<i>Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters</i>	DE-Braunfels
27.2.-2.3.	<i>Central Conference Theological Education Fund</i>	online
6.-8.3.	<i>German-speaking Cabinets</i>	DE-Frankfurt/Main
18.3.	<i>Central Conference Northern Europe and Eurasia</i>	online
30.3.-2.4.	<i>Serbia-North Macedonia-Albania Provisional AC</i>	RS-Kisac
13.-16.4.	<i>Hungary Provisional AC</i> <i>(probably together with the District of Romania)</i>	HU-Budapest
23.-26.4.	<i>Coordination Committee North Africa</i>	TN-Tunis
30.4.-5.5.	<i>Council of Bishops</i>	US-Chicago
11.-14.5.	<i>Czech Republic AC</i>	CZ-Prague
18.-21.5.	<i>Austria Provisional AC</i>	AT-Linz
1.-4.6.	<i>Poland AC</i>	PL-Katowice
12.-13.6.	<i>Platform North Africa</i>	CH-Lenk
14.-18.6.	<i>Switzerland-France-North Africa AC</i>	CH-Lenk
14.-20.6.	<i>CEC General Assembly</i>	Estonia
29.6.-2.7.	<i>Executive Committee CC CSE</i>	TBD
4.-5.7.	<i>50 Years CPCE</i>	AT-Vienna
6.-9.9.	<i>European Historical Conference</i>	IT-Velletri
22.-24.9.	<i>STAUNEN!</i>	DE-Hamburg
28.9.-2.10.	<i>Fund for Mission in Europe / European Methodist Council</i>	Ireland?
6.-10.11.	<i>Council of Bishops</i>	US-Lake Junaluska

2024

14.-17.3	<i>Executive Committee CC CSE</i>	TBD
23.4.-3.5.	<i>General Conference</i>	US-Charlotte
13.-14.8.	<i>World Methodist Council</i>	SE-Gothenburg
14.-17.8.	<i>World Methodist Conference</i>	SE-Gothenburg
18.8.	<i>World Methodist Council</i>	SE-Gothenburg

Report of the Round Table to the Executive Committee of the Central Conference in September 2022 (#4a)

1) BACKGROUND FOR CONVENING THE ROUND TABLE

In the worldwide UMC, there have been differing views on the theological and moral assessment of same-sex partnerships for decades. This dispute is also evident in partly contradictory statements in the Social Principles of the UMC on the assessment of human sexuality as well as in provisions of the Church Order. In March 2019, an extraordinary General Conference was called by the Council of Bishops - in the hope of settling this dispute. However, this General Conference basically had the opposite effect and led to a hardening of the fronts. By a narrow majority, the conference passed a restrictive tightening of provisions regarding pastoral opportunities for LGBTQI+ persons. These provisions have not yet gone into effect due to by-laws for the Central Conferences. In our Central Conference, the decisions of the General Conference have also provoked very different reactions. While in some parts of our Central Conference it was seen as a great relief that the previous position of the church was confirmed, in other parts of our Central Conference the tightening was perceived with great dismay.

Immediately after the 2019 General Conference, it became clear to many leaders of our church, especially in the USA, that on this basis a common path of the so-called "conservative" as well as the so-called "liberal" parts of our church is not possible. With this in mind, a proposal² was developed in the course of 2019 as to how an amicable disestablishment of parts of the church could be achieved, which could subsequently form its own church. This proposal should have been presented to the 2020 General Conference, but the conference has so far been unable to meet in light of the Covid 19 pandemic. The delay has now resulted in some parts leaving the UMC in a disorderly process and the formation of the Global Methodist Church as of May 1, 2022.

The conflict at the world level, the different theological and ethical assessments of same-sex partnerships, and the different social, cultural and legal backgrounds have also put the fellowship between the various conferences and districts within our Central Conference (and to some extent also within individual Annual Conferences) to the test and called into question the continued existence of the Central Conference. In response, the Central Conference Executive Committee convened a Round Table on March 13, 2021.

2) MANDATE FOR THE „ROUND TABLE“

The Central Conference Executive Committee, in its online meeting on March 13, 2021, adopted the following Terms of Reference for the Round Table:

1. The Executive Committee of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe establishes a round table group with the purpose to design a way for the UMC in CSE after the pandemic. It shall seek to envision a UMC in Eu-

² Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace through Separation

rope with vision and mission. The round table is empowered by the Executive Committee talk with the other two Central Conferences in Europe. The aim shall be to find a renewal of commitment and a common vision for the United Methodist Church in Central and Southern Europe and in Europe.

The round table starts its work in summer 2021. It stays in close contact with the Study Group of the Central Conference CSE (see above). It shall build a foundation for the Central Conferences in Europe Task Force.

2. It shall be moderated by two persons. One of those shall be a trusted leader of the southeastern part of the Central Conference, the other from a more western perspective. The round table shall constitute itself and elect the moderators.
3. It shall stay in close contact with the bishop but shall not be moderated by the bishop.
4. Each District (CH-F-NA: each Country) may nominate one person as a member of the round table
5. The round table may invite other persons to join and share their situation

3) COMPOSITION AND MEETINGS

The Annual Conference, districts, and countries, respectively, responded to the Round Table invitation as follows:

- The following countries have accepted the invitation and nominated a delegate: UMC Switzerland (Lea Hafner), France (Etienne Rudolphe), Hungary (Laszlo Khaled), North Macedonia (Marian Dimov), Poland (Andrzej Malicki), Serbia (Daniel Sjanta) and Austria (Stefan Schröckenfuchs).
- The UMC Albania has underlined that it wants to remain part of the Central Conference, but will not participate in the work of the Round Table.
- The UMC Czech Republic has joined the Round Table after a period of reflection in January 2022 (Ivana Procházkova)
- The UMC in North Africa has not sent anyone in view of the challenging situation in North Africa.
- The churches in Bulgaria, Slovakia and Romania have decided against participating in the work of the Round Table.
- The women's organization of the Central Conference has sent one delegate (Barbara Büniger)
- The bishop has participated in the meetings of the Round Table according to time availability.

Andrzej Malicki and Stefan Schröckenfuchs were elected as co-chairs in accordance with the mandate. At the October 2021 Executive, it was decided to bring in an external facilitator to accompany the process. Matthias Bruhn was assigned this task by Bishop Streiff. At the same Executive meeting, a small group was also appointed to develop proposals regarding relevant formulations of the Church Order. This small group was composed of Laszlo Khaled (HU), Serge Frutiger (CHF) and Bishop Patrick Streiff.

The Round Table has convened 10 times since it was established:

- 23.6.2021 by zoom
- 13.9.2021 by zoom
- 13.10.2021 by zoom
- 21.-23.10.2021 at the CC Executive meeting in Budapest
- 9.12.2021 by zoom
- 1.-2.2.2022 by zoom
- 24.-26.3.2022 at the CC Executive meeting in Mulhouse
- 6.5.2022 by zoom
- 2.6.2022 by zoom
- 18.-19.8.2022 in Budapest

In addition, numerous discussions have taken place between the co-chairs and the moderator as well as the members of the small group.

Another meeting to finalize the proposals to the Extraordinary Central Conference has been scheduled for October 18-19 in Budapest.

4) THE COMMON WAY FORWARD

The Round Table has worked very hard in recent months to strengthen mutual understanding of the different contexts in which our church operates and to find solutions that take into account the realities in all parts of our Central Conference. The perspectives - as well as the cultural, social and legal realities in our countries - are sometimes very different. Formulations that meet all the concerns and objections of individual members have not yet been found everywhere. Likewise, the results of the Round Table will have to be understood as compromise proposals in the best sense of the word. This means that, as part of the common path, all participants had to be prepared to move toward others and to make concessions, some of which required considerable efforts.

However, mutual understanding and new trust has grown between the members of the Round Table, and relationships have deepened. Therefore, we are confident that despite all the differences, we can live together and be church together - as long as there is the necessary will to do so. As members of the Round Table, we want to do our part to ensure that this remains possible even if a future General Conference should change formulations of the Book of Discipline on questions of human sexuality.

5) INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

The mutual commitment that we, as individual parts of our Central Conference, do not want to exert pressure on others has been decisive for the work of the Round Table. No one should be forced by others to have to change their own attitude and convictions. With this in mind, the members of the Round Table have agreed that no proposals should be made on the part of the Round Table to change the understanding of marriage that has so far been anchored in the UMC. At the same time, there is an understanding that equal consideration must be given to the fact that there are active church members in parts of our church who come out as LGBTQI+ persons, and who should be treated respectfully and not hurtfully by the church. This includes the fact that in some countries in our CC there is the possibility of same-sex marriage before the state. Here the churches are faced with the question of how to respond to the sincere desire of such couples for a blessing.

We believe that delegates in all Annual Conferences strive to make decisions that serve mission and pastoral care in their context. However, a viable solution must also be reflected in

the wording of the Central Conference Church Order. Bishop Streiff has set out in a separate document the possibilities for adaptation to which, according to his expertise, the Central Conferences are entitled. On this basis, the Round Table is working out proposals as to how the Church Order can take account of the diverse realities in our Central Conference by means of overarching texts, commenting footnotes and adaptations - or how it can also take account of them in the future if provisions of the Book of Discipline are changed by the General Conference.

The Round Table has prepared the following texts or has them on the agenda for the October meeting:

- Criteria for the development of the proposed solutions (See Appendix 1, slide 1).
- Central Conference Unity Statement (See Appendix 1, slide 2 for draft. Minor changes are expected at the October meeting).
- Templates for texts on how individual conferences and districts can maintain previous UMC wording on understanding marriage and evaluating practiced homosexuality in their internal regulations, should they be changed by a future General Conference (See Appendix 2.)
- "Overarching texts" on those passages of the Church Order that relate to the theological assessment of homosexuality as well as pastoral care options (This relates exclusively to Social Principles Art 161.c and 161.g and Art 341.6 Church Order. Corresponding proposals will be available after the meeting of the Round Table in October).

6) PROSPECT

After months of intensive collaboration, we hope that the Round Table's proposals will receive the support of the Central Conference delegates. It is quite obvious that for those who were not part of the Round Table, questions will remain unanswered. Not every proposal of the Round Table will meet with unopposed approval. For some, one proposal will go too far, for others another will not go far enough, and the question may arise as to whether all sides have accommodated each other equally. However, we ask the delegates to the Central Conference to trust that, as we move forward together, all concerns have been heard, all objections have been reviewed, and all parties have taken steps toward each other. And we encourage you to engage in conversation with Roundtable members from your conference or district to learn more about the genesis of the proposals at hand.

On behalf of the Round Table
Andrzej Malicki und Stefan Schröckenfuchs
Co-Chairs

Matthias Bruhn
Facilitator



A solution that is acceptable for all should fulfil the following general criteria (accepted 24th March, amended 19th Aug, 2022):
(criteria 2, 4 and 6 were called into question by country feedback.)

- 1) The main message shall be the important message: „we want to live in unity even if we are not of one mind on every aspect.“
- 2) In questions of human sexuality, each country can follow local convictions and laws
- 3) No outside pressure on annual conferences and districts
- 4) We want to protect the unity of our CC using the process of adaptation (through translation) to avoid pressure from a GC. A solution must work also when the BOD is changed by a General Conference:
- 5) Address communication aspects (within ACs and among ACs)
- 6) We want to end the discussion so that we may focus on the question, what our mission / task for the future is.
- 7) A bishop is expected to adhere to the principle of impartiality/multiparty (Allparteilichkeit) and not to stress any personal views. A bishop cannot overrule the vote of the closed session concerning ordinations; still, a bishop's personal freedom of conscience must be accepted.
- 8) The ACs must respect the elected bishop in spite of the existing areas of dispute.
- 9) In this round table process, we do not intend to change the definition of marriage.



Draft statement of unity as of 18th August 2022

Unity statement of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe:

Jesus prayed for his disciples: "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me." (John 17:20-21).

In the Church at large, as well as in the central conference of Central and Southern Europe, we are not of one mind on all parts of the Social Principles and its consequences on the polity and practice of the Church. Despite intense listening, conferencing, and examination of the Scriptures, we nevertheless differ about what forms of human sexuality and of faithful, committed relationships we can endorse and bless. However, we value the commandment of Jesus for unity and mutual love as core to our faith, binding us together despite divergent understandings.

We abstain from putting pressure on each other. We trust that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we will make good decisions for the welfare of our church and of those to whom we are sent in our Annual and District Conferences.

The Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe values the Social Principles as an important call to conscience, and at the same time acknowledges the country-specific differences with regard to individual topics. It allows each country that so wishes, to keep its understanding of marriage and human sexuality and testify to it in its internal regulations. Thus, the central conference wants to continue a common journey in mutual respect, connectional conferencing, and support in mission.

Two points presently remain open for discussion/clarification. The title - unity?
And that definition of marriage shall not be changed.

Proposals to the Round Table for a country that chooses to remain with the present Discipline

newly proposed text for the Discipline³ is in green

1. On adaptation rights of a Central Conference, and internal regulations in an Annual conference or district / country

1.1 On adaptation rights of a Central Conference:

According to the outline concerning adaptation rights by Bishop Patrick Streiff in the documents from March and from May, the **Discipline Group recommends** the following way of dealing with the adaptation right:

As the present General Conference Discipline contains negative qualifications on the practice of homosexuality not only in the Social Principles but also in legally binding parts of the Discipline, a central conference adaptation cannot overrule or contradict legally binding parts.

As a future General Conference Discipline may partially or completely change such negative qualifications, the working group of the Round Table proposes options for additions and/or footnotes to the text of the Discipline of CC CSE that shall allow a continued common journey of countries despite their differences on topics of human sexuality.

It will be up to the Round Table to propose to the extra session of the Central Conference whether such adaptations and/or footnotes shall be added now or later in the Discipline of the CC CSE.

The following option was already recommended by the round table.

1.2 On internal regulations in an Annual Conference or district / country

The possibility of internal regulations for a country that so chooses, should be given with the "Unity Statement" of the Central Conference of CSE – see below the proposal in 2.1.

Option for a country that chooses to remain with the present Discipline:

Because a future General Conference may delete negative qualifications on the practice of homosexuality in legally binding parts of the Discipline, the central conference may allow to an AC or country the right of keeping the present practice "*as the special conditions and the mission of the church*" (par. 543.7) require.

As the Round Table states in its criteria, no country shall be put under pressure from outside. If a country chooses to change its practices, such change has to grow from within the country. Therefore, the central conference shall allow that each country (annual or district conference according to the BOD) that so chooses, may add by decision of the district or annual conference,

³ 1 The official text of the Discipline of the CC CSE is in German and can be downloaded from the website of the central conference: <https://www.umc-cse.org/de/downloads--links/documents-studies-and-lectures/cse-church-rules.html> ; there is no official English version of the Discipline of the CC CSE.

at its next meeting, the following in its own internal regulations:

"The United Methodist Church in [name of country] affirms the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support personal commitment, and shared fidelity between a man and a woman. It celebrates marriage as a union of one man and one woman.

It does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with its understanding of Christian teaching. It affirms that God's grace is available to all. It seeks to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. It implores families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. It is committed to ministry to and with all people."

Comment: text follows exactly the wording taken from the present Social Principles; only the words in green (related to the UMC in the respective country) are new!

...

Unauthorized translation - original in German

Final report Round Table of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe (#4a.2)

As announced in the preliminary report of the Round Table from September 2022, the members of the Round Table met for the last time in Budapest on October 18-19. Personally present were delegates Lea Hafner (CH), Marjan Dimov (NMK), Andrzej Malicki (PL), Ivana Procházková (CZ), Daniel Sjanta (SRB), Laszlo Khaled (HU) and Stefan Schröckenfuchs (AT), as well as Bishop Patrick Streiff and as moderator Matthias Bruhn. Delegates Etienne Rudolph (FR) and Barbara Bünger (CC Women) participated via Zoom. The cooperation in this last session was characterised by great openness of all participants and the willingness to listen to each other. We prayed together for God's blessing and guidance and concluded our work with the celebration of Holy Communion.

In terms of content, the outstanding proposals for "overarching texts" were worked out on the basis of the proposals of a small group (Serge Frutiger, Laszlo Khaled and Patrick Streiff). The texts already submitted in the September report were also reviewed for final, mostly linguistic editing. Thus, the text proposals now attached to this report reflect the final recommendations and proposals of the Round Table. They partly replace the text proposals from September.

Disciplinary Basis of the Round Table's work

The basis of the Round Table's work lies in the constitutional rights and duties of a Central Conference which, according to Par. 31.5, include: "to make such rules and regulations for the administration of the work within their boundaries including such changes and adaptations of the General *Discipline* as the conditions in the respective areas may require, subject to the powers that have been or shall be vested in the General Conference."

Par. 543.7 further explains it related to the mission of the church and the work on local, district, and annual conference levels: "A central conference shall have power to make such changes and adaptations of the *Book of Discipline* as the special conditions and the mission of the church in the area require, especially concerning the organization and administration of the work on local church, district, and annual conference levels, provided that no action shall be taken that is contrary to the Constitution and the General Rules of The United Methodist Church, and provided that the spirit of connectional relationship is kept between the local and the general church. Subject to this restriction, a central conference may delegate to an annual conference within its boundaries the power to make one or the other of the changes and adaptations referred to in this paragraph, upon the request of such annual conference."

Recommended package of measures

The members of the Round Table were very deliberate in listening to the different convictions represented in the Central Conference and respecting them. To ensure that these different convictions remain protected as we move forward together - even in the face of possible new decisions by the General Conference - the Round Table has developed a package of measures that includes the following elements:

A) General criteria for being together in the CC CSE

The General Criteria were developed by the Round Table in a first step as a basic document that should outline a way to find a solution for remaining together as a Central Conference. The Round Table recommends that this document be adopted by the Central Conference as part of the report.

B) Called to unity in the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

The text "Called to Unity" makes visible the first concern of the General Criteria: "We want to live in unity, even if we do not agree on all issues". The Round Table recommends that this text be inserted in the CC CSE Discipline before the preface to the Social Principles.

C) Text templates for "internal regulations" in the respective countries

The text "Called to Unity" leaves to each country that so chooses, the possibility to adopt specific internal regulations. Since a future General Conference may delete the part of Social Principles and/or negative qualifications on the practice of homosexuality in legally binding parts of the *Book of Discipline*, the Round Table recommends that the Central Conference, on the one hand, allows a country (District or Annual Conference), by its own decision, to include the wording of the Social Principles currently in force in its internal regulations; and, on the other hand, affirm that a country (District or Annual Conference) has the right to make a declaration of intention to amend or delete the current negative qualifications on the practice of homosexuality in the *Discipline of the CC CSE*.

D) Overarching texts for the church order of the CC CSE as declarations of intent for a common future in unity and mutual commitment

The texts in this section are called "overarching texts" because they are to remain valid in the CC CSE as a whole (in contrast to the recommendations in Part C, which are to apply only in a country that wishes to adopt them for itself). The "overarching texts" in the Church Order have the following aims:

- They include clarification for the future when a General Conference deletes the negative qualifiers on homosexuality and/or changes the definition of marriage.
- They affirm a common commitment of all Annual and District Conferences in the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe who remain in The United Methodist Church.
- They will remain valid in the CC CSE if the General Conference changes the current traditional wording in the Social Principles and in Par. 341 (Unauthorized Conduct).
- They are to be presented for decision at the extra session of the Central Conference as footnotes to the present CC CSE Discipline. If the CC CSE agrees, these footnotes would replace the present footnote in Par. 161G with a text of the CC-Germany.

The suggestions for "overarching texts" refer in the first two cases to statements from the Social Principles. A definition of marriage is found only in the Social Principles, par 161.C. The Doctrinal Principles do not contain a definition of marriage. The suggestions

for new footnotes in the Social Principles are based on the current text of the Social Principles (see BOD 2016 in English or CC CSE Discipline 2018 in German).

Only the third overarching text refers to a paragraph of the Church Order which is church law. In the CC CSE Discipline in its original German text, only Par. 341.6 contains an explicit negative qualification. Par. 341, Unauthorized Conduct, states in Alinea 6: "Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches." The US context, which was at the origin of this provision, includes the fact that pastors in the US (as well as in England or some other countries with Anglo-Saxon or Catholic traditions) perform legally binding marriages as civil registrars. In the USA, a pastor does not merely give a religious blessing to a marriage that is already legally binding under civil law. Therefore, a footnote may indicate the different legal context in those CC CSE countries where the UMC wishes to allow a minister to celebrate a blessing for a same-sex couple who are already civilly married.

In the countries of the CC CSE, the legal situation differs not only in terms of the state legal system and definition of marriage, but also in terms of the authority to perform a legally binding marriage. Many countries, mostly in Western Europe, have strict limitations that no pastor may perform a legally binding marriage or celebrate a religious wedding ceremony for a couple that is not already civilly married.

The Round Table therefore recommends that the Central Conference take a common path into the future by adding an explanatory footnote to paragraph 341.6 for the time such alinea is in the Discipline.

The recommendations of the Round Table:

According to the understanding of the members of the Round Table, the present recommendations form a unity and are supported in their entirety by all members of the Round Table. They take up the different convictions in a balanced way and make it possible to remain in a common Central Conference in the future and to support each other in the mission of the Church. They are thus also recommended to the delegates of the Central Conference for adoption as an overall package.

For better comprehensibility, are attached to this report at first a clear version of the Round Table's recommendations and afterwards a version with all changes to present texts of the CC CSE Discipline made visible.

We hope that with our work we have contributed to a common future as a Central Conference and have been of service to the members of our Church in the different countries.

For the Round Table

Stefan Schröckenfuchs and Andrzej Malicki

Recommendations of the Round Table

Clear version

A. General criteria

Recommendation: In order to ensure that the different beliefs held in the Central Conference can be protected, the Round Table recommends that the "General Criteria" be endorsed by the Central Conference as part of the Round Table report.

General criteria for being together in the CC CSE

- 1) *The main message shall be the important message: "We want to live in unity, even if we are not of one mind on every aspect".*
- 2) *In questions of human sexuality, each country can follow local convictions and laws*
- 3) *No outside pressure on annual conferences and districts.*
- 4) *We want to protect the unity of our CC using the process of adaptation (including translation) to avoid pressure from a GC. A solution must work even if the Book of Discipline is changed by General Conference.*
- 5) *Address communication aspects (within ACs and among ACs).*
- 6) *We want to end the discussion so that we may focus on the question what our mission / task is for the future.*
- 7) *A bishop is expected to adhere to the principle of impartiality (multipartiality) and not to stress any personal views. A bishop cannot overrule the vote of the closed session concerning ordinations; still, a bishop's personal freedom of conscience must be accepted.*
- 8) *The ACs must respect the elected bishop in spite of the existing areas of dispute.*
- 9) *We do not intend to change the definition of marriage.*

B. Called to Unity

Recommendation: In order to ensure that the various convictions held in the Central Conference can be protected, the Round Table recommends that the text "Called to Unity in the CC CSE" be inserted in the CC CSE Discipline before the Preface to the Social Principles.

Called to Unity in the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe:

Jesus prayed for his disciples: "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me." (John 17:20-21).

In the Church at large, as well as in the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe, we are not of one mind on all parts of the Social Principles and its consequences on the polity and practice of the Church. Despite intense listening, conferencing, and examination of the Scriptures, we nevertheless differ about what forms of human sexuality and of faithful, committed relationships we can endorse and

bless. However, we value the commandment of Jesus for unity and mutual love as core to our faith, binding us together despite divergent understandings. We abstain from putting pressure on each other. We trust that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we will make good decisions for the welfare of our church and of those to whom we are sent in our Annual and District Conferences.

The Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe values the Social Principles as "a call to prayerful, studied dialogue of faith and practice", and at the same time acknowledges the country-specific differences with regard to individual topics. It allows each country that so wishes, to keep its understanding of marriage and human sexuality and testify to it in its internal regulations. Thus, the central conference wants to continue a common journey in mutual respect, connectional conferencing, and support in mission.

C. Internal regulations in an AC or a district / country

C. 1 Option for a country that chooses to retain the current church order

Recommendation: Because a future General Conference may change parts of the Social Principles and/or delete negative qualifications on the practice of homosexuality in legally binding parts of the Book of Discipline, the Central Conference allows that a country (as annual or district conference according to the BOD) may add by decision, at an upcoming meeting, to put the following text, taken from the present Social Principles, into its internal regulations:

"The United Methodist Church in [name of country] keeps the following understanding of marriage and of human sexuality as expressed in the Book of Discipline [or: in the Social Principles] of the 2016 General Conference. It affirms the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity between a man and a woman. It celebrates marriage as a union of one man and one woman.

It cannot condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with its understanding of Christian teaching. It affirms that God's grace is available to all. It seeks to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. It implores families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. It is committed to ministry to and with all people."

C. 2 Option for a country that intends to remove all negative qualifications in the Church Order

Recommendation: The Central Conference acknowledges that an Annual Conference or country has the right of making a resolution of intent on wishing to change or delete the present negative qualifications on the practice of homosexuality in the Discipline.

D. "Overarching Texts" in the CC CSE Discipline

D.1 "Overarching Text" for the Social Principles on Marriage (Par 161.C)

Recommendation: To ensure that the various convictions held in the Central Conference can be protected, the Round Table recommends that the Central Conference add the following text as a footnote to Par. 161.C in the CC CSE Discipline:

"The CC CSE intends to journey together into the future with the following understanding:

C) Marriage - We affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity, in Christianity traditionally understood as a union of one man and one woman. We believe that God's blessing rests upon such a marriage, whether or not there are children of the union. We reject social norms that assume different standards for women than for men in marriage. Where laws in civil society define marriage as union between two adults, it is the authority of each country (District or Annual Conference) to make its internal regulations. No United Methodist clergy shall be required to bless a same-sex union. "

D.2 "Overarching Text" for the Social Principles on Human Sexuality

Recommendation: To ensure that the various convictions held in the Central Conference can be protected, the Round Table recommends that the Central Conference insert the following text as a footnote to Par. 161.G in the CC CSE Discipline:

The CC CSE intends to journey together into the future with the following understanding:

G) Human Sexuality - We affirm that sexuality is a God's good gift to all persons. We call everyone to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift.

Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of marriage.

We deplore all forms of commercialization, abuse, and exploitation of sex. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and for adequate protection, guidance, and counselling of abused children. All persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured and to be protected against violence. The Church should support the family in providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality of children, youth, and adults.

We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All persons need the ministry of the Church in their struggle for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. We commit ourselves to ministry to and with all people.

Notes: The texts in Part D are called "overarching texts" because they are to remain valid in the CC CSE as a whole (in contrast to the texts in Part C, which are to apply only in a country that wishes to adopt them for itself). Such "overarching texts" are to be included in the present Discipline of the CC CSE as a footnote. If this "overarching text" is included as a footnote, the Social Principles will include these footnotes instead of the present footnote to the text of the CC Germany.

D.3 "Overarching text" for parts of the Church Order that are church law

Recommendation: The Round Table recommends that the Central Conference journeys together into the future by adding the following footnote to Par. 341.6 - for the time that this Alinea 6 remains in the Discipline:

The CC CSE intends to journey together into the future with the following understanding:

The prohibition is related to countries where same-sex marriage is legally allowed and a clergyperson is authorized to perform a legally valid marriage as a civil agent. In such countries, a UMC clergyperson is not allowed to perform a legally valid same-sex marriage.

In the CC CSE, a country (as an annual conference or district conference according to the BOD) may add in its internal regulations that it keeps an understanding and practice of marriage exclusively as a union between one man and one woman. If State law in a country defines marriage as a union of two adult persons, such country may add internal regulations for such situation. A United Methodist clergy shall not be required to bless a same-sex couple in a legally valid marriage.

Additional comment only for translations of the official German CC CSE Discipline from English versions of the Book of Discipline:

Par. 340 would need clarification if translated from the English of the BOD into other languages. The official German text of the CC CSE Discipline does not need any change. The BOD in English has the following wording:

Par. 340 Responsibility and Duties of Elders and Licensed Pastors

1. Proclamation of the word and ecclesiastical acts: ...

*c) (1) To perform weddings after appropriate preparation with the **bride and groom** [CC CSE in German "Brautpaar" or in English "**couple**"]. It is the right and responsibility of the pastor to decide whether a church wedding can be performed.*

The laws of the state and the order of the church are to be observed; ...

Comment: as the official text of the CC CSE Discipline is in German, translations into other languages of the CC CSE should use a translation of the English word "couple".

Recommendations of the Round Table

Version with visible corrections to texts of the CC CSE Discipline

A. General criteria

(No texts of the CC CSE Discipline)

B. Called to Unity

(No texts of the CC CSE Discipline are concerned – it is a new text that shall be placed before the present Preface to the Social Principles)

Remark: The quote that the Social Principles are valued “as a call to prayerful, studied dialogue of faith and practice”, is taken literally from the Preface of the presently valid Social Principles.

C. Internal regulations in an AC or a district / country

C. 1 Option for a country that chooses to retain the current church order

Recommendation: Because a future General Conference may change parts of the Social Principles and/or delete negative qualifications on the practice of homosexuality in legally binding parts of the Book of Discipline, the Central Conference allows that a country (as annual or district conference according to the BOD) may add by decision, at an upcoming meeting, to put the following text, taken from the present Social Principles, into its internal regulations:

"The United Methodist Church in [name of country] keeps the following understanding of marriage and of human sexuality as expressed in the Book of Discipline [or: in the Social Principles] of the 2016 General Conference. It affirms the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity between a man and a woman. It celebrates marriage as a union of one man and one woman.

It cannot condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with its understanding of Christian teaching. It affirms that God's grace is available to all. It seeks to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. It implores families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. It is committed to ministry to and with all people."

Remark: The text takes literally elements from the present Social Principles (in black); only the red marked words (related to the UMC in a particular country) are new.

C. 2 Option for a country that intends to remove all negative qualifications in the Church Order

(No texts of the present CC CSE Discipline are concerned)

D. "Overarching Texts" in the CC CSE Discipline

D.1 "Overarching Text" for the Social Principles on Marriage (Par 161.C)

Recommendation: To ensure that the various convictions held in the Central Conference can be protected, the Round Table recommends that the Central Conference add the following text as a footnote to Par. 161.C in the CC CSE Discipline:

The CC CSE intends to journey together into the future with the following understanding:

C) Marriage - We affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity ~~between a man and a woman~~, in Christianity traditionally understood as a union of one man and one woman. We believe that God's blessing rests upon such a marriage, whether or not there are children of the union. We reject social norms that assume different standards for women than for men in marriage. ~~We support laws in civil society that define marriage as the union of one man and one woman.~~ Where laws in civil society define marriage as union between two adults, it is the authority of each country (District or Annual Conference) to make its internal regulations. No United Methodist clergy shall be required to bless a same-sex union. "

Remark: The text takes up the present wording of the present Social Principles with some deletions and additions; the changes are marked in red.

D.2 "Overarching Text" for the Social Principles on Human Sexuality

Recommendation: To ensure that the various convictions held in the Central Conference can be protected, the Round Table recommends that the Central Conference insert the following text as a footnote to Par. 161.G in the CC CSE Discipline:

The CC CSE intends to journey together into the future with the following understanding:

G) Human Sexuality - We affirm that sexuality is a God's good gift to all persons. We call everyone to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift. Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of ~~a monogamous, heterosexual~~ marriage. We deplore all forms of commercialization, abuse, and exploitation of sex. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and for adequate protection, guidance, and counselling of abused children. All persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured and to be protected against violence. The Church

should support the family in providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality of children, youth, and adults.

We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All persons need the ministry of the Church in their struggle for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. ~~The worldwide United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching. We affirm that God's grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay church members and friends.~~ We commit ourselves to ministry to and with all people.

Remarks: The text takes up the present Social Principles and makes several deletions:

(1) the marriage covenant is defined in 161C. Therefore, we delete here any additional descriptive adjectives;

(2) with the deletion of the phrase that the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching, we delete also the next three sentences, because the remaining two sentences before and the one last sentence are sufficient.

D.3 "Overarching text" for parts of the Church Order that are church law

(No present text of the Discipline is changed; the recommendation is a new footnote to par. 341.6)

Report and motions from Executive Committee meetings

Information and motions from the meetings of the Executive Committee (#5a)

The Executive Committee of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe met in the following online meetings since the March 2022 meeting in Mulhouse:

75th meeting of the Executive Committee August 27, 2022

The Executive Committee met online for its 75th meeting on August 27, 2022. The focus of the meeting was to prepare for the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference CSE in Basel on November 16 - 20, 2022. All resolutions passed for the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference are included in the documents distributed. The following resolutions were passed:

- The Executive Committee unanimously decided to propose to the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference to replace the first sentence in Article 4.2 of the Rules and Order of the Central Conference as follows: "The Bishop shall be elected through secret ballot with a three-fifths majority of the voting delegates present who take part in that ballot and cast valid votes. Empty ballots shall also count among valid votes." (See motion and document #3g).
- The Executive Committee voted unanimously to propose to the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe that the following be added to the Rules and Order of the Central Conference in Article 7.2 at the end: "If needed, an Annual Conference may elect additional alternate delegates." (See Motion and Document #3f).
- The Executive Committee unanimously approved the document "A Brief History of The United Methodist Church" and submits it to the extraordinary Meeting of the Central Conference 2022 for inclusion in the Church Order (see Motion and Document #3d).
- The Executive Committee unanimously decided that the six documents of the Working Group Episcopacy as a basis for the election of a bishop will be given to the delegates of the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference CSE on November 16-20, 2022 (see documents #6b and #6c.1-5).
In addition, the Executive Committee approved the motion of the Working Group Episcopacy to request the Central Conference to extend the 1st term of office of the newly elected bishop (see Motion and Document #6b).
- The Executive Committee unanimously approved the revised Regulations of the Central Conference CSE Pension Plan, rev10 of 5/25/2022 / 7/24/2022.
- The Executive Committee unanimously decided to submit the 2023-2024 budget to the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference for approval (see document ...#3c). It was also decided that the funds included in the budget item "Jugendrat (EMYC)" from 2021 - 2024 can also be used for youth meetings within the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe.

Motion of the Executive Committee to the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference 2022:

The Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe approves the budget for the years 2023-2024.

76th meeting of the Executive Committee October 27, 2022

The Executive Committee of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe met online for its 76th meeting on October 27, 2022. The focus was the final report of the Round Table (#4a.2). The Executive Committee also took note of the current situation in Slovakia and approved amendments to the Constitution (#5a.1 + #5a.2) in the Church Order of the Central Conference CSE for the attention of the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference 2022 in Basel.

The following motions were adopted by the Executive Committee for the attention of the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference:

A) Final Report of the Round Table

With great gratitude, the Executive Committee received the final report (#4a.1) of the Round Table. This report builds on the Roundtable report already distributed (#4a). It is a particularly valuable sign that the report and recommendations are shared by all members of the Round Table. The report will be added to the Central Conference documents and the Secretary will send the report to the delegates in addition to the Dropbox for intensive study.

The Executive Committee expresses its sincere thanks to the members of the Round Table co-chaired by Andrzej Malicki and Stefan Schröckenfuchs for the work done and time invested. The Executive Committee is also grateful for the expert help of moderator Matthias Bruhn. As the only change in the text, the Executive Committee decides to change the title of the "Unity Statement" to "Called to Unity". The Executive Committee follows the recommendations of the Round Table and submits the report to the Central Conference with a request for approval and implementation.

The Executive Committee intensively discusses the necessary quorum for voting on the total package of all motions. It is clearly stated that at least a majority as in an election of bishops (3/5 majority) should be reached, but that at the same time a clear majority of all countries should agree, since the individual countries are numerically very differently represented by voting delegates. It is pointed out that the intended consent procedure and the planning of the discussion process should aim at the broadest possible agreement. However, the Executive Committee refrains from setting a numerical quorum and trusts in the quality of the conferencing process.

The Executive Committee decided that the motions should be discussed individually on the basis of the report of the Round Table. However, the vote should be taken on all the motions together.

Motions of the Executive Committee to the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference 2022:

1. To ensure that the different beliefs held in the Central Conference can be protected, the Central Conference decide, that the "General Criteria" be endorsed by the Central Conference as part of the Round Table report.
2. To ensure that the various convictions held in the Central Conference can be protected, the Central Conference decide, that the text "Called to Unity in the CC CSE" be inserted in the CC CSE Discipline before the Preface to the Social Principles.

3. Because a future General Conference may change parts of the Social Principles and/or delete negative qualifications on the practice of homosexuality in legally binding parts of the Book of Discipline, the Central Conference allows that a country (as annual or district conference according to the BOD) may add by decision, at an upcoming meeting, to put the following text, taken from the present Social Principles, into its internal regulations:

"The United Methodist Church in [name of country] keeps the following understanding of marriage and of human sexuality as expressed in the Book of Discipline [or: in the Social Principles] of the 2016 General Conference. It affirms the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity between a man and a woman. It celebrates marriage as a union of one man and one woman.

It cannot condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with its understanding of Christian teaching. It affirms that God's grace is available to all. It seeks to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. It implores families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. It is committed to ministry to and with all people."

4. The Central Conference acknowledges that an Annual Conference or country has the right of making a resolution of intent on wishing to change or delete the present negative qualifications on the practice of homosexuality in the Discipline.
5. To ensure that the various convictions held in the Central Conference can be protected, the Central Conference decide, that the Central Conference add the following text as a footnote to Par. 161.C in the CC CSE Discipline:

"The CC CSE intends to journey together into the future with the following understanding:

C) Marriage - We affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity, in Christianity traditionally understood as a union of one man and one woman. We believe that God's blessing rests upon such a marriage, whether or not there are children of the union. We reject social norms that

assume different standards for women than for men in marriage. Where laws in civil society define marriage as union between two adults, it is the authority of each country (District or Annual Conference) to make its internal regulations. No United Methodist clergy shall be required to bless a same-sex union. "

6. To ensure that the various convictions held in the Central Conference can be protected, the Central Conference decide, that the Central Conference insert the following text as a footnote to Par. 161.G in the CC CSE Discipline and replace the current footnote:

The CC CSE intends to journey together into the future with the following understanding:

G) Human Sexuality - We affirm that sexuality is a God's good gift to all persons. We call everyone to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift. Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of marriage. We deplore all forms of commercialization, abuse, and exploitation of sex. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and for adequate protection, guidance, and counselling of abused children. All persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured and to be protected against violence. The Church should support the family in providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality of children, youth, and adults.

We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All persons need the ministry of the Church in their struggle for human fulfilment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. We commit ourselves to ministry to and with all people.

7. The Central Conference decide that the Central Conference journeys together into the future by adding the following footnote to Par. 341.6 - for the time that this Alinea 6 remains in the Discipline:

The CC CSE intends to journey together into the future with the following understanding:

The prohibition is related to countries where same-sex marriage is legally allowed and a clergyperson is authorized to perform a legally valid marriage as a civil agent. In such countries, a UMC clergyperson is not allowed to perform a legally valid same-sex marriage.

In the CC CSE, a country (as an annual conference or district conference according to the BOD) may add in its internal regulations that it keeps an understanding and practice of marriage exclusively as a union between one man and one woman. If State law in a country defines marriage as a union of two adult persons, such country may add internal regulations for such situation. A United Methodist clergy shall not be required to bless a same-sex couple in a legally valid marriage.

B) Report of the Working Group Church Discipline and Legal Affairs

The Executive Committee received a report from the Working Group on Church Discipline and Legal Affairs with corrections to the text of the Constitution in the German-language Church Order. In the current Church Order of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe (2011 version), the constitutional changes of 2012 and 2016 have not been tracked. Since the Constitution of the "Book of Discipline" cannot be adapted, the Working Group asks to update the text of the Constitution.

Motions of the Executive Committee to the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference 2022:

1. **Article 6 is to be deleted entirely.**
2. **Article 14.1 shall be amended as follows:**
«Die Generalkonferenz tagt alle vier Jahre, zu der Zeit und an dem Ort, wie sie selbst oder die von ihr beauftragten Ausschüsse es bestimmen.»
3. **Article 34 is amended as follows:**
«Diese Wahlen umfassen offene Nominationen in der Plenarsitzung der Jährlichen Konferenz, und die Delegierten werden durch einfache Mehrheit der abgegebenen Stimmen gewählt.»
4. **Article 40 is amended as follows:**
«Die Autorität der Jurisdiktional- und Zentralkonferenzen, die hier festgehalten ist, schränkt die Autorität des Bischofskollegiums und seine Pläne, bischöfliche Aufsicht bereit zu stellen, nicht ein.»
5. **Article 46 is amended as follows:**
«Für die Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen bestimmt die Generalkonferenz den Zeitpunkt und Ort. Die Zentralkonferenzen bestimmen diese selbst. Bischofswahlen in den Zentralkonferenzen müssen auf einer ordentlichen und nicht auf einer außerordentlichen Tagung der Zentralkonferenz abgehalten werden, mit Ausnahme unvorhergesehener Vakanzen.»
6. **Article 50 ist amended at the end as follows:**
«Diese Bestimmungen schliessen nicht aus, dass die Generalkonferenz Beschlüsse fasst, die es dem Bischofsrat ermöglichen seine Mitglieder in ihrem Leitungsdienst der gesamten Kirche, sowie als Vorsitzende und Verantwortliche für ihre bischöflichen Gebiete zur Rechenschaft zu ziehen.»

77th meeting of the Executive Committee November 16, 2022

The Executive Committee of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe met for its 77th session on November 16, 2022, prior to the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference in Basel, Switzerland. The focus was on the by-elections and nominations for the attention of the Central Conference. These can be seen in document #9b. The Executive Committee held the following elections:

- Vice Chair Executive Committee
ence

- 2 pastors EMC

- 2 lay persons EMC
(HU)

- Fund for Mission in Europe (FMIE)
(HU)

- European Lay Seminar

- Board of Directors e-Academy

Election by Central Confer-

Adrian Myslinski (PL)
Vladimir Fazekas (RS)

Lilla Kardosné Lakatos

Anna Schamas (CH)
Lilla Kardosné Lakatos

Christa Wichers (CH)
Zoltán Kovács (HU)
Christoph Schluep (CH)

In addition, the Executive Committee took note of the Bishop's report on the withdrawal of the District Conference of the Slovak Republic (see Report #3b.2) and makes the following motion:

Motion to the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference 2022:

Due to the withdrawal of Slovakia from the UMC as of October 15, 2022, the Annual Conference is renamed in Annual Conference Czechia.

The Secretary:
Markus Bach

Corrections to the text of the constitution in the German-language Church Order of the CC CSE, version 2011 (#5a.1)

The last revision of the Constitution of the Church Order of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe dates from 2011. In the course of the work of the Round Table and the preparation for the Extraordinary Central Conference, we have noticed that the 2011 version contains errors and also does not include the latest changes to the Constitution.

The following proposed changes are based on the published version of the "Constitution" in the Book of Discipline 2016, as well as on the only digitally published changes since 2016 ("Errata-Sheets"). The German-language proposed changes were developed by the Working Group Church Discipline and Legal Affairs in consultation with the Bishop and are based in part (where already available) on the German-language version of the VLO 2017 of the Central Conference of Germany.

Article 6

Article 6 is to be deleted entirely. It was not included in the constitution! This also shifts the counting of all other articles. In the following only the counting method in the BOD is applied!

Article 14

Alinea 1 is to be adapted concerning the time to the English original: *«The General Conference shall meet once in four years at such time and in such place as shall be determined by the General Conference or by its duly authorized committees. The change in the preceding sentence shall become effective at the close of General Conference in 2016.»*

Article 14.1 shall be amended as follows:

«Die Generalkonferenz tagt alle vier Jahre, zu der Zeit und an dem Ort, wie sie selbst oder die von ihr beauftragten Ausschüsse es bestimmen.» The second sentence is omitted!

Article 34 (Constitutional amendment of 2016 - enacted by the Council of Bishops)

After the first sentence, add: *«Such elections shall include open nominations from the floor by the annual conference, and delegates shall be elected by a minimum of a simple majority of the ballots cast.»*

Article 34 is amended as follows Article: (not yet included in VLO 2017)

«Diese Wahlen umfassen offene Nominationen in der Plenarsitzung der Jährlichen Konferenz, und die Delegierten werden durch einfache Mehrheit der abgegebenen Stimmen gewählt.»

Article 40

Article 40 is expanded in English with an additional sentence: *«The authority of jurisdictional and central conferences provided herein is not circumscribed or limited by the authority provided to the College of Bishops to arrange a plan of episcopal supervision.»*

Article 40 is amended as follows:

«Die Autorität der Jurisdiktional- und Zentralkonferenzen, die hier festgehalten ist,

schränkt die Autorität des Bischofskollegiums und seine Pläne, bischöfliche Aufsicht bereit zu stellen, nicht ein.»

Article (Constitutional amendment of 2016 - enacted by the Council of Bishops)

Am Ende des Artikels wurde ergänzt «... by such central conference, *provided that episcopal elections in central conferences shall be held at a regular, not an extra, session of the central conference, except in the case where an unexpected vacancy must be filled.*»

Article 46 is amended as follows: (not yet included in VLO 2017)

(...) feierlich zu ihrem Dienst geweiht. **Für die Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen bestimmt die Generalkonferenz den Zeitpunkt und Ort. Die Zentralkonferenzen bestimmen diese selbst.**

Bischofswahlen in den Zentralkonferenzen müssen auf einer ordentlichen und nicht auf einer außerordentlichen Tagung der Zentralkonferenz abgehalten werden, mit Ausnahme unvorhergesehener Vakanz.»

Article 50 (Constitutional amendment of 2016 - enacted by the Council of Bishops)

After the last paragraph, add a new paragraph: «*These provisions shall not preclude the adoption by the General Conference of provisions for the Council of Bishops to hold its individual members accountable for their work, both as general superintendents and as presidents and residents in episcopal areas.*»

Article 50 ist amended at the end as follows: (not yet included in VLO 2017)

«Diese Bestimmungen schliessen nicht aus, dass die Generalkonferenz Beschlüsse fasst, die es dem Bischofsrat ermöglichen seine Mitglieder in ihrem Leitungsdienst der gesamten Kirche⁴, sowie als Vorsitzende und Verantwortliche für ihre bischöflichen Gebiete zur Rechenschaft zu ziehen.»

⁴ The phrase «Leitungsdienst der gesamten Kirche» has been chosen following the CC Church Order Par. 427 Council of Bishops (BOD 422)

Church Order of the Central Conference CSE (#5a.2)

I Verfassung

Einleitung

1 Die Kirche ist der Zusammenschluss aller wahrhaft Glaubenden unter Jesus Christus, Ihrem Herrn. Sie ist die erlöste und mit der Botschaft der Erlösung in die Welt gesandte Gemeinschaft, in der Gottes Wort durch von Gott berufene Männer und Frauen gepredigt wird und die Sakramente nach der Einsetzung Christi recht verwaltet werden. Unter der Leitung des Heiligen Geistes dient die Kirche der Anbetung Gottes, der Auferbauung der Glaubenden und der Erlösung der Welt.

2 Die Kirche Jesu Christi lebt in der Welt und für die Welt. Ihre starke Zersplitterung ist ein Hindernis für ihren Dienst.

3 In Busse über die Zersplitterung der christlichen Kirche und in Dankbarkeit für die Möglichkeit der Vereinigung, die ihnen geschenkt wurde, richten sich die Gebete und Bestrebungen der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche und ihrer Vorgängerkirchen, der Methodistenkirche und der Evangelischen Gemeinschaft¹ auf den Willen unseres Herrn, dass sein Volk eins sei.

4 Darum nimmt die Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche die nachfolgende geänderte Verfassung an.

1 Allgemeines

Artikel 1 Vereinigungserklärung

Die Evangelische Gemeinschaft und die Methodistenkirche haben sich zu einer Kirche vereinigt. Die auf diese Weise konstituierte Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche ist die Nachfolgerin der beiden sich vereinigenden Kirchen.

Artikel 2 Name

Der Name der Kirche ist *The United Methodist Church*. In eine nichtenglische Sprache kann er mit Billigung der Generalkonferenz frei übersetzt werden².

Artikel 3 Glaubensartikel und Glaubensbekenntnis

Die Glaubensartikel der Methodistenkirche und das Glaubensbekenntnis der Evangelischen Gemeinschaft bleiben bestehen.

Artikel 4 Inklusivität der Kirche

Die Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche ist ein Teil der allgemeinen Kirche, die in Christus ein Leib ist. Die Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche erkennt an, dass alle Menschen vor Gott eine unantastbare Würde haben. Alle Menschen sind ohne Unterschied eingeladen, am kirchlichen

¹ „Methodistenkirche“ war der deutsche Name der „The Methodist Church“, „Evangelische Gemeinschaft“ war der deutsche Name der „Evangelical United Brethren Church“.

² Im deutschen Sprachraum „Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche“; in der vorliegenden deutschen Übersetzung der Verfassung wird nur dieser Begriff verwendet.

Leben teilzunehmen, die Sakramente zu empfangen und sich auf Grund der Taufe als Getaufte Glieder und auf das Bekenntnis ihres christlichen Glaubens hin als Bekennende Glieder aufnehmen zu lassen. Keine Konferenz oder organisatorische Einheit der Kirche darf so aufgebaut sein, dass eine Einzelperson oder eine Gruppe aus Gründen der Rasse, Hautfarbe, nationalen Herkunft, gesellschaftlichen oder wirtschaftlichen Stellung ausgeschlossen wird.

Artikel 5 Wider den Rassismus

Die Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche bezeugt den Wert eines jeden Menschen als eines einzigartigen Kindes Gottes und verpflichtet sich selbst zum Dienst an der Heilung und dem Heil aller Menschen. Die Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche weiss, wie zerstörerisch in ihrer Geschichte die Sünde des Rassismus für ihre Einheit war. Rassismus ist noch immer der Grundschmerzhafter Trennung und Benachteiligung. Die Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche widersetzt sich dem Rassismus in allen Bereichen ihres Lebens und in der ganzen Gesellschaft und sucht ihn zu beseitigen, gleich ob er in institutioneller oder persönlicher Gestalt auftritt. Die Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche arbeitet mit anderen zusammen, um zu allen Zeiten und an allen Orten dem Rassismus entgegen zu wirken.

Artikel 6 Ökumenische Beziehungen

Als Teil der einen christlichen Kirche glaubt die Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche, dass der Herr der Kirche alle Christen zum Einssein ruft. Darum wird sie nach Einheit auf allen Gebieten kirchlichen Lebens streben: durch weltweite Beziehungen zu anderen methodistischen Kirchen, zu solchen vereinigten Kirchen, die der Methodistenkirche oder der Evangelischen Gemeinschaft angegliedert sind, durch Arbeitsgemeinschaften und Räte christlicher Kirchen, durch Bestrebungen zur Vereinigung und zu partnerschaftlichen Beziehungen mit Kirchen methodistischer und anderer Tradition.

Artikel 7 Vermögen

Die Vermögensrechte, die früher der Evangelischen Gemeinschaft und der Methodistenkirche zustanden, werden gemäss der Kirchenordnung ausgeübt. Aus dem Vereinigungsplan darf zu keiner Zeit eine Verpflichtung irgendeiner Gemeinde oder eines anderen Vermögensträgers der früheren Evangelischen Gemeinschaft oder Methodistenkirche hergeleitet werden, ihre im Zeitpunkt der Vereinigung bestehenden Eigentums- und sonstigen Vermögensrechte zu veräussern oder zu verändern; auch bleiben Zeitablauf und mangelnde Ausübung ohne Einfluss auf diese Rechte.

2 Organisation

2.1 Konferenzen

Artikel 8 Generalkonferenz

Für die Gesamtkirche besteht eine Generalkonferenz mit den nachstehend aufgeführten Rechten und Pflichten.

Artikel 9 Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen

Für die Kirche in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika bestehen Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen mit den nachstehend aufgeführten Rechten und Pflichten. Die Einteilung in Jurisdiktional- und Zentralkonferenzen darf nur nach geografischen und regionalen Gesichtspunkten erfolgen.

Artikel 10 Zentralkonferenzen

Für die Kirche ausserhalb der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika bestehen Zentralkonferenzen und, falls erforderlich, Provisorische Zentralkonferenzen mit den nachstehend aufgeführten Rechten und Pflichten.

Artikel 11 Jährliche Konferenzen

Als grundlegende Körperschaften der Kirche bestehen Jährliche Konferenzen und, falls erforderlich, Provisorische Jährliche Konferenzen mit den nachstehend aufgeführten Rechten und Pflichten.

Artikel 12 Bezirkskonferenzen

Für jede Gemeinde oder jeden Bezirk besteht eine Bezirkskonferenz mit den nachstehend aufgeführten Rechten und Pflichten.

2.2 Generalkonferenz

Artikel 13 Delegierte

1 Die Generalkonferenz besteht aus mindestens 600 und höchstens 1000 Delegierten, je zur Hälfte pastorale Delegierte und Laiendelegierte, die von den Jährlichen Konferenzen zu wählen sind. Im Sinne dieses Artikels gelten Missionskonferenzen als Jährliche Konferenzen.

2 Die Delegierten werden in einem fairen und offenen Prozess von den Jährlichen Konferenzen gewählt. Von autonomen methodistischen Kirchen können Delegierte gewählt werden, wenn die Generalkonferenz mit diesen Kirchen vertragliche Vereinbarungen abgeschlossen hat, nach denen gegenseitig Delegierte an die gesetzgebenden Konferenzen mit Sitz und Stimmrecht entsandt werden.

3 Für die Mutterkirche des Methodismus, „*The Methodist Church in Great Britain*“, ist vorgesehen, dass die Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche jährlich zwei Delegierte an die Britische Methodistische Konferenz entsendet und dass „*The Methodist Church in Great Britain*“ vier Delegierte an die alle vier Jahre stattfindende Generalkonferenz der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche entsendet. Die Delegierten haben Sitz und Stimmrecht. Laiendelegierte und pastorale Delegierte sind in gleicher Anzahl vertreten.

Artikel 14 Termin der Tagung

1 Die Generalkonferenz tagt alle ~~tritt einmal innerhalb von vier Jahren~~, **zusammen**, zu der Zeit und an dem Ort, wie sie selbst oder die von ihr beauftragten Ausschüsse es bestimmen.

2 Eine ausserordentliche Tagung der Generalkonferenz besitzt alle Befugnisse der Generalkonferenz. Sie kann durch den Bischofsrat oder durch die Generalkonferenz selbst einberufen werden. Zeit und Ort werden in der Einberufung festgelegt. Eine solche ausserordentliche Generalkonferenz setzt sich aus Delegierten der vorhergehenden Generalkonferenz zusammen oder aus ihren rechtmässigen Nachfolgern/Nachfolgerinnen. Eine Jährliche Konferenz oder Missionskonferenz kann jedoch eine neue Delegiertenwahl vornehmen. Der Zweck einer ausserordentlichen Tagung muss bei der Einberufung angegeben werden. Dabei dürfen nur solche Geschäfte getätigt werden, die im Zusammenhang mit dem bei der Einberufung angegebenen Zweck stehen. Mit einer Zweidrittelmehrheit können auch andere Geschäfte auf die Tagesordnung gesetzt werden.

Artikel 15 Verhältniszahl

1 Die Generalkonferenz bestimmt die Verhältniszahl, nach welcher die Jährlichen Konferenzen, Provisorischen Jährlichen Konferenzen und Missionskonferenzen in der Generalkonferenz, in den Jurisdiktional- und Zentralkonferenzen vertreten sind.

2 Diese Verhältniszahl wird für jede Jährliche Konferenz oder Missionskonferenz berechnet nach der Zahl ihrer pastoralen Mitglieder und der Zahl der bekennenden Glieder in ihrem Bereich.

3 Jede Jährliche Konferenz, Provisorische Jährliche Konferenz oder Missionskonferenz ist berechtigt, wenigstens einen pastoralen Delegierten / eine pastorale Delegierte und einen Laiendelegierten / eine Laiendelegierte an die Generalkonferenz und ebenso an die Jurisdiktional- oder Zentralkonferenz zu entsenden.

Artikel 16 Zuständigkeit

Der Generalkonferenz steht die Gesetzgebung in allen ausgesprochen gesamtkirchlichen Angelegenheiten zu. In Ausübung dieser Befugnis ist sie zuständig für:

1 die Festlegung der Bedingungen, Rechte und Pflichten der Kirchengliedschaft, die in keinem Fall von der Rasse, dem Geschlecht oder der gesellschaftlichen Stellung abhängig gemacht werden dürfen;

2 die Festlegung der Rechte und Pflichten der ordinierten Dienste und des Laienpredigtdienstes;

3 die Festlegung der Rechte und Pflichten der Jährlichen Konferenzen, Provisorischen Jährlichen Konferenzen, Missionskonferenzen und Missionen, der Zentral-, Distrikts- und Bezirkskonferenzen sowie der Gemeindeversammlungen;

4 die Organisation, Förderung und Leitung des kirchlichen Werks ausserhalb der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika;

5 die Festlegung der Rechte und Pflichten der Bischöfe/Bischöfinnen, einer Ordnung für ihren Unterhalt und einer einheitlichen Regelung für den Ruhestand sowie die Anordnung der Entlassung eines Bischofs/einer Bischöfin wegen Unfähigkeit oder Untragbarkeit;

6 die Herausgabe von Gesangbüchern und liturgischen Ordnungen unter Beachtung der Einschränkungsbestimmungen von Artikel 17 und Artikel 18;

7 die Schaffung einer kirchlichen Rechtspflege und der entsprechenden Verfahrensordnung, so weit im Folgenden keine Einschränkungen gemacht werden;

8 die Gründung und Leitung aller gesamtkirchlichen Unternehmungen und die Einrichtung von Behörden für deren Förderung und Verwaltung;

9 das Aufbringen und die Zuweisung der für die Fortführung der gesamtkirchlichen Arbeit erforderlichen Mittel;

10 die Festlegung einer einheitlichen Verfahrensweise für die Wahl der Bischöfe/Bischöfinnen in den Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen und die Festlegung der Zahl der von den Zentralkonferenzen zu wählenden Bischöfe /Bischöfinnen;

11 die Auswahl ihrer Vorsitzenden aus der Reihe der Bischöfe/Bischöfinnen durch einen Ausschuss. Für die Eröffnungssitzung erfolgt dies durch den Bischofsrat;

12 die Änderung der Zahl und der Grenzen von Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen mit Zustimmung der Mehrheit der Jährlichen Konferenzen aller betroffenen Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen;

13 die Einsetzung aller für das gesamtkirchliche Werk notwendigen Kommissionen;

14 die Gewährleistung des Rechts auf Mitgliedschaft in allen Behörden, Einrichtungen und Programmen der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche ohne Rücksicht auf Rasse, Geschlecht oder gesellschaftliche Stellung;

15 die Erteilung der Erlaubnis an die Jährlichen Konferenzen, Strukturen ihrem besonderen Auftrag entsprechend zu verwenden, solange andere zwingend gebotene Strukturen dem nicht entgegen stehen;

16 eine andere notwendig werdende Gesetzgebung unter Beachtung der durch die Verfassung festgelegten Einschränkungen.

2.3 Einschränkungsbestimmungen

Artikel 17 Glaubensartikel und Lehrnormen

Die Generalkonferenz darf unsere Glaubensartikel nicht widerrufen, verändern oder ersetzen, noch irgendwelche neue Lehrnormen aufstellen, die mit unseren gegenwärtigen anerkannten Lehrnormen nicht übereinstimmen.

Artikel 18 Glaubensbekenntnis

Die Generalkonferenz darf unser Glaubensbekenntnis nicht widerrufen, verändern oder ersetzen.

Artikel 19 Bischofsamt

Die Generalkonferenz darf die Bestimmungen über die Leitung der Kirche nicht im Sinne einer Abschaffung des Bischofsamts oder einer Aufhebung der bischöflichen Aufsicht ändern.

Artikel 20 Rechtsverfahren

Die Generalkonferenz darf das Recht der Geistlichen³ auf ein Rechtsverfahren vor einem Ausschuss der Jährlichen Konferenz und das Recht, gegen dessen Entscheid Berufung einzulegen, nicht abschaffen. Ebenso darf sie den Kirchengliedern das Recht auf ein kirchliches Verfahren und das Recht auf Berufung gegen dessen Entscheid nicht entziehen.

Artikel 21 „Allgemeine Regeln“

Die Generalkonferenz darf die „Allgemeinen Regeln“ der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche⁴ weder ändern noch widerrufen.

Artikel 22 Pensionszusage

Die Generalkonferenz darf den Reinertrag der kirchlichen Verlagshäuser, des Buchhandels und des *Chartered Fund* nur zu Gunsten der im Ruhestand befindlichen und dienstunfähigen Geistlichen⁵, ihrer Eheleute, Witwen oder Witwer und Kinder, sowie anderer Begünstigter des kirchlichen Pensionssystems verwenden.

2.4 Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen

Artikel 23 Delegierte

Die Zahl der Delegierten der Jährlichen Konferenzen und Missionskonferenzen in den einzelnen Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen wird von der Generalkonferenz durch eine einheitliche Regelung festgelegt. Im Sinne dieses Artikels gelten Missionskonferenzen als Jährliche Konferenzen.

Artikel 24 Verhältniszahl

³ Die Geistlichen führen in Deutschland und Österreich den Titel „Pastor/Pastorin“. In der deutschsprachigen Schweiz lautet die Berufsbezeichnung „Pfarrer/Pfarrerin“.

⁴ Der ursprünglich auf John Wesley zurückgehende Text wurde 1808 letztmals geändert.

⁵ Vgl. Fussnote 3.

Alle Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen haben die gleiche Stellung und die gleichen Handlungsbefugnisse innerhalb der durch die Verfassung festgelegten Grenzen. Das Vertretungsverhältnis der Jährlichen Konferenzen und Missionskonferenzen in der Generalkonferenz ist für alle Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen gleich.

Artikel 25 Parität

Die Generalkonferenz bestimmt den Vertretungsmodus in den Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen, wobei sich diese aus einer gleichen Anzahl von pastoralen und Laiendelegierte zusammensetzen, die von den Jährlichen Konferenzen, den Provisorischen Jährlichen Konferenzen und den Missionskonferenzen zu wählen sind.

Artikel 26 Zeitpunkt der Tagung

Alle Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen treten zur gleichen Zeit zusammen. Dieser Zeitpunkt wird vom Bischofsrat oder von einem durch ihn ermächtigten Ausschuss festgelegt. Der Tagungsort wird für jede Jurisdiktionalkonferenz durch einen Vorbereitungsausschuss bestimmt, der vom Bischofskollegium ernannt wird, wenn er nicht von der vorhergehenden Jurisdiktionalkonferenz gewählt worden ist.

Artikel 27 Rechte und Pflichten

Die Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen haben folgende Rechte und Pflichten, denen die Generalkonferenz weitere hinzufügen kann:

- 1 die Förderung der Anliegen der Kirche in Evangelisation, Erziehung und Ausbildung, Mission und Wohltätigkeit sowie der Einrichtungen der Kirche innerhalb ihrer Grenzen;
- 2 die Wahl der Bischöfe und Bischöfinnen und die Mitbeteiligung an ihrem Unterhalt nach den Anordnungen der Generalkonferenz;
- 3 die Bestellung von Jurisdiktionalkonferenzbehörden zur Unterstützung der Behörden der Gesamtkirche, wo dies als erforderlich erscheint, und die Wahl ihrer Delegierten in die gesamtkirchlichen Behörden nach den Anordnungen der Generalkonferenz;
- 4 die Festlegung der Grenzen ihrer Jährlichen Konferenzen, wobei ohne die Zustimmung der Generalkonferenz keine Jährliche Konferenz mit weniger als 50 pastoralen Mitgliedern⁶ in voller Verbindung mit der Jährlichen Konferenz besteht;
- 5 die Erstellung von Richtlinien für die Verwaltung der kirchlichen Arbeit innerhalb der Jurisdiktion, wobei die Befugnisse, die allein der Generalkonferenz zustehen, vorbehalten bleiben;
- 6 die Ernennung eines Berufungsausschusses, der über die Berufung eines/einer Geistlichen⁷ dieser Jurisdiktion gegen einen Entscheid eines Gerichtsausschusses befindet.

2.5 Zentralkonferenzen

Artikel 28 Zahl und Grenzen

Für die Kirche ausserhalb der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika bestehen Zentralkonferenzen. Ihre Zahl und Grenzen werden durch die Vereinigungskonferenz festgelegt; über spätere Änderungen beschliesst die Generalkonferenz. Die Zentralkonferenzen haben die nachstehend festgelegten Rechte und Pflichten.

⁶ Vgl. Fussnote 3.

⁷ Vgl. Fussnote 3.

Artikel 29 Parität

Die Zentralkonferenzen bestehen aus einer gleichen Zahl von pastoralen und Laiendelegierten. Die Zahl wird auf Grund einer von der Generalkonferenz festgelegten Verhältniszahl bestimmt.

Artikel 30 Zeitpunkt der Tagung

Die Zentralkonferenzen tagen innerhalb eines Jahres nach der Tagung der Generalkonferenz. Zeit und Ort werden von den betreffenden vorhergegangenen Zentralkonferenzen oder durch von ihnen oder von der Generalkonferenz eingesetzte Ausschüsse bestimmt. Zeit und Ort der ersten Tagung nach der Vereinigungskonferenz werden von den Bischöfen der betreffenden Zentralkonferenz festgesetzt oder auf eine durch die Generalkonferenz festgelegte Art und Weise.

Artikel 31 Rechte und Pflichten

Die Zentralkonferenzen haben folgende Rechte und Pflichten, denen die Generalkonferenz weitere hinzufügen kann:

- 1 die Förderung der Anliegen und Einrichtungen der Kirche für Evangelisation, Erziehung und Ausbildung, Mission, gesellschaftlicher Verantwortung und diakonisches Handeln innerhalb ihrer Grenzen;
- 2 die Wahl der Bischöfe/Bischöfinnen für ihre Zentralkonferenz in der Zahl, die nach einer von der Generalkonferenz festgelegten Regelung bestimmt wird, und die Mitbeteiligung an ihrem Unterhalt nach den Anordnungen der Generalkonferenz;
- 3 die Einsetzung der notwendigen Zentralkonferenzbehörden und die Ernennung ihrer geschäftsführenden Beauftragten;
- 4 die Festlegung der Grenzen der Jährlichen Konferenzen in ihrem Gebiet;
- 5 die Festsetzung von Ordnungen und Ausführungsbestimmungen für die Leitung und Verwaltung des Werks innerhalb ihrer Grenzen, einschliesslich solcher Änderungen und Adaptionen der von der Generalkonferenz beschlossenen Ordnung der Kirche, wie die Verhältnisse in ihrem Gebiet es erfordern, solange sie nicht die Vollmachten der Generalkonferenz berühren;
- 6 die Einsetzung eines Rechtsrats zur Entscheidung von Rechtsfragen, die sich bei der Anwendung der Ordnung und Ausführungsbestimmungen sowie bei der Anwendung der von der Zentralkonferenz beschlossenen Änderungen, Anpassungen und Ergänzungen ergeben;
- 7 die Einsetzung eines Berufungsausschusses zur Entscheidung über die Berufung eines/einer Geistlichen⁸ der betreffenden Zentralkonferenz gegen die Entscheidung eines Gerichtsausschusses.

2.6 Jährliche Konferenzen

Artikel 32 Zusammensetzung

Die Jährliche Konferenz besteht aus den pastoralen Mitgliedern und Laienmitgliedern. Zu den pastoralen Mitgliedern zählen Diakone und Älteste, Pastoren und Pastorinnen auf Probe, ausserordentliche Mitglieder und Lokalpastoren/Lokalpastorinnen mit Dienstzuweisung. Zu den Laienmitgliedern gehören die durch die Bezirke gewählten Bekennenden Glieder, die *diaconal*

⁸ Vgl. Fussnote 3.

*ministers*⁹, der Konferenzlaienfürher/die Konferenzlaienfürherin, die Distriktslaienfürher / Distriktslaienfürherinnen, der Konferenzsekretär/die Konferenzsekretärin für Weltmission (sofern es sich um Laien handelt), der/die Verantwortliche für Laienpredigtdienste, die Leiter/Leiterinnen des Frauenwerks¹⁰, des Männerwerks¹¹, der Konferenzorganisation junger Erwachsener¹², des Konferenzjugendwerks, des Studierendenwerks¹³, eine junge Person zwischen 12 und 17 Jahren und eine junge Person zwischen 18 und 30 Jahren von jedem Distrikt, die auf die von der Jährlichen Konferenz bestimmte Art gewählt werden. Die Jährlichen Konferenzen einer Zentralkonferenz können auf die Erfordernisse der vierjährigen Beteiligung und der zweijährigen Gliedschaft für Jugendliche unter 30 Jahren verzichten. Diese Jugendlichen müssen aber zum Zeitpunkt ihrer Wahl Bekennende Glieder der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche sein und sich in ihr aktiv beteiligen.¹⁴

Jeder Bezirk, in dem mehr als ein pastorales Mitglied im Dienst steht, hat Anspruch auf eine entsprechende Anzahl Laienmitglieder. Die Laienmitglieder müssen zwei Jahre unmittelbar vor ihrer Wahl Glieder der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche gewesen sein und sich mindestens vier Jahre unmittelbar vor ihrer Wahl in dieser Kirche aktiv beteiligt haben. Ist die Zahl der Laienmitglieder geringer als die der pastoralen Mitglieder der Jährlichen Konferenz, hat die Konferenz mit einer nach eigenem Ermessen zu beschliessenden Regelung für die Wahl zusätzlicher Laienmitglieder zu sorgen, um die Parität herzustellen.

Artikel 33 Grundlegende Körperschaft

Die Jährliche Konferenz ist die grundlegende Körperschaft in der Kirche. Sie hat das Recht, über alle Verfassungsänderungen abzustimmen, die pastoralen und Laiendelegierten an die Generalkonferenz, die Jurisdiktional- und die Zentralkonferenz zu wählen, über alle Fragen des Charakters, der Konferenzzugehörigkeit der pastoralen Mitglieder und deren Ordination zu entscheiden, wie auch über andere Fragen, die nach der Verfassung nicht in die alleinige Zuständigkeit der Generalkonferenz fallen. Die Laienmitglieder stimmen über Angelegenheiten der Ordination, des Charakters und der Konferenzzugehörigkeit der pastoralen Mitglieder nicht mit. Ausgenommen sind die Laienmitglieder in der Kommission für ordinierte Dienste und im Untersuchungsausschuss. Sie sind bei Angelegenheiten der Ordination, des Charakters und der Konferenzzugehörigkeit der pastoralen Mitglieder stimmberechtigt. Ausgenommen sind weiterhin die Laienmitglieder des Distriktsausschusses für das Predigtamt, insofern sie im Distriktsausschuss für das Predigtamt vollberechtigte Mitglieder mit Stimmrecht sind. Die Jährliche Konferenz übt alle Rechte und Pflichten aus, die die Generalkonferenz im Rahmen der Verfassung festlegt.

Artikel 34 Wahlen zur Generalkonferenz

Die Jährliche Konferenz wählt die pastoralen und die Laiendelegierten an die Generalkonferenz, die Jurisdiktional- oder Zentralkonferenz gemäss den Artikeln 35 und 36. Diese Wahlen umfassen offene Nominationen in der Plenarsitzung der Jährlichen Konferenz, und die Delegierten werden durch einfache Mehrheit der abgegebenen Stimmen gewählt. Für die Generalkonferenz wird die nach der festgesetzten Verhältniszahl erforderliche Anzahl von Delegierten

⁹ *diaconal ministers* gibt es nicht in den ZK MSE und Zentralkonferenz in Deutschland (ZK D), an ihrer Stelle stehen die Diakonissen im aktiven Dienst mit bischöflicher Dienstzuweisung sowie die Diakoninnen und Diakone.

¹⁰ In der ZK MSE Frauendienst.

¹¹ In der ZK MSE Männerdienst.

¹² Die „Konferenzorganisation junger Erwachsener“ gibt es nicht in der ZK D.

¹³ Den Studierendensekretär gibt es nicht in der ZK MSE.

¹⁴ Von dieser Möglichkeit haben die JK wie folgt Gebrauch gemacht: NWJK, Beschluss vom 14.4.1989; OJK, Beschluss vom 27.5.1989; SJK, Beschluss vom 9.6.1989; SWJK, Beschluss vom 22.6.1989.

gewählt. Diese sind zugleich Delegierte an die Jurisdiktional- oder Zentralkonferenz. Es werden dann noch so viele Delegierte hinzugewählt, bis die festgesetzte Zahl für die Jurisdiktional- oder Zentralkonferenz erreicht ist. Diese für die Jurisdiktional- oder Zentralkonferenz gewählten Delegierten sind in der Reihenfolge ihrer Wahl stellvertretende Delegierte an die Generalkonferenz. Die Jährliche Konferenz wählt ferner eine von ihr selbst zu bestimmende Zahl von stellvertretenden Delegierten an die Jurisdiktional- oder Zentralkonferenz. Falls für die Generalkonferenz nicht genügend stellvertretende Delegierte zur Verfügung stehen, können die stellvertretenden Delegierten an die Jurisdiktional- oder Zentralkonferenzen auch als stellvertretende Delegierte an die Generalkonferenz entsandt werden.

Artikel 35 Wahl der pastoralen Delegierten zur Generalkonferenz

Die pastoralen Delegierten an die Generalkonferenz und an die Jurisdiktional- und Zentralkonferenz werden aus den Reihen der pastoralen Mitglieder der Jährlichen Konferenz in voller Verbindung von den folgenden pastoralen Mitgliedern der Jährlichen Konferenz gewählt: Diakone und Älteste in voller Verbindung, ausserordentliche Mitglieder, Mitglieder auf Probe, die alle erforderlichen Studienvoraussetzungen erbracht haben, sowie Lokalpastoren, die die vorgeschriebenen Studien absolviert oder Masterabschluss in Theologie erlangt haben und seit mindestens zwei aufeinander folgenden Jahren unmittelbar vor der Wahl eine Dienstzuweisung haben.

Artikel 36 Wahl der Laiendelegierten zur Generalkonferenz

Die Laiendelegierten an die Generalkonferenz und die Jurisdiktional- oder Zentralkonferenz werden von den Laienmitgliedern der Jährlichen oder Provisorischen Jährlichen Konferenz ohne Rücksicht auf ihr Alter gewählt. Sie müssen mindestens zwei Jahre unmittelbar vor ihrer Wahl Bekennende Glieder der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche gewesen sein und mindestens vier Jahre unmittelbar vor ihrer Wahl in dieser Kirche mitgearbeitet haben. Zur Zeit der Tagung der Generalkonferenz und der Jurisdiktional- oder Zentralkonferenz muss die Kirchengliedschaft innerhalb ihrer Jährlichen Konferenz noch bestehen.

2.7 Konferenzgrenzen

Artikel 37

(betrifft Grenzen der Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika)

Artikel 38 Zentralkonferenzen ausserhalb der USA

Die Arbeit der Kirche ausserhalb der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika kann in Zentralkonferenzen organisiert werden, deren Zahl und Grenzen durch die Vereinigungskonferenz festgelegt werden. Für spätere Veränderungen der Zahl und Grenzen ist die Generalkonferenz zuständig.

Artikel 39 Änderungen, die Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen betreffen

Änderungen von Zahl, Namen und Grenzen der Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen können durch die Generalkonferenz mit Zustimmung einer Mehrheit der Jährlichen Konferenzen einer jeden betroffenen Jurisdiktionalkonferenz vorgenommen werden.

Artikel 40 Änderungen, die Jährliche Konferenzen betreffen

Änderungen von Zahl, Namen und Grenzen der Jährlichen Konferenzen und Bischofssprengel in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika können durch die Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen und außerhalb der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika durch die Zentralkonferenzen nach den jeweiligen Rechten und entsprechend den jeweiligen Strukturen der Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen und Zentralkonferenzen vorgenommen werden.

Die Autorität der Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen, die hier festgehalten ist, schränkt die Autorität des Bischofskollegiums und seine Pläne bischöfliche Aufsicht bereit zu stellen nicht ein.

Artikel 41 Änderungen, die Gemeinden betreffen

1 Eine Gemeinde kann von einer Jährlichen Konferenz in eine andere, in deren Gebiet sie sich befindet, mit Zustimmung einer Zweidrittelmehrheit der anwesenden und abstimmenden Mitglieder

- a) der Bezirkskonferenz,
 - b) der zuständigen Gemeindeversammlung und
 - c) der beiden betreffenden Jährlichen Konferenzen
- überwiesen werden.

Die genannten Gremien teilen den Aufsichtführenden Bischöfen/Bischöfinnen der betreffenden Jährlichen Konferenzen das Abstimmungsergebnis schriftlich mit. Die Überweisung tritt sofort nach Bekanntgabe der erforderlichen Mehrheiten in Kraft.

2 Die Abstimmung über eine Überweisung wird von jeder Jährlichen Konferenz in ihrer ersten Sitzung nach Stellung des Antrags durchgeführt.

3 Nach diesen Bestimmungen beschlossene Überweisungen unterliegen keinen Einschränkungen durch andere Artikel der Verfassung über die Änderung von Konferenzgrenzen.

2.8 Distriktskonferenzen

Artikel 42 Distriktskonferenzen

In einer Jährlichen Konferenz können Distriktskonferenzen nach den Bestimmungen der Generalkonferenz gebildet werden.

2.9 Bezirkskonferenzen

Artikel 43 Bildung einer Bezirkskonferenz

Auf jedem Bezirk wird eine Bezirkskonferenz nach den Bestimmungen der Generalkonferenz gebildet.

Artikel 44 Beauftragte eines Bezirks oder einer Gemeinde

Sofern es die Generalkonferenz nicht anders bestimmt, werden die Beauftragten einer Gemeinde oder eines Bezirks von der Bezirkskonferenz oder, falls diese es so bestimmt, von der zu diesem Zweck einberufenen Versammlung aller Bekennenden Glieder der Gemeinde oder Gemeinden gewählt. Besondere Satzungen für einzelne Gemeinden und staatliche Gesetze sind zu beachten.

3 Bischöfliche Aufsicht

Artikel 45 Bischofsamt

In der vereinigten Kirche gibt es, wie in der Methodistenkirche und der Evangelischen Gemeinschaft, Bischöfe und Bischöfinnen mit den in dieser Verfassung niedergelegten Rechten und Pflichten. [...]

Artikel 46 Wahl eines Bischofs oder einer Bischöfin

Bischöfe und Bischöfinnen werden durch die betreffenden Jurisdiktional- und Zentralkonferenzen gewählt und in der überlieferten Weise feierlich zu ihrem Dienst geweiht. Für die Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen ~~bestimmt werden Zeit und Ort durch die Generalkonferenz~~ den Zeitpunkt und Ort. bestimmt, für Die Zentralkonferenzen ~~bestimmen diese selbst, durch diese selber.~~ Bischofswahlen in den Zentralkonferenzen müssen auf einer ordentlichen und nicht auf einer ausserordentlichen Tagung der Zentralkonferenz abgehalten werden, mit Ausnahme unvorhergesehener Vakanzten.

Artikel 47 Bischofsrat

Die Bischöfe und Bischöfinnen der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche bilden den Bischofsrat. Dieser tritt mindestens einmal im Jahr zusammen. Es ist seine Aufgabe, für die allgemeine Beaufsichtigung und Förderung der zeitlichen und geistlichen Anliegen der Gesamtkirche zu sorgen. Ihm obliegt weiter die Durchführung der von der Generalkonferenz gefassten Beschlüsse in Übereinstimmung mit dem Vereinigungsplan.

Artikel 48 Bischofskollegium

Die Bischöfe und Bischöfinnen jeder Jurisdiktional- und Zentralkonferenz bilden ein Bischofskollegium. Dieses stellt einen Plan für die bischöfliche Aufsicht über die Jährlichen Konferenzen, Missionskonferenzen und Missionen in ihren Gebieten auf.

Artikel 49 Jurisdiktion eines Bischofs oder einer Bischöfin

1 Die Bischöfe und Bischöfinnen haben ihr Aufsichtsgebiet und ihr Recht auf Vorsitz in den Jurisdiktional- oder Zentralkonferenzen, durch die sie gewählt oder in die sie überwiesen worden sind. Sie können unter folgenden Bedingungen von einer Jurisdiktion in eine andere überwiesen werden:

- 1) Eine Jurisdiktion, in die ein Bischof/eine Bischöfin überwiesen wird, kann ihrerseits, ohne dazu verpflichtet zu sein, eine Überweisung vornehmen, sodass die Zahl der Überweisungen ausgeglichen ist.
- 2) Eine Überweisung kann nur mit Zustimmung der betroffenen Person erfolgen.
- 3) Eine Überweisung kann frühestens ein Jahrviert nach der Wahl zum Bischof/zur Bischöfin erfolgen.
- 4) Alle Überweisungen bedürfen der Zustimmung durch eine Mehrheit der anwesenden und abstimmenden Mitglieder des Ausschusses für das Bischofsamt jeder der betroffenen Jurisdiktionalkonferenzen.

Nach der Überweisung wird der Bischof/die Bischöfin Mitglied des aufnehmenden Kollegiums und unterliegt den Wohnbestimmungen dieser Jurisdiktionalkonferenz.

2 Ein Bischof oder eine Bischöfin kann vom Bischofsrat zeitweilig für leitende oder für andere zeitlich begrenzte Aufgaben in eine andere Jurisdiktion abgeordnet werden, wenn die Mehrheit der Bischöfe und Bischöfinnen dieser Jurisdiktion darum ersucht.

3 Tritt in einer Jurisdiktional- oder Zentralkonferenz durch den Tod oder die Dienstunfähigkeit eines Bischofs/einer Bischöfin oder aus anderen Gründen eine Notsituation ein, so kann ihr der Bischofsrat mit Zustimmung der Mehrheit der Bischöfe und Bischöfinnen jener Jurisdiktional- oder Zentralkonferenz einen Bischof oder eine Bischöfin aus einer anderen Jurisdiktional- oder Zentralkonferenz zuweisen.

Artikel 50 Ausschuss für das Bischofsamt

1 Die zur Zeit der Vereinigung aktiven und im Ruhestand befindlichen Bischöfe der Evangelischen Gemeinschaft und der Methodistenkirche sind Bischöfe der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche.

2 Die durch die Jurisdiktionen gewählten Bischöfe der Methodistenkirche, die zur Zeit der Vereinigung aktiven Bischöfe der Evangelischen Gemeinschaft und die von den Jurisdiktionen der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche gewählten Bischöfe und Bischöfinnen, sind auf Lebenszeit gewählt. Für die Zentralkonferenzen gelten eigene Bestimmungen.

3 Die Jurisdiktionalkonferenz wählt einen Ausschuss für das Bischofsamt¹⁵. Es besteht aus einem pastoralen und einem Laiendelegierten jeder Jährlichen Konferenz, die jeweils von der Delegation der betreffenden Jährlichen Konferenz vorgeschlagen werden. Der Ausschuss überprüft Charakter und Amtsführung der Bischöfe und Bischöfinnen und berichtet an die Jurisdiktionalkonferenz entsprechend deren Anordnungen. Ferner empfiehlt er, welches jeweilige Gebiet ihnen zugeteilt werden soll. Die Entscheidung hierüber liegt bei der Jurisdiktionalkonferenz. Diese Bestimmungen schliessen nicht aus, dass die Generalkonferenz Beschlüsse fasst, die es dem Bischofsrat ermöglichen seine Mitglieder in ihrem Leitungsdienst der gesamten Kirche, sowie als Vorsitzende und Verantwortliche für ihre bischöflichen Gebiete zur Rechenschaft zu ziehen.

Artikel 51 Entscheidung von Rechtsfragen

1 Der vorsitzende Bischof/die vorsitzende Bischöfin entscheidet in einer Jährlichen Konferenz, einer Zentral- oder Jurisdiktionalkonferenz alle Rechtsfragen, die ihm/ihr im ordentlichen Tagungsverlauf vorgelegt werden. Solche Fragen müssen schriftlich eingereicht und die getroffenen Entscheidungen in das Protokoll der Konferenz aufgenommen werden.

2 Eine solche bischöfliche Entscheidung gilt einstweilen nur für den betreffenden Fall und wird erst allgemein gültig, wenn der Rechtshof¹⁶ sie bestätigt hat. Jeder Bischof/jede Bischöfin stellt jährlich eine schriftliche Aufstellung dieser Rechtsentscheidungen dem Rechtshof zu. Dieser bestätigt sie, ändert sie ab oder hebt sie auf.

Artikel 52 Vorsitz in den Jährlichen Konferenzen

Die Bischöfe und Bischöfinnen der verschiedenen Jurisdiktionalkonferenz- und Zentralkonferenzen führen den Vorsitz in den Sitzungen ihrer Konferenzen.

Artikel 53 Superintendenten und Superintendentinnen

In jeder Jährlichen Konferenz stehen dem Bischof/der Bischöfin ein oder mehrere Superintendenten oder Superintendentinnen¹⁷ in der Führung der Jährlichen Konferenz zur Seite. Aufgaben und Dauer der Beauftragungen können von der Generalkonferenz festgelegt werden.

Artikel 54 Dienstzuweisungen

Die Bischöfe und Bischöfinnen weisen nach Beratung mit den Superintendenten und Superintendentinnen die Pastoren und Pastorinnen den Bezirken zu. Sie haben die ihnen von der Generalkonferenz übertragenen Verantwortlichkeiten und Befugnisse.

¹⁶ Obwohl dieser Ausschuss für die Zentralkonferenzen nicht erwähnt ist, besteht in der ZK Deutschland in Anwendung dieses Artikels eine „Kommission für das Bischofsamt“.

¹⁷ Der englische Begriff „judicial council“ wird hier autonom mit „Rechtshof“ übersetzt. Siehe auch Artikel 29 Abs. 6.

¹⁸ Die ZK MSE verwendet den Begriff Distriktsvorsteher/Distriktsvorsteherin.

4 Rechtspflege

Artikel 55 Rechtshof

Es besteht ein Rechtshof. Die Generalkonferenz legt die Zahl seiner Mitglieder, ihre Dienstzeit, die Art ihrer Wahl und der Besetzung im Falle von Vakanzen fest und bestimmt die für dieses Amt erforderliche Qualifikation.

Artikel 56 Zuständigkeit

Der Rechtshof hat folgende Zuständigkeiten:

1 Die Feststellung der Verfassungsmässigkeit eines Beschlusses der Generalkonferenz auf Antrag einer Mehrheit des Bischofsrats oder eines Fünftels der Mitglieder der Generalkonferenz; ferner der Verfassungsmässigkeit eines Beschlusses einer Jurisdiktional- oder Zentralkonferenz auf Antrag der Mehrheit der Bischöfe und Bischöfinnen dieser Jurisdiktional- oder Zentralkonferenz oder eines Fünftels ihrer Mitglieder.

2 Die Entscheidung über eine Berufung gegen die in einer Jährlichen Konferenz getroffene Rechtsentscheidung eines Bischofs/einer Bischöfin, wenn ein Fünftel der anwesenden und abstimmanden Mitglieder dieser Konferenz es verlangt.

3 Die Bestätigung, Abänderung oder Aufhebung von Rechtsentscheidungen von Bischöfen und Bischöfinnen in den Jährlichen Konferenzen.

4 Die Entscheidung über die Rechtmässigkeit eines Beschlusses einer General-, Jurisdiktional- oder Zentralkonferenzbehörde oder eines Gremiums einer solchen auf Antrag eines Drittels der Mitglieder dieser Konferenzbehörde oder dieses Gremiums oder auf Antrag des Bischofsrats oder der Mehrheit der Bischöfe und Bischöfinnen einer Jurisdiktional- oder Zentralkonferenz.

5 Die Ausübung weiterer von der Generalkonferenz übertragener Rechte und Pflichten

6 Die Festlegung seiner Organisation und Verfahrensweise.

Artikel 57 Entscheidungen

Alle Entscheidungen des Rechtshofs sind endgültig. Erklärt der Rechtshof einen Beschluss der gerade in Sitzung befindlichen Generalkonferenz für verfassungswidrig, so hat er diese Entscheidung sofort der Generalkonferenz bekannt zu geben.

Artikel 58 Verfahrens- und Berufungsrechte

Die Generalkonferenz schafft für die Kirche eine Rechtsordnung, die den Geistlichen¹⁸ das Recht auf ein Verfahren vor einem Ausschuss sowie ein Berufungsrecht und den Kirchengliedern das Recht auf ein kirchliches Verfahren und ein Berufungsrecht gewährleistet.

5 Änderungsbestimmungen

Artikel 59 Verfassungsänderungen

1 Verfassungsänderungen bedürfen einer Zweidrittelmehrheit der bei einer Generalkonferenz Anwesenden und Abstimmenden und einer Zweidrittelmehrheit der abgegebenen Stimmen

¹⁹ Vgl. Fussnote 3.

aller anwesenden und abstimmenden Mitglieder der Jährlichen Konferenzen. Für die Änderung der Artikel 17 und 18 ist eine Dreiviertelmehrheit aller anwesenden und abstimmenden Mitglieder der Jährlichen Konferenzen erforderlich. Wenn die Abstimmung abgeschlossen ist, wird sie durch den Bischofsrat geprüft. Sind die erforderlichen Mehrheiten erreicht, tritt die Änderung mit der Bekanntgabe durch den Bischofsrat in Kraft.

2 Wenn die Generalkonferenz eine Verfassungsänderung annimmt, darf sie auch die sich daraus ergebenden Änderungen der Kirchenordnung beschliessen. Ihr Inkrafttreten hängt davon ab, dass die Verfassungsänderung mit mindestens zwei Dritteln der anwesenden und abstimmenden Mitglieder der verschiedenen Jährlichen Konferenzen angenommen wird. Die Veränderungen werden gültig, nachdem der Bischofsrat die Mehrheit festgestellt und bekannt gegeben hat. In gleicher Weise darf eine Jährliche Konferenz Ordnungen beschliessen im Vorgriff auf eine erwartete Änderung der Kirchenordnung und/oder der Verfassung, noch bevor diese bestätigt worden ist, so dass jene gleichzeitig mit dem Inkrafttreten der Änderung wirksam werden.

Artikel 60 Antragsrechte der Generalkonferenz und der Jährlichen Konferenzen

Anträge auf Verfassungsänderungen können entweder von der Generalkonferenz oder von Jährlichen Konferenzen ausgehen.

Artikel 61 Antragsrecht der Jurisdiktional- und Zentralkonferenzen

Eine Jurisdiktional- oder Zentralkonferenz kann durch einen Mehrheitsbeschluss Änderungen der Verfassung der Kirche vorschlagen. Derartige Vorschläge werden der nächsten Generalkonferenz unterbreitet. Wenn die Generalkonferenz mit einer Zweidrittelmehrheit zustimmt, werden die Änderungen den Jährlichen Konferenzen zur Abstimmung vorgelegt.

Consent based Discernment (#5b)

There are topics where a "Consent-Based Discernment" is particularly helpful. The present explanation is inspired by experiences in ecumenical conferences. The presiding Bishop will announce, if an agenda item will be treated not by the habitual rules of debate and decision, but by a consent based discernment. The latter will certainly be used during the extra session of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe for discernment and decision on the common future.

Consent-based discernment does not mean that a final decision is taken unanimously by consensus. It is rather a process of exploring a topic that allows engaging with each other and assuring that each one is heard until it is time to make a decision. Understanding the opinion of another person raises the willingness to find a common solution. When a decision cannot be taken unanimously by consensus, those opposing or abstaining shall be able to testify that their arguments have been heard and seriously considered by all.

Goals of a consent based discernment:

- Allow enough questions so that a topic is well understood by every member;
- Enhance participation and dialogue, including relevant facts and feelings;
- Encourage prayerful listening to all voices, seeking to meet the legitimate concerns that others express;
- Prevent that a member does not dare to express its own opinion;
- Manage discussions with courtesy, respect and grace so that participants bring their contribution to deeply held, contending perspectives on a topic;
- Limit the possibility of domination by any participant or small group;
- Explore creative alternatives;
- All the considerations are weighed up, taken into account, and possibly incorporated into a proposal before a decision is made;
- Encourage a decision by consent when most are agreed and counter-arguments have been heard, thus limiting the danger that a few individual persons obstruct a decision that is broadly supported, through their urging a unanimous consensus.

Practical implementation in conferencing:

- Use "indicator cards" to monitor the mind of the group;
- Listening carefully to voices from a minority;
- Possible use of small groups and mixing up people in table groups;
- Possible delegation of drafting a better proposal towards a small group;

- Possible time out for prayer or silence;
- Possible deferring of a decision if not yet ready.

Process of discernment with "Indicator Cards":

In consent-based discernment, members will use "Indicator cards" in two different colours. Consciously, no colours of traffic lights are used:

- Golden yellow: indicating warmth towards an idea and acceptance that there is "light" in it;
- Dark Blue: indicating frostiness towards an idea and disapproval as being "dark" and not helpful;

After each contribution by a member, the other members will hold one of the two indicator cards visibly in front of them, indicating their measure of support for the point of view expressed.

If a member considers after several contributions that it is time to move on or that the sharing becomes repetitious, he/she holds the two indicator cards visibly crossed in front of him/her. If a majority of members does so, it shows a willingness to move forward.

Unauthorized translation - original in German

Timetable for change in the office of Bishop (#6a)

1. Basic considerations

- The most optimal circumstances for the newly elected and consecrated bishop take precedence over the needs of the annual conference from which he/she comes. For a short time, this may briefly lead to difficulties in the ministry setting for which the newly elected person previously was responsible. However, active service will not start immediately after consecration.
- The incumbent and the newly elected bishop shall be present together at each regular annual conference in the first half of 2023. At the end of each session of the annual conference, the newly elected person shall assume the duties of office with the closing worship service and appointments for the new conference year. The newly elected person shall have the opportunity to remain for additional days for conversations and meetings with the superintendents and other leadership in the respective country.
- It will probably not be possible for the newly elected person to visit local congregations or pastors' meetings in the respective countries until the fall of the year, despite a greater time gap between the annual conferences.
- Adequate time shall be allowed for the introduction of the newly elected Bishop into tasks within the Bishop's Office.

2. Retirement of Bishop Patrick Streiff

If General Conference had met in May 2020 and a regular Central conference in 2021, Bishop Patrick Streiff would then have taken retirement which means that he would have visited with the newly elected person all annual conferences and had passed on the responsibility at the end of each annual conference.

Because of the postponements of the General Conference, there is no possibility to hold a regular Central conference. In spring 2022 a pathway was found for holding an episcopal election in a called session of Central conference (see document #1e – Rationale for holding an episcopal election). Thereafter, Bishop Patrick Streiff began planning with the working group on episcopacy for holding an extra session of the Central Conference in November 2022 with an episcopal election.

Because of the complex reality of the Central conference with its many annual conferences and even more countries in very different contexts, the working group on episcopacy has planned together with Bishop Patrick Streiff a timeframe for a handing over of responsibility which is much shorter than when he entered into the office in 2005/2006, but sufficient for a presence of both bishops in each of the annual conferences. On the whole, it brings a longer timeframe of overlap than the maximum of seven weeks which is usually applied in normal episcopal areas.

3. Provisional timetable for the newly elected person

2022:

- 20.11. Consecration of the new bishop at the extra session of the CC-CSE in Basel
- 24-26.11. Jointly participating in the extra session of the CC in Germany
- 6.12. Council of Bishops, online, for greeting the newly elected bishops

2023:

- January 2023 (17.-21.1.?): New Bishops Orientation USA (jointly, as P. Streiff is part of the preparatory group)
- 22.-26.2 probably jointly: Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, Braunfels DE (→ possibly as new CC bishop with voting rights; P. Streiff then only as consultant to the officers)
- [27.2.-3.3. Central Conference Theological Education Fund, USA; probably only P. Streiff]
- 6.-8.3. Jointly: German speaking cabinets (DE-CH-AT), Frankfurt
- 15-19.3. Jointly participating in the called session of the CC Northern Europe and Eurasia, Tallinn EE
- 30.3.-2.4. Jointly AC RS-NMK-AL, presumably Kisac RS→ from 2.4. responsible for RS-NMK-AL
- Easter West: 9.4. / Easter East: 16.4.*
- 13-16.4. Jointly AC HU, Budapest(?)→ from 16.4. responsible for HU
- 23.-26.4. Jointly Northafrica, meeting with pastors in active service, Tunis
- 28-29.4. (pre-meetings) and 30.4.-5.5. Council of Bishops, Chicago IL (jointly)
→ at the latest from 1.5. as active bishop with voting rights in COB;
P. Streiff in the COB as a retired bishop
- 11-14.5. Jointly AC CZ-SK, Prague(?)→ from 14.5. responsible for CZ-SK
- 18-21.5. Jointly AC AT, Linz(?)→ from 21.5. responsible for AT
- Pentecost West: 28.5. / Pentecost East: 4.6.*
- 1-4.6. Jointly AC PL, location?→ from 4.6. responsible for PL
- 14-18.6. Jointly AC CH-FR-NA, Lenk→ from 18.6. responsible
- [14-20.6. Conference of European Churches General Assembly, Estonia].
- 29.6.-1.7. (provisional date) Jointly CC Executive Committee→ from 1.7. responsible for CC Executive Committee and HiS Board (change of signature authority)
- 4-5.7.→ alone: 50 years of CPCE, Vienna
- July: remaining clarifications as necessary in the bishop's office, materials for archive, and remaining holidays for P. Streiff with definitive retirement on 1.8.

By joint agreement, the two bishops will also be able to hand over individual tasks or representations to the newly elected person before the respective official handover of an annual conference.

4. Labour law and salary issues

The Episcopal Fund of the general church (GCFA) only pays double salaries for a maximum of 7 weeks and presumably also double travel expenses over this period. However, because the transition period is much longer, part of the costs will have to be covered in other ways:

- Travel costs to annual conferences through the accounts of the Central conference;
- Salary costs (including apartment and social security) through the office account of "Hilfe im Sprengel".

Timeline for retirement on the level of the general church respectively timeline of start of active ministry:

Option A:

Because the Council of Bishops will begin its deliberations on 1.5.2023, this is a good last date for the handover at the worldwide level, beyond the CC-CSE. This means that Bishop Streiff will be considered a retired bishop by the general church level as of May 1st. In such a case, the newly elected person will receive salary from GCFA and be considered as active bishop starting March 13, 2023. Such a timeline would also cover all dates of annual conferences in CC-CSE.

Option B:

The first meaningful date for the newly elected person would be the month where he/she would seat with voice in some general church gatherings (Meeting of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, February 22-26, 2023), if he/she is willing to take the seat. In such a case, the newly elected person could begin as active bishop on February 1st, 2023, as earliest timeline. Then Bishop Streiff would be considered as a retired bishop on the general church level, beyond the CC-CSE, as of March 22nd 2023.

The Working Group on Episcopacy has agreed that the chairperson (Jörg Niederer), after the episcopal election, will discuss the timeline with both bishops and, on a common agreement, will find the best suited date for the official start of the newly elected person as active bishop. On the level of the CC-CSE, Bishop Streiff will remain in "active service" up to July 31st 2023. He will retire from all his responsibilities as bishop in the CC-CSE on August 1st 2023.

The CC Council for Finance and Administration is requested to settle the relevant labour law and salary issues according to this schedule. Because GCFA has asked for submitting the budget for 2023 already in June 2022, the active Bishop together with the CC Council on Finance and Administration have already sent it in. Therefore, the motion from the executive committee from 2019 (Motion 2019 – 16), asking for sending an information letter to GCFA is no more needed. GCFA will pay 7 weeks of overlap with double salaries in 2023. Additional costs for the longer overlap will be paid by the accounts of the central conference (travel to annual conferences) respectively by the episcopal office ("Hilfe im Sprengel" for salary and other costs).

Report and Motion of the Working Group Episcopacy (#6b)

The Working Group Episcopacy has met online since the last executive meeting in March 2022 (divided by attendance on June 30, and July 8, 2022). Immediately before the extra session of the Central Conference, it will meet for another session on November 15, 2022.

Documents of the Working Group Episcopacy in connection with the new election of a bishop in the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

The following documents have been finalized and approved at the Executive Meeting for the election of a new Bishop.

1. Information letter of the Working Group Episcopacy to the delegates of the Central Conference CSE (#6c.1)
2. Procedure for the Election of a Bishop at the called session of Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe 2022 (#6c.2)
3. Description of Position Bishop of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe (#6c.3)
4. List of electable Ordained Elders for the episcopate (#6c.4)
5. Personal sheet for the candidates for Bishop (#6c.5)

The documents were sent to the delegates at the Central Conference CSE.

No nomination process before election of a new bishop

The Central Conference 2017 has amended the Regulations to make possible a nomination process at the level of the Annual Conferences for the election of a bishop at the Central Conference. The corresponding sentence in the regulations says: *"The Executive Committee may establish a preparatory process for the election of a bishop."* Over the next three years, such a nomination process was then formulated by the Working Group Episcopacy and adopted at the 2019 Executive Meeting. However, the Delegates at the Executive Meeting of October 21-23, 2021, discussed it again. Delegates from smaller Annual Conferences felt that a nomination process at the level of the Annual Conferences would be an overload and not helpful. Thus, the following motion was narrowly adopted by 5 votes to 4: *"The nomination process proposed by the Working Group Episcopacy is deleted without replacement. The election of a bishop shall take place without nomination."*

Duration of the term of office of the new bishop

The Working Group Episcopacy has unanimously decided to submit the following motion to the called session of the Central Conference:

Motion to the extraordinary Session of the Central Conference 2022: The election of a new Bishop has a first term of office until the regular session of the Central Conference after the regular General Conference which will follow the General Conference of 2024 (presumably GC 2028 and CC 2028/29) - in deviation of Art. 4.3 of the Rules of the CC, which provides for a first term of office of four years.

Reason: From an election for 4 years, only two years remain until the expected Central Conference after the expected General Conference in 2024. In our view however, two years are too short as an initial term of office. Shortly afterwards the bishop has been elected, there would be a second election for life or a new election. For this reason, a term of office of approximately 6 years should be provided only for this election of a bishop. The Rules of Order of the Central Conference will not be changed for this purpose.

St. Gall, September 14, 2022

Jörg Niederer

Information letter Working Group Episcopacy (#6c.1)

St. Gallen, August 27, 2022

To the members of the Central Conference of
Central and Southern Europe

Please find enclosed a list of all eligible pastors for the election for the episcopate; all of them being ordained elders in full connection and in active service.

The list was compiled according to the following criteria:

Since the mandatory retirement age of a United Methodist Bishop is 72 and taking into consideration that the term of office needs to be at least 6 years, this means that the future bishop may not be older than 66 at the time of election (Book of Discipline par. 408.1b). The enclosed list therefore only includes ordained elders in active service who will not yet be 66 (i.e., born in November 20, 1956 or later) at the time of the extraordinary Central Conference 2022. There is no minimum age and no minimum number of years of service as an ordained elder in full connection. The retired ordained elders who will not yet have completed their 66th year of age at the time of the Central Conference 2022 are not eligible and therefore not included in the list. Ordained deacons, pastors on honorable location, guest members, and associated members are not eligible and not listed either.

- The information in the enclosed list is reflecting the situation as per August 1, 2022.
- The first column shows whether the pastor is a delegate to Central Conference 2022. Alternate delegates are marked with an asterisk (✕*).
- The second-to-last column provides the information whether someone has officially attended a meeting of the Central Conference or Executive Committee of the Central Conference in the past, whether he/she has been entrusted by the Central Conference with a particular task, or whether he/she is/has been a member of a working group of the Central Conference.
- "Experience in the Global Church" means official responsibilities beyond the Central Conference. This box is checked if the person has attended a General Conference, was entrusted by the Central Conference with an international task (General Board, global area of work), was a member of the European Methodist Council (EMC) (for persons under 35 also a member of EMYC – European Methodist Youth & Children), or served as member of the World Methodist Council (WMC) or the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women (WFMUCW). Missionary assignments (e.g. with Connexio) or involvement in the "In Mission Together" (IMT) partnership program are not included.

Further important information can be found in the "Procedure for the Nomination and Election of a Bishop of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe 2022".

For the Working Group Episcopacy: Jörg Niederer

Procedure for the Election of a Bishop at the called session of Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe 2022 (#6c.2)

Preliminary Remarks

- A) The election of the delegates to the 2022 called session of Central Conference has taken place at the Annual Conference meetings in 2019.
- B) It is crucial that the process for the election of a bishop should remain open as long as possible. No person should be particularly mentioned prior to the called session of Central Conference meeting and the first ballot. Therefore, the forms containing the personal details of the nominees will be submitted only after the first ballot.
- C) Eligible clergy members can withdraw from the election after each ballot. However, there will be no corresponding request from the presiding bishop whether someone continues in the balloting process; the initiative for the withdrawal must come from the eligible clergy member.

Election Procedure

- 1. All persons who have, at the time of the election, the status of an ordained elder in full connection, are eligible. Each voting person (lay and clergy members) can give his or her vote to one person. A person is considered elected if the number of votes in his/her favor has reached a 3/5 majority of the voting members present.
- 2. The result will be communicated to the called session of Central Conference on the same day. If a second ballot is needed, only those persons who have received two or more votes will remain eligible. These persons will then submit the personal information form with the biographical details (in electronic way) to the secretary of the Central Conference within two hours. The following morning, these forms will be handed out to the delegates.
- 3. If further ballots are necessary, these will take place successively on the day following the day of the first ballot. This provides for enough time to read the personal information forms. The ballots will continue until a person has been elected. A person is considered elected if the number of votes in his/her favor has reached a 3/5 majority of the voting members present. From the third ballot onwards, the person with the lowest number of votes will drop out.
- 4. Any eligible person may withdraw from the election after each ballot. However, this person is not allowed to recommend another person for election.

United Methodist Church (UMC)

Description of Position Bishop of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe (CC CSE)⁵

1) Election and Position

Election:

The bishop is elected by the respective central conference according to the process of election and term of election as determined by the respective central conference. (KO 46 + 50.2 / 406, 412).

Bishops are ordained elders in full connection who are mandated with a ministry of general superintendence and leadership (KO 404.1)

The Rules of Order of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe state in article 4, points 2 and 3:

2. The Bishop shall be elected through secret ballot with a three-fifths majority of the voting delegates present. The Executive Committee can define a preparatory process for the election of a bishop. All ordained elders in full connection, who belong to an annual or provisional annual conference of the Central Conference, may be elected
3. The newly elected Bishop has a term of four years. When the Bishop's first term of office is closing, the executive committee shall determine whether a re-election for life or an election of a new Bishop shall take place and makes the appropriate motion to the Central Conference. For a re-election for life a three-fifth majority is required.

Official title: Bishop

Employment:

The Bishop is employed according to the regulations of the general church on the *Episcopal Fund* (in principle from the date of consecration). For the central conference of central and southern Europe, the legal regulations of employment are handled within the association "Verein Hilfe im Sprengel" (as for the persons employed in the episcopal office). The budget for the episcopal office is prepared by the Council on Finance and Administration of the central conference and submitted for approbation to the General Council on Finance and Administration of The UMC.

2) Place of employment and substitution*

Place of employment:

The Rules of Order of the CC-CSE state in article 1, point 5:

5. The „Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe“ has its office in Switzerland, Badenerstrasse 69, 8004 Zürich. [...]

Active and passive substitution

⁵ References in brackets „KO“ refer to the Discipline of the Central Conference.

The Council of Bishops may decide that the Bishop of CC-CSE is assigned to another central or jurisdictional conference for presidential or temporary service, or that another Bishop is assigned in CC-CSE in the case of an emergency (see for jurisdictional conferences KO 49)

Every year, the Bishop may plan a study leave according to the regulations of the *General Council on Finance and Administration*.

Within a quadrennium the Bishop can plan up to three months for renewal leave for purposes of reflection, study, and self-renewal according to the regulations of the *General Council on Finance and Administration*. (KO 411)

Such renewal leaves should be planned in a way that no tasks lie within its time that would need being substituted by another Bishop (e.g. no presiding at annual conferences or decisions on appointments).

3) Basic function and purpose

Basic function

The Bishop has the responsibility to lead and oversee the spiritual and temporal (including administrative and financial) life of the church and to lead the Church in its mission of witness and service in the world. (KO 414.1)

He / She does it with the aim in mind:

- To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world;
- To enable the gathered Church to worship and to evangelize faithfully. (KO 401)

He / She acknowledges the ways and the insights of the world critically and with understanding while remaining cognizant of and faithful to the mandate of the Church. (KO 401).

Cabinet:

The task of superintending in The United Methodist Church resides in the office of bishop and extends to the district superintendent, with each possessing distinct and collegial responsibilities (KO 401). Together, they form the cabinet. The cabinet is charged with the oversight of the spiritual and temporal affairs of a conference. Those who superintend carry primary responsibility for ordering the life of the Church. It is also their task to facilitate the initiation of structures and strategies for the equipping of Christian people for service in the Church and in the world. (KO 53 / 401, 404.2, 426, 429).

According to the country and legal status of the Church, the oversight of the temporal and administrative functions is in the hands of councils of the church in which the superintendents are members or may be the chairperson.

In the CC-CSE there is often only one single superintendent in a country. Therefore, the bishop may also constitute cabinets beyond one annual conference for creating larger teams in which mutual support in leadership can be practiced.

Legal representation of the Church:

In the CC-CSE it is in general not the Bishop who is the legal representative of the Church (also not in Switzerland if he / she is a Swiss citizen). In most countries, the leading superintendent as a citizen of the country is the legal representative of the Church according to civil law. Therefore, the Bishop of CC-CSE does not have a legal counsel in the staff as it is the case in almost all episcopal areas.

As part of the role of presiding in central and annual conferences, the Bishop decides all questions of law that are submitted to him / her during the session. He / She sends a written report on all decisions of law to the Judicial Court of the CC-CSE. (KO 49.1, 51 / 404.1)

4) Tasks

The specific responsibilities of Bishops are written in detail in the *Discipline* (see appendix).

There are three main areas of duties:

- Spiritual and temporal leadership (KO 414, see appendix)
- Presidential Duties (KO 415, see appendix)
- Working with Ordained, Licensed, Consecrated, and Commissioned Personnel (KO 416, see appendix)

5) Work in agencies and units

The Bishop is a member of the following agencies and units or may ex officio be present in their sessions:

Central Conference of CSE:

- Member and chairperson of the college of bishops in the central conference (according to KO 48, each jurisdictional or central conference creates its own college), with active vote, and with retired bishops with voice but no vote.
- Chairperson of the CC-CSE (KO 52)
- Member and chairperson of the officers meeting and of the executive committee of the CC-CSE (see Rules of Order of the CC-CSE art. 7.4, 8.1)
- Member and chairperson of the council and of the plenary assembly of the association "Hilfe im Sprengel" and of the Board of Pension of the CC-CSE (see Rules of Order of the association)
- Member and chairperson of the cabinets (for all of the CC, for regional cabinets, for annual conference cabinets). He / She may designate a leading superintendent (Dean of the cabinet) who leads the cabinet in the absence of the Bishop (KO 429).
- Ex officio, he / she may participate in all meetings of units of the CC-CSE (see Rules of Order of the CC-CSE art. 4.1, 8.1).

Worldwide UMC:

- Member of the Council of Bishops (KO 47 / 427)
- Member in units and study committees of the Council of Bishops, according to election by the Council of Bishops.
- Member of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters
- He / She may be elected by the Council of Bishops or the General Conference as a member of general agencies, for a quadrennium.

Europe:

- Member of the European Methodist Council (EMC) and the Fund Mission in Europe (see Constitution of EMC)
- Member of the college of European Bishops (as the European central conferences only have one or two bishops each, the college of active bishops usually meets on a European level).

- He / She may be elected into other European Methodist units as a member or as chairperson (e.g. Executive committee of EMC, European Commission on Mission, European Methodist Youth and Children Council).

Annual Conferences of the CC-CSE:

- Presiding at annual conferences (KO 52)
- Founder and chairperson of the foundation „Diakonia Metodiste“, Albania (Statute of the foundation).
- Ex officio, he / she may assist at all district conferences.
- Ex officio, he / she may assist at all meetings of units of the annual conferences.
- He / She may be elected as a voting member to units of the annual conferences.
- Due to the official residence in Zurich, in the territory of the annual conference Switzerland-France-North Africa, he / she is in general a member and / or the chairperson of the following units:
 Presiding at the district conference of the UMC in Switzerland (all of Switzerland forming a district conference),
 Presiding at the platform for Northern Africa (exercises the right of a district conference for the UMC in Algeria and Tunisia),
 Co-chair of the church council of the annual conference,
 Co-chair of the Board of Connexio,
 Chairperson of the commission on theological and ecclesial questions,
 Chairperson of the officers meeting of the annual conference.

6) Competences and powers

The Bishop has essentially the following competences and powers (see basic functions of his ministry):

- To lead and oversee the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church.
- To speak to the Church and from the Church to the world (in the Council of Bishops on worldwide level or in the CC-CSE).
- To guard the faith, order, liturgy, doctrine, and discipline of the Church (KO 403)
- To appoint clergy (KO 54 / 430-434)
- To consecrate, commission and ordain persons duly elected by the respective bodies.
- To decide on all questions of law which are submitted during the role of presiding (KO 49.1, 51 / 404.1)

7) Accountability

The Bishop is accountable towards the committee on episcopacy of the CC-CSE. The chairperson of the committee (working group) meets at least once in an individual setting with the Bishop, in addition to the regular meeting with the committee (working group) during the session of the executive committee of the CC-CSE. (see also for Jurisdictional conferences KO 50.3).

8) Documents

- Book of Discipline of the UMC (General Conference) respectively Discipline of CC-CSE (KO)
- Rules of Order of the CC-CSE

rev.3- 24.1.2019

Requirement profile Bishop of CC-CSE

The requirement profile is similar to the profile for superintendents, but adapted to the role of a Bishop where needed:

1) Spiritual requirements (KO 402):

- Rooted in the faith in Christ
 - living an authentic personal spirituality and mode of living;
 - style of leadership which grows out of a spiritual foundation and a holy life;
 - mature, balanced personality.
- Theological competences
 - capacity to discern the signs of the time, out of a spiritual foundation, and to express and implement the consequences for the life of the Church;
 - theological judgment in order to make good use of the core of Methodist identity for the mission of the Church.
- Relational competences
 - capacity to build up community in the Church which is effective in the society
 - capacity to listen to others, learn from them, and take decisions.

2) Professional requirements:

- Study of theology and ordained elder in full connection in one of the annual conferences in CC-CSE
- Knowledge of the ministry in the general Church and good knowledge of the Discipline (*Book of Discipline* of the General Conference, and Discipline of CC-CSE)
- Basic knowledge in accounting
- Good knowledge of the big lines and developments in the history of Europe and in the CC-CSE
- Knowledge of the German and English languages for communication in the CC-CSE; at least for one of the two languages with good oral and written mastery.
- Knowledge of one further language within CC-CSE (whether as mother language or foreign language).

3) Leadership requirements:

- Leadership experience in the pastoral ministry
- Experience in handling conflict situations
- High capacity of self-organizing
- Encouraging and promoting co-workers through a cooperative style of leadership.

4) Personal requirements – self and social competence

- Self competence
 - capacity to create support in order to receive help and discern solutions;
 - capacity to take reasonable time for reflection, continuing education, friendship and renewal;

- resilient for irregular working hours and a high measure of travel and absences from home;
- resilient in situations of conflict and willingness to actively deal with them;
- capacity to learn from mistakes and pro-actively shape the future;
- willingness to listen to feed-back, check it and learn from it.
- Social competence
 - See and develop potential in other people;
 - willingness to actively contact leaders in the ecumenical, political and social context.

Rev 3- 24.1.2019

Appendix:

Book of Discipline of the UMC (General Conference, art. 414-416)

Section IV. Specific Responsibilities of Bishops

¶ 414. *Leadership-Spiritual and Temporal*-1. To lead and oversee the spiritual and temporal affairs of The United Methodist Church which confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and particularly to lead the Church in its mission of witness and service in the world.

2. To strengthen the local church, giving spiritual leadership to both laity and clergy; and to build relationships with people of local congregations of the area.

3. To guard, transmit, teach, and proclaim, corporately and individually, the apostolic faith as it is expressed in Scripture and tradition, and, as they are led and endowed by the Spirit, to interpret that faith evangelically and prophetically.

4. To travel through the connection at large as the Council of Bishops (¶ 422) to implement strategy for the concerns of the Church.

5. To teach and uphold the theological traditions of The United Methodist Church.

6. To provide liaison and leadership in the quest for Christian unity in ministry, mission, and structure and in the search for strengthened relationships with other living faith communities.

7. To organize such missions as shall have been authorized by the General Conference.

8. To promote and support the evangelistic witness of the whole Church.

9. To discharge such other duties as the *Discipline* may direct.

10. To convene the Order of Deacons and the Order of Elders and work with the elected chairperson of each order.

11. To promote, support, and model generous Christian giving, with special attention to teaching the biblical principles of giving.

¶ 415. *Presidential Duties*-1. To preside in the General, jurisdictional, central, and annual conferences.

2. To provide general oversight for the fiscal and program operations of the annual conference(s). This may include special inquiry into the work of agencies to ensure that the annual conference and general church policies and procedures are followed.

3. To ensure fair process for clergy and laity as set forth in ¶ 2701 in all involuntary administrative and judicial proceedings through monitoring the performance of annual

conference officials, boards, and committees charged with implementing such procedures.

4. To form the districts after consultation with the district superintendents and after the number of the same has been determined by vote of the annual conference.

5. To appoint the district superintendents annually (§§ 417-418).

6. To consecrate bishops; to ordain elders and deacons; to commission deaconesses, home missionaries and missionaries; and to see that the names of the persons commissioned and consecrated are entered on the journals of the conference and that proper credentials are furnished to these persons. As these services are acts of the whole Church, text and rubrics shall be used in the form approved by the General Conference.

7. To fix the appointments of deaconesses, home missionaries, and missionaries and to see that the names and appointments are printed in the journals of the conference.

¶ 416. *Working with Ordained, Licensed, Consecrated, and Commissioned Personnel-1.* To make and fix the appointments in the annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, and missions as the *Discipline* may direct (§§ 425-429).

2. To divide or to unite a circuit(s), station(s), or mission(s) as judged necessary for missional strategy and then to make appropriate appointments.

3. To announce the appointments of deaconesses, diaconal ministers, home missionaries, and laypersons in service under the General Board of Global Ministries.

4. To fix the charge conference membership of all ordained ministers appointed to ministries other than the local church in keeping with ¶ 344.

5. To transfer, upon the request of the receiving bishop, clergy member(s) of one annual conference to another, provided said member(s) agrees to said transfer; and to send immediately to the secretaries of both conferences involved, to the conference boards of ordained ministry, and to the clearing house of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, written notices of the transfer of members and of their standing in the Course of Study if they are undergraduates.

6. To appoint associate members, provisional members, or full members to attend any school, college, or theological seminary listed by the University Senate, or to participate in a program of clinical pastoral education in a setting accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education or another accrediting agency approved by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Such appointments are not to be considered as extension ministry appointments.

7. To keep and maintain appropriate supervisory records on all district superintendents and other records on ministerial personnel as determined by the bishop or required by the *Discipline* or action of the annual conference. When a district superintendent is no longer appointed to the cabinet, the bishop shall give that person's supervisory file to the superintendent of record. Supervisory records shall be kept under guidelines approved by the General Council on Finance and Administration. The supervisory records maintained by the bishop are not the personnel records of the annual conference.

Ordinierte Älteste in voller Verbindung 2022 in der Zentralkonferenz von Mittel- und Südeuropa (Stand 15. Nov. 2022)
Ordained Elders in Full Connection 2022 in the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe (Nov 15, 2022)

* = Ersatzdelegierte / Alternate delegate

Nur wählbar für 2 Jahre bis 2024 / Only electable for 2 years until 2024

Delegiert an die ZK 2022 / Delegated to the CC 2022	Name	Vorname / First Name	Jährliche Konferenz Annual Conference	Geburtsjahr / Year of Birth	Aufnahme in volle Verbindung / Admission to Full Connection	aktuelle Dienstzuweisung / Current Appointment	Erfahrungen in der ... / Experience in the ...	
							Zentral- konferenz / Central Conference	weltweiten Kirche / Global Church
<input type="checkbox"/>	Allenbach	Markus	CH-FR-NA	1984	2021	Region Schaffhausen / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bach	Markus	CH-FR-NA	1963	1993	Bäretswil-Uster-Dübendorf / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bach	Sarah	CH-FR-NA	1992	2022	Schwarzenburg / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Baier	Esther	CH-FR-NA	1961	2007	Bern / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Balovski	Lila	RS-NMK-AL	1961	2002	Jabuka / RS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bartos	Jozef	PL	1968	1996	Superintendent Distrikt Süd und Krakow / PL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bator	Jaroslav	PL	1965	2019	Pulawy / PL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Baumann	Urs	CH-FR-NA	1960	2017	Affoltern a. A. / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Becher	Nicole	CH-FR-NA	1968	2011	Zürich-Nord / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bestrzynski	Sebastian	PL	1970	2019	Koszalin und Slupsk / PL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	* Brankov	Novica	RS-NMK-AL	1977	2009	Novi Sad / RS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Brunner-Wyss	Andrea	CH-FR-NA	1966	2006	Kloten-Glattbrugg / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Büchmeier	Sven	CH-FR-NA	1962	1995	Basel-Allschwilerplatz / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bünger	Matthias	CH-FR-NA	1965	1998	Rothrist / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Büürma	Dorothee	AT	1986	2022	Salzburg / AT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19. Zentralkonferenz MSE 2022 in Basel (Schweiz) / 19th Central Conference CSE 2022 in Basel (Switzerland)

Bericht/Report #6c.4

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Delegiert an die ZK 2022 / Delegated to the CC 2022	Name	Vorname / First Name	Jährliche Konferenz Annual Conference	Geburtsjahr / Year of Birth	Aufnahme in volle Verbindung / Admission to Full Connection	aktuelle Dienstzuweisung / Current Appointment	Erfahrungen in der ... / Experience in the ...	
							Zentral- konferenz / Central Conference	weltweiten Kirche / Global Church
<input type="checkbox"/>	Calugar	Rares	RO	1980	2018	Superintendent und Cluj-Napoca / RO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chahinian	Grégoire	CH-FR-NA	1954	2005	2022 Jan. Surintendant France	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Da Rugna	Markus	CH-FR-NA	1969	2005	Aarau / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Da Silva	Antoine	CH-FR-NA	1956	2015	2022 Mont-de-Marsan / FR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dabrowski	Waldemar	PL	1967	1995	Katowice / PL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	* Daneckova	Jana	CZ	1977	2011	Tachov / CZ	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Déjardin	Joël	CH-FR-NA	1965	2012	Anduze / FR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	* Dimov	Marjan	RS-NMK-AL	1977	2011	Superintendent und Strumica / NMK	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	* Đurovka-Petraš	Maria	RS-NMK-AL	1983	2013	Đivnice / RS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	* Eggert	Waldemar	PL	1964	1991	Superintendent Distrikt Masuren sowie Ostroda, Lukta, Slonecznik und Lipowo / PL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	* Ehoussou	Catherine	CH-FR-NA	1957	2017	Paris-Résurrection und Paris-Jérusalem / FR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	* Eschbach	Daniel	CH-FR-NA	1965	1994	Adliswil-Zürich 2 / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Etter	Daniel	CH-FR-NA	1957	1987	Seelsorge Artos / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fankhauser	Matthias	CH-FR-NA	1967	2008	Bereichsleitung Gemeindeentwicklung und «Kirche anders» / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fazekaš	Vladimir	RS-NMK-AL	1983	2017	Šid / RS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	* Fietkau	Klaus	CH-FR-NA	1963	1965	Belp / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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							Zentral- konferenz / Central Conference	weltweiten Kirche / Global Church
<input type="checkbox"/>	Friedrich	Sigmar	CH-FR-NA	1969	1999	Redaktor «Kirche und Welt» / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Frutiger	Serge	CH-FR-NA	1974	2008	Superintendent Distrikt Nordostschweiz / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gumbal	Peter	CH-FR-NA	1959	1998	Region Zimmerberg / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gyurkó	Donát	HU	1988	2017	Kaposvar / HU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hajdune Csernak	Erzsebet	HU	1959	1996	Nyiregyhaza / HU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Handschin	Esther	AT	1968	2004	Wien-Florisdorf und Aufsicht Graz / AT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Haslebacher	Claudia	CH-FR-NA	1966	1996	Oberemmental / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Hecker	Marton	HU	1965	1991	Dombovar / HU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hradsky	Pavel	CZ	1957	2007	Leave of absence / Beurlaubung / CZ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hruby	Ctirad	CZ	1968	2016	Jihlava, Znojmo / CZ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Hug	Ernst	CH-FR-NA	1960	1997	Lyss-Aarberg / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Istrate	Cristian	RO	1984	2019	Sibiu / RO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Isufi	Mustafa	RS-NMK-AL	1966	2021	Pogradec / AL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jaeschke	Marco	CH-FR-NA	1965	2010	Leave of absence / Beurlaubung (Art. 354 KO) / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jende	Annegret	CH-FR-NA	1986	2018	Zürich 4 / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Khaled Abdo	Laszlo	HU	1979	2013	Superintendent / HU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kim	Chae Bin	CH-FR-NA	1993	2021	Sevelen / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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							Zentral- konferenz / Central Conference	weltweiten Kirche / Global Church
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kleiner	Markus	CH-FR-NA	1969	2006	Rüti-Wald-Hombrechtikon / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Klusek	Krzysztof	PL	1972	2014	Lodz, Pabianice / PL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Koch	Stephan	CH-FR-NA	1962	2009	Evangelische Kirche Ermatingen / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Kohli	Philipp	CH-FR-NA	1983	2017	Bäretswil-Uster-Dübendorf / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kopacz	Krzysztof	PL	1971	1998	Ilawa, Siemiany und Glaznoty / PL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Kovacs	Zoltan	HU	1977	2011	Miskolc / HU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kuchynka	Pavel	CZ	1970	2001	Pilsen 1 Lochotin / CZ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kurdi	Zoltan	HU	1964	2005	Pecs / HU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lee	Beyong Koan	CH-FR-NA	1963	2010	Strassburg / FR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lewicki	Pawel	PL	1973	2004	Wisla und Bielsko Biala / PL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Malicki	Andrzej	PL	1963	1991	Leitender Superintendent und Zentraldistrikt / PL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Matter	Thomas	CH-FR-NA	1962	1991	Interlaken / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Maurin	Pascal	CH-FR-NA	1961	2005	Montélimar / FR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Minder	Hans-Peter	CH-FR-NA	1965	1999	Bülach-Oberglatt / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Minder	Sylvia	CH-FR-NA	1965	2007	Bülach-Oberglatt / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Moll	Stefan	CH-FR-NA	1961	1992	Baden + Fresh Expression / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Morata	Daniel	CH-FR-NA	1974	2017	Agen und Fleurance / FR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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							Zentral- konferenz / Central Conference	weltweiten Kirche / Global Church
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Moser	Brigitte	CH-FR-NA	1977	2011	Superintendentin Berner Distrikt und Thun / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Myslinski	Adrian	PL	1988	2017	Tarnow / PL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nausner	Michael	AT	1994	2017	Senior Researcher, Uppsala / SWE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nausner	Wilfried	AT	1953	1986	2021 Sup. Albania	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Niederer	Jörg	CH-FR-NA	1959	1989	St. Gallen-Teufen / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Niedzwiedzinski	Sebastian	PL	1972	2012	Gdansk und Elblag / PL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Novak	Richard	CZ	1959	2001	Protivin / CZ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nzambe	Freddy	CH-FR-NA	1969	2015	Superintendent Nordafrika und Tunis / TN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *	Obermeier-Siegrist	Martin	AT	1981	2014	Linz / AT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Odendaal	Marietjie	CH-FR-NA	1963	2013	Basel-Kleinbasel / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Olszanski	Janusz	PL	1958	unk.	Bydgoszcz und Inowroclaw / PL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ostrowski	Wojciech	PL	1963	2020	Warszawa / PL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Paka	Théo	CH-FR-NA	1960	2011	Genève Communauté francophone und St-Imier / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *	Palik-Kunčák	Ana	RS-NMK-AL	1961	1988	Kisač / RS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pfister	Stefan	CH-FR-NA	1968	1997	Leave of absence / Beurlaubung / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Poganiacz	Artur	PL	1965	1995	Gierzwałd, Dabrown, Olsztynek und Krapplewo / PL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Polak	Jerzy	PL	1963	2005	Chodzież, Czarnkow / PL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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							Zentral- konferenz / Central Conference	weltweiten Kirche / Global Church
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Prochazka	Petr	CZ	1966	1998	Prag 9 Horni Pocernice / CZ	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prochazkova	Ivana	CZ	1971	2001	Superintendentin / CZ	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ramseier	Urs	CH-FR-NA	1960	1991	Eschlikon / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Raymann	Damaris	CH-FR-NA	1988	2020	Solothurn / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rickenbacher	Urs	CH-FR-NA	1968	1998	Leave of absence / Beurlaubung / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rodaszynski	Slawomir	PL	1964	1994	Superintendent Distrikt West sowie Poznan und Miedzyszcz / PL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rudolph	Etienne	CH-FR-NA	1966	1993	Superintendent Suisse francophone / Mulhouse FR / Lausanne CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Schaefer	Andreas	CH-FR-NA	1963	2021	Region Zimmerberg, Haus Tabea Horgen / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Schiess	Markus	CH-FR-NA	1958	1991	Rhein-Bodensee / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Schluop	Christoph	CH-FR-NA	1970	2018	Professor, Theologische Hochschule Reutlingen / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Schnell	Bernfried	CH-FR-NA	1959	2014	Bregenz / AT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Schröckenfuchs	Stefan	AT	1978	2009	Superintendent und Wien-Fünfhof / AT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shults	Lev	CZ	1963	2021	Praha 2 Agape (RUSUMC) / CZ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sjanta	Daniel	RS-NMK-AL	1984	2013	Superintendent und Kovačica, Padina / RS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stefanov	Milen	RS-NMK-AL	1975	2017	Radovis-Raklis / NMK	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Steiner	Andreas	CH-FR-NA	1968	2001	Bottenwil / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Streit	Martin	CH-FR-NA	1961	2001	Bern / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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							Zentral- konferenz / Central Conference	weltweiten Kirche / Global Church
<input type="checkbox"/>	Szatkowski	Henryk	PL	1959	2021	Gliwice, Bytom / PL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Szczepanczyk	Damian	PL	1988	2021	Kielce / PL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *	Szuhanszky	Gabor	HU	1956	1981	Budakeszi / HU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Szuhanszky	Istvan	HU	1957	1981	Szolnok / HU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Szuhanszky	Tamás	HU	1989	2020	Szeged / HU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Trajčevski	Dragan	RS-NMK-AL	1978	2013	Vrbas / RS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vadura	Petr	CZ	1962	2019	Pilsen 3 Husova / CZ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Vigh	Bence	HU	1985	2015	Budapest Obuda / HU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	von Känel	Peter	CH-FR-NA	1960	1991	Burgdorf-Breitenegg / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *	Weller	Stefan	CH-FR-NA	1964	1991	Bethesda Spital Basel / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Wichers	Gunnar	CH-FR-NA	1961	1988	Zofingen / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wolnica	Krzysztof	PL	1967	1997	Wroclaw, Scinawka Srednia / PL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *	Wüthrich	Rolf	CH-FR-NA	1973	2017	Kirche anders (Projekt Mitten im Leben) / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wyder	Rolf	CH-FR-NA	1967	2004	Uzwil-Flawil / CH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Zolliker	Stefan	CH-FR-NA	1967	2003	Winterthur / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Zuber	Dariusz	PL	1978	2012	Elk, Pietki / PL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *	Zuber	Monika	PL	1979	2019	Stare Juchy / PL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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							Zentral- konferenz / Central Conference	weltweiten Kirche / Global Church
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Zürcher	Simon	CH-FR-NA	1976	2006	Frutigland / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Zürcher	Stefan	CH-FR-NA	1967	2003	Superintendent Distrikt Nordwestschweiz / CH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

AT = Austria / Österreich || RO = Romania / Rumänien || CH-FR-NA = Switzerland-France-North Africa / Schweiz-Frankreich-Nordafrika || CZ = Czech Republic / Tschechien || HU = Hungary / Ungarn || PL = Poland / Polen || RS-NMK-AL = Serbia-North Macedonia-Albania / Serbien-Nordmazedonien-Albanien

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Working Group on Episcopacy

#6c.5

Personal sheet for the nominated candidates for Bishop

First name and surname:

...

Born on/in:

...

Citizenship:

...

Ordained as an elder on:

...

List of appointments with years:

...

Theological Education:

...

Further training / Important further training:

...

Important tasks in the area of the Annual Conference:

...

Important tasks in the area of the Central Conference:

...

Important tasks in pan-European or worldwide areas:

...

Language skills: (specify language level)

Muttersprache: ...

Deutsch: ...

Englisch: ...

Weitere Sprachen: ...

C2: Mastery or proficiency

C1: Effective operational proficiency or advanced

B2: Vantage or upper intermediate

B1: Threshold or intermediate

A2: Waystage or elementary

A1: Breakthrough or beginner

Family situation:

...

What is particularly important to me for the ministry as a bishop?

...

St. Gall, October 7, 2021 – JN

Guidelines for Laity leaving the UMC (#8a)

Membership

A professing member may request to leave the UMC by withdrawal (see Book of Discipline, ¶¶ 228.2b(1)(d), 230.1e, 235; CC-CSE Discipline ¶ 235).

There are two paragraphs in the Discipline (referenced hereafter as BOD or CC-CSE Discipline) that relate to laity who wish to transfer to another denomination or have withdrawn from The United Methodist Church.

The CC-CSE Discipline ¶ 240 gives guidelines for a lay person wishing to transfer to another denomination:

A pastor, upon receiving a request from a member to transfer to a church of another denomination, or upon receiving such request from a pastor or duly authorized official of another denomination, shall (with the approval of the member) issue a certificate of transfer and, upon receiving confirmation of the member's reception into another congregation, shall properly record the transfer of such person on the membership record of the local church. This ends membership.

Furthermore, BOD ¶ 241 (not in CC-CSE Discipline) provides guidance when a lay person already joined another church:

If a pastor is informed that a member has without notice united with a church of another denomination, the pastor shall make diligent inquiry and, if the report is confirmed, shall enter 'Withdrawn' after the person's name on the membership roll and shall report the same to the next charge conference.

Pensions and Benefits

Lay employees who were included in pension plans of the Central Conference Pension Initiative or in another pension plan and separate from The United Methodist Church would need to consult with the respective Board of Pension of said plan.

Let us remember...

Throughout the processes for disaffiliation and separation, may the teachings of the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 12 and 13 remind us always that while there are many branches of the Church of Jesus Christ, we are one body in Christ whose aim should always be to exhibit love and grace with one another even in the most challenging circumstances.

May God watch between us as we part company, remembering that God is a witness between us.

Guidelines for Clergy leaving the UMC (#8b)

Ordained Clergy

Ordained clergy who wish to either disaffiliate with The United Methodist Church or separate from The United Methodist Church in order to unite with another denomination are guided by a Judicial Council ruling and a provision found in the CC-CSE Discipline:

1. Judicial Council Decision 696

The Judicial Council ruled that upon joining another denomination, clergy membership in The United Methodist Church is terminated. There is no disciplinary provision authorizing an ordained United Methodist minister to hold membership simultaneously in another denomination.

2. CC-CSE Discipline ¶ 361.1 (Withdrawal to Unite with Another Denomination; cf. similar in BOD 2016 ¶ 360.1):

When ordained members in good standing withdraw to unite with another denomination or to terminate their membership in the denomination, their certificate of ordination shall be given to the superintendent for deposit. Upon request and with the approval of the members in full connection with the annual conference, the ordination certificate may be given back with the notice "withdrawn in good standing".

There are no provisions found in the CC-CSE Discipline or The Book of Discipline for an ordained clergy person to "transfer" their membership to another denomination. Clergy wishing to depart from The United Methodist Church must formally terminate their membership by disaffiliating or withdrawing in order to unite with another denomination.

Local Pastors

There are several paragraphs in the Discipline which provide guidance for local pastors who wish to leave The United Methodist Church. The CC-CSE Discipline ¶ 316 (Responsibilities and Duties of Those Licensed for Pastoral Ministry; cf. BOD 2016 ¶¶ 315 and 318) provides the clear understanding that a local pastor must meet certain requirements and be certified by the Board of Ordained Ministry in order to be eligible for an appointment as a local pastor. However, the awarding of a license shall not be made until or unless an appointment to a pastoral charge is made. If a local pastor ceases to serve an appointment their license is not valid, and they return to the category of being a lay person in The United Methodist Church.

The CC-CSE Discipline ¶ 320.1 (Discontinuance of Local Pastor; cf. BOD 2016 ¶ 320.1) states concerning local pastors,

At each discontinuance of ministry, local pastors shall surrender license and credentials to the district superintendent for deposit, together with a report to the Board of Ordained Ministry on the circumstances of the discontinuance of ministry."

BOD 2016, ¶ 320.1 further explains:

... After consultation with the pastor, the former local pastor shall designate the local church in which membership shall be held. ...

The CC-CSE Discipline ¶ 240 (Transfer to Other Denominations; cf. BOD 2016 ¶ 240) states concerning lay members,

A pastor, upon receiving a request from a member to transfer to a church of another denomination, or upon receiving such request from a pastor or duly authorized official of another denomination, shall (with the approval of the member) issue a certificate of transfer and, upon receiving confirmation of the member's reception into another congregation, shall properly record the transfer of such person on the membership record of the local church. This ends membership.

Furthermore, BOD ¶ 241 (not in CC-CSE Discipline) provides guidance when a lay person already joined another church:

If a pastor is informed that a member has without notice united with a church of another denomination, the pastor shall make diligent inquiry and, if the report is confirmed, shall enter 'Withdrawn' after the person's name on the membership roll and shall report the same to the next charge conference.

These paragraphs provide the basis for the following understandings for current local pastors who choose to sever their relationship with The United Methodist Church:

1. A license as a local pastor is not transferrable to another denomination, because "local pastor" is a distinct United Methodist category of clergy that doesn't exist in other denomination.
2. Local pastors who disaffiliate or separate from The United Methodist Church forfeit their license and shall once again be designated as laity and designate the local church in which membership shall be held.
3. The pastor of the charge may then either, a) Transfer the lay membership to a local church within the new denomination, or b) Withdraw the lay membership upon uniting with a church of another denomination.
4. Pursuit of a license for local pastor ministry within the new denomination will be based on the provisions, guidelines, and standards of the new denomination, not of the continuing United Methodist Church.

Pensions and Benefits

Clergy who were included in pension plans of the Central Conference Pension Initiative, or in other pension plans and disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church would need to consult with the respective Board of Pension of said plan.

An Annual Conference desiring to leave the Church (#8c)

For Annual Conferences in Central Conferences, there is a process of becoming an autonomous Methodist Church, an affiliated autonomous Methodist Church, or an affiliated United Church according to ¶ 572.

The Book of Discipline has no provisions for an Annual Conference to leave The United Methodist Church in order to directly become part of another denomination (e.g. joining the Global Methodist Church – GMC). The only possible process will be to become an autonomous Methodist Church with the intention to decide to become part of another denomination. Such process is laid out in BOD 2016 ¶ 572 (much shortened in the CC CSE Discipline and with explicit reference to the BOD) and includes the following consecutive steps:

Process according to ¶ 572:

- A. A petition to begin the process of becoming an autonomous Methodist Church must be presented to and passed by the Annual Conference.
- B. Approval by the Central Conference must be secured.
- C. The decision of the Central Conference must be ratified by the Annual Conferences within the Central Conference by two-thirds majority of the aggregate votes cast by the Annual Conferences.
- D. The Annual Conference(s) involved shall prepare a historical record with reasons why affiliation and/or autonomy is requested and shall consult with the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters (BOD ¶ 2201) on proceedings for affiliation and/or autonomy.
- E. The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters and the Annual Conference(s) involved shall mutually agree on the confession of faith and the constitution of the new church. These shall be prepared with care and shall be approved by the Annual Conference(s) involved.
- F. Preparation of its *Discipline* is the responsibility of the Annual Conference(s) desiring affiliation and/or autonomy.
- G. Upon recommendation of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, when all disciplinary requirements for affiliated and/or autonomous relationship have been met, the General Conference through an enabling act shall approve of and grant permission for the Annual Conference(s) involved to become an autonomous Methodist, affiliated autonomous Methodist, or affiliated united church.
- H. Then the Central Conference involved shall meet, declare the present relationship between The United Methodist Church and the Annual Conference(s) involved dissolved, and the Annual Conference(s) involved reorganize as an autonomous Methodist, affiliated autonomous Methodist, or affiliated united church in accordance with the enabling act granted by the General Conference.
- I. The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters shall assist in this process and, when the plans are consummated, report to the Council of Bishops.
- J. The proclamation of affiliated and/or autonomous status shall then be signed by the president of the Council of Bishops and the secretary of the General Conference.
- K. A plan of cooperation shall be developed in accordance with BOD ¶ 571.4.

Comments to the process (related to above mentioned points A – K)

General comment: If the necessary vote in any of these steps of the process is not obtained, the process immediately ends.

- A. As no specific majority is required, decision is by simple majority.
- B. To provide the background needed to enable the Central Conference to make an informed decision, the petition for approval of the desire to leave the UMC should include rationale, purpose, destination and at least some excerpt of a confession of faith and a constitution. (described in D and E) As no specific majority is required in the Central Conference, decision is by simple majority.
- D. The historical record and the reasons for disaffiliation must be approved by the Annual Conference.
- E. "The conferences involved" refers to the conferences in the Central Conference desiring to leave the connection.
- F. If the separating Annual Conference intends to join another denomination (e.g. the Global Methodist Church), the Annual Conference may use the BOD of said denomination adapted to a situation of an autonomous Methodist church that wants to join said denomination at its earliest convenience. The Annual Conference must vote to approve the discipline.
- H. Once the relationship to the Central Conference has been declared dissolved, the Annual Conference(s) as a new formed autonomous Methodist Church may officially decide to join said denomination. Episcopal supervision ends with the date of separation.
- K. The plan of cooperation can be made with said denomination which an autonomous Methodist Church desires to join, if said denomination agrees to it.

Timeline for the process of an Annual Conference that intends to join another denomination (e.g. the Global Methodist Church - GMC)

The process for an Annual Conference to leave the United Methodist Church is complicated and long. The following is an attempt to describe the speediest process possible following the steps in the process laid out in BOD ¶ 572

- A. Late 2022: A petition to begin the process of becoming an autonomous Methodist Church with the explicit intention of joining another denomination must be presented to and passed by the Annual Conference.
- B. Early 2023: Approval is secured by an extra session of the Central Conference, with a date prior to the first Annual Conference of 2023. Called under the provisions of BOD ¶ 542.2
- C. 2023: The decision of the Central Conference must be ratified by the Annual Conferences within the Central Conference by two-thirds majority of the aggregate votes cast by the Annual Conferences.
- D. 2023 following the ratification: The Annual Conference shall consult with the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters (BOD ¶ 2201) on proceedings for autonomy with the intention of joining another denomination. Such consultation shall lead

to present a historical record and to mutually agree on the confession of faith and the constitution of the new church, in accordance with BOD ¶ 572.1-3.

- E. 2024: Upon recommendation of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, when all disciplinary requirements for autonomous relationship have been met, the 2024 General Conference through an enabling act shall approve of and grant permission for the conference(s) involved to become an autonomous Methodist church that intends to join another denomination.
- F. 2024 or 2025 within one year after General Conference: The regular session of the Central Conference involved shall meet and declare the present relationship between The United Methodist Church and the conference(s) involved dissolved.
- G. After the regular Central Conference 2024/25: The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters shall assist in this process and, when the plans are consummated, report to the Council of Bishops that said conference has duly left the connection of The United Methodist Church.

Preparation needed for an Annual Conference that wishes to vote on leaving the UMC and joining another denomination

The following aspects should be addressed and clearly understood by all members of the AC.

Before voting, the conference must be informed about the following matters and receive the opportunity to discuss them:

- The purpose, plan, process, and timeline for separating from the UMC.
- Clarity about the intention of what other denomination the AC wants to join after having officially left The United Methodist Church.
- Becoming an autonomous Methodist church for joining another denomination needs clarity about the confession of faith and the constitution of the new church. Therefore, the following items need to be included, based on the Discipline of said denomination.
 - The doctrine, order, and discipline of the denomination
 - Organizational realities
 - Local church level
 - District level
 - Annual Conference level
 - General level
 - Supervisory and leadership realities
 - How is episcopal leadership elected and assigned?
 - How is national leadership elected and assigned?
 - Clergy
 - Requirements
 - Accountability
 - Appointment

- Security
- Financial realities
 - Liabilities
 - Support
- Relational realities
 - What will the church look like in Europe?
 - What will relationships between countries look like?
- The relationship and support that will end with the effective date of separation from the Central Conference and the UMC, this may include but is not limited to:
 - Missionary assignments
 - NIM positions
 - Grants from the Central Conference Theological Education Fund
 - Grants from the Funds for Mission in Europe
 - Support from the Central Conference
- Administrative consequences of separation related to the episcopal area office and the Central Conference
- If the Annual Conference is part of the Central Conference Pension Initiative or another pension plan, the terms of separation need to be clarified with the Board of Pension of said plan and, if necessary, with Wespath.
- Financial implications of separation
 - Liabilities that need to be paid by decision of the Central Conference, includes but is not limited to:
 - Pension liabilities
 - Apportionments
- Ecumenical consequences of separation (within Methodist family and larger ecumenical bodies)
 - Membership of ecumenical bodies stops. This may include but is not limited to:
 - The World Methodist Council
 - The European Methodist Council
 - The Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE/Leuenberg)
 - The Conference of European Churches (CEC)
 - The National Ecumenical Council of Churches
 - Other ecumenical and interreligious bodies of which the church has been a member.
 - No longer being included in ecumenical agreements – dialogues may be initiated
 - Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE/Leuenberg)

- Conference of European Churches (CEC)
- Community Agreement of Methodist and Wesleyan Churches in Europe
- National agreements with other denominations

The four active bishops in Europe affirm their willingness to help assisting Annual Conferences in this transition, according to the *Book of Discipline*.

Appendix:

Experiences from a process by the Sweden Annual Conference 2009-2012:

There is likely to be local churches and clergy not desiring to leave The United Methodist Church. Honoring their position, The Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference discussed how to best care for those churches and clergy.

The following additional conditions were decided:

- Local churches may by a 2/3 majority vote decide to remain in the United Methodist Church
- The remaining local churches keep all their assets.
- Based on their number of professing members, the remaining local churches get a proportional share of the full assets of the Annual Conference.
- The borders of another Annual Conference may be expanded to include Sweden.
- Missional work of the United Methodist Church may continue in Sweden.
- The Sweden Annual Conference does not become a formal part of the Uniting Church in Sweden until after the relationship to the Central Conference has been declared dissolved.
- Furthermore, in the process an agreement of full communion will be negotiated and signed by the Uniting Church in Sweden and The United Methodist Church (on General Conference level).

District Leaving for merger (#8d.1)

Comment: The following will be a new, time-limited article in the CC CSE Discipline. The new Art. 549 will be part of the section on central conferences and is a non-used number in the CC CSE Discipline and in the Book of Discipline. Therefore, the following motion is submitted to the extra session of the CC CSE for adoption:

Motion to the Central Conference: The extra session of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe (CC CSE) adopts the following new article in the Discipline of the CC CSE. Article 549 will become effective upon adjournment of the extra session of the CC CSE on November 20, 2022. It will expire at the opening session of the next regular session of the CC CSE. The guidelines for documentation and for a mutual agreement (see Document #8d.2) are an integral part of the decision to enact art. 549 within the CC CSE.

Art. 549 Special conditions for District Conferences that cover a civil, legal entity in a country of CC CSE

1. *Generalities* - This article becomes effective on November 20, 2022, upon the adjournment of the extra session of the central conference of Central and Southern Europe (CC CSE). It will expire at the opening session of the next regular session of CC CSE. It regulates special conditions applying only to District Conferences that cover a civil, legal entity in a country of CC CSE.

2. Mergers of a District Conference with another Protestant denomination –

a) According to the *Book of Discipline*, an annual conference must decide on criteria and conditions that need to be fulfilled for the annual conference to permit a local church to merge with another Wesleyan denomination or another historic Protestant church. The CC CSE herewith sets the boundaries and framework for a possibility for merger of a District Conference that covers a civil, legal entity in a country of CC CSE.

b) The *Book of Discipline* 2016, ¶¶ 2547 and 2548.1, provides a framework for the process of a local church requesting to merge with another denomination. Any such move of a local church needs a two-thirds majority vote of a duly called church conference, similarly to a local church disaffiliating from The United Methodist Church (see Judicial Council Decision 1379). Art. 549 is based on this framework given by the Book of Discipline in the paragraphs mentioned, and applies it to a District Conference that covers a civil, legal entity in a country of CC CSE.

c) Before a process on a merger of a District Conference becomes effective, the respective annual conference needs to receive an agreement related to at least the following points: (1) the continuing care for those members who do not choose to leave The United Methodist Church for merging with another denomination; (2) a fair share of property for the continuing mission of The United Methodist Church with those members

and/or local churches remaining; (3) a settlement of any amounts due to the annual conference or to pension liabilities; (4) an effective date of leaving The United Methodist Church for merging with another denomination, such date being set after the adjournment of the annual conference that has to ratify the merger; (5) an agreement on mutually respectful relationships for the future.

d) Upon completion of the process of voting of a District Conference, including its respective local churches, the annual conference will have to ratify the merger by simple majority. Ratification means a yes/no-vote without possibility to amend.

3. Process for a District Conference covering a civil, legal entity in a country of CC CSE and wanting to merger with another denomination-

a) *Initiating a merger.* By a two-third majority vote the District Conference may ask all local churches within a certain time frame to call a church conference to vote on a motion of merger with another Wesleyan denomination or another historic Protestant church. In preparation of such initial vote in the District Conference, the District Conference has to prepare and submit to its members all the documentation mentioned in the respective guidelines of CC CSE.

b) *Local churches.* Upon an affirmative, initial vote (2/3 majority) in the District Conference in favour of a process of merging with a specific Methodist or other Protestant denomination, all local church conferences of said district can be encouraged but not forced to vote on a request for merger. The documentation established by the District Conference are the official documents for preparing the discernment and decision in the local churches. All members of a local church need to receive ample time to read the documentation and receive a fair explanation of their options. At least a two-third majority of the local church council or at least 30% of the Professing Members of said local church need to call a church conference for voting on a request for merger. If a church conference approves the request for merger by a two-thirds majority, such local church will be counted among the charges favourable for merger. Thereupon, all members of said church conference shall receive a written letter in which they may confirm that they want to leave The United Methodist Church at the time of the effective date of merger.

c) *Further process in a District Conference for merging.* If a two-thirds majority of the church conferences in said district have voted in favour of merger, the District Conference may initiate the final steps with its respective annual conference. Such final steps need to include all administrative and financial regulations on which mutual agreement has to be reached with the respective entities of the annual conference. Furthermore, it needs to include at least the following: (1) At the District Conference where the final vote on merger will be taken, the District Conference may choose one of the following options: (a) Transfer all restricted and un-restricted funds of the District Conference to the denomination that the local churches have voted to merge with, being implemented on the effective date of merger. Or (b) Divide all un-restricted funds among the local churches and transfer the restricted funds to the denomination that the local churches have voted to merge with, being implemented on the effective date of merger. (2) The District Conference shall vote on the final motion of merger with a two-thirds majority. The motion shall contain at least the names of the church conferences and of the clergy persons that have supported the request for merger, the supporting documents on merger, the proposal for a fair proportional share of the district assets, a signed copy of the

agreement on mutually respectful relationships for the future, and the proposed date for merger. Such final motion shall be presented to the annual conference for approval. (3) If one or several church conferences have not voted with a two-thirds majority in favour of merger, such local churches will remain in The United Methodist Church. The District Conference must give a fair proportional share of all the district assets to its annual conference for supporting remaining local churches and/or members in their future mission and ministry (cf. e. below).

d) Preparation of legal documents. The constitution and/or other legal texts of the District Conference and annual conference and their respective entities must be prepared in a timely manner to enable the District Conference to fulfil its intentions of merging with another denomination.

e) Preparation of transfer of assets – (1) Local church property and assets. At the District Conference where the final vote on merger is taken, a fair, proportional share of property and assets on local and/or district level need to remain with The United Methodist Church for those local churches and/or members who remain with The United Methodist Church; *(2) District property.* At the District Conference where the final vote on merger is taken, the District Conference may by a 2/3 majority vote instruct the respective entity to deed all district property to the denomination the District Conference is deciding to merge with, respecting the condition of *e(1)* and being implemented only on the effective date of merger; *(3) Restricted and unrestricted funds.* At the District Conference where the final vote on merger is taken, the District Conference may advise the transfer of restricted and unrestricted funds according to its decision in *c(1)*.

f) Agreement on mutually respectful relationships for the future – The signing partners hereto stipulate and agree on the authority to enter into such agreement. They do so pursuant to the Constitution of the UMC, ¶ 33, that an Annual Conference has such other rights as have not been delegated to the General Conference under the Constitution. According to the standard form provided by the CC CSE, such agreement includes among other points: (1) Each recognizes in one another that they are constituent members of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church as expressed in the Scriptures, confessed in the Church's historic creeds, attested to in the doctrinal standards, and rooted in the shared Methodist, United Brethren in Christ, and Evangelical Association history. (2) Each recognizes the authenticity of the other's sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion; (3) Each recognizes the validity of each other's respective offices of ordained ministry, while stipulating that each has different qualifications for set-apart ministry that members of the other may or may not meet. And (4) Each commits to seek continued good respectful relationships and, where possible, collaboration in mission and ministry and to welcome each other's members.

Documentation and Mutual Agreement (#8d.2)

Comment: These guidelines are an integral part for implementing a new Article 549 for the CC CSE Discipline, as the motion in document #8d1 mentions explicitly. The guidelines give further clarity on

(A) the documentation and

(B) the Agreement on mutually respectful relationships for the future.

A. Documentation for voting on a merger

The motion put to vote at the District Conference for decision on merger must relate to a written documentation which shall include at least the following items:

- The purpose, plan, process, and provisional timeline for merging with another denomination.
- Clarity about the intention of what other Protestant denomination the District Conference wants to merge with.
- The "Agreement on mutually respectful relationships for the future" (see below point B) which the district and each of its departing local churches and clergypersons will have to agree to and sign prior to any official merger.
- Merging with another denomination needs clarity about the confession of faith and the constitution of the new church. Therefore, the following items need to be included, based on the Discipline of said denomination.
 - The doctrine, polity, and discipline of the denomination
 - Organizational realities
 - Local church level
 - District level
 - Annual Conference level
 - General level
 - Supervisory and leadership realities
 - How is episcopal leadership elected and assigned?
 - How is national leadership elected and assigned?
 - Clergy
 - Requirements
 - Accountability
 - Appointment
 - Security
 - Financial realities
 - Present liabilities towards others
 - Present support from others

- Apportionments / contributions to new denomination
- Relational realities
 - Into what organizational and geographical unit will the district and its local churches be integrated in joining the new denomination?
 - What will the new denomination look like in Europe?
 - What will relationships between countries look like in the new denomination?
- The relationship and support from the Annual Conference and the UMC will end with the effective date of merger. This may include but is not limited to:
 - Missionary assignments
 - NIM positions
 - Grants from the Central Conference Theological Education Fund
 - Grants from the Fund for Mission in Europe
 - Support from the Central Conference
- Financial implications of separation
 - Liabilities that need to be paid by decision of the Central Conference, the Episcopal area office, and/or the Annual Conference, may include but is not limited to:
 - Pension liabilities
 - Apportionments
 - Loans
- If the District Conference is part of the Central Conference Pension Initiative or another pension plan, the terms of separation need to be clarified with the Board of Pension of said plan and, if necessary, with Wespath.
- Administrative consequences of separation related to the Annual Conference office, episcopal area office and the Central Conference
- Ecumenical consequences (within Methodist family and larger ecumenical bodies)
 - Membership of ecumenical bodies stops. This may include but is not limited to:
 - The World Methodist Council
 - The European Methodist Council
 - The Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE/Leuenberg)
 - The Conference of European Churches (CEC)
 - National Ecumenical Councils of Churches
 - Other ecumenical and interreligious bodies of which the church as part of the UMC has been a member
 - Community Agreement of Methodist and Wesleyan Churches in Europe
 - National agreements with other denominations,

B. MODEL OF AN AGREEMENT ON MUTUALLY RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS FOR THE FUTURE

Pursuant to the Constitution of The United Methodist Church, ¶ 33,
on this _____ day of _____, 20____,
the partners mentioned below enter into an

AGREEMENT ON MUTUALLY RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS FOR THE FUTURE:

(1) the _____ Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church (the "Annual Conference") and
(2) the _____ District Conference and its local churches and clergy persons that want to merge with the following Protestant denomination _____ (the "District Conference").

1. Biblical & Ecclesiological Foundations

Jesus stated his desire for unity in his prayer "that they may be one" (John 17:11). Yet the history of the Christian Church is filled with partings, such as the disagreement that Paul had with Barnabas that resulted in their going their separate ways for the good of the mission (Acts 15:39-40). John Wesley also acknowledged the desire for unity but the reality of divisions when he said, "It is therefore no way surprising that infinite varieties of opinion should now be found in the Christian church." United Methodists acknowledge our church (originally the Methodist Episcopal Church) was birthed in separation from the Church of England. And yet the Methodist Episcopal Church always recognized the Church of England – and then the Episcopal Church in the USA – as being part of Christ's holy Church that we profess in the Confession of Faith.

We too find ourselves at a point where some maintain they cannot stay united in one denominational governance structure. This public dispute has undermined our mission and witness to the world and tarnishes the reputation of the Church catholic. We desire a certain unity of spirit in going our separate ways with grace and reconciliation.

This Agreement is like the Mizpah (cf. Gen. 31,49), acknowledging and announcing that God is watching over us as we part ways. Blessing and sending requires the commitment of both partners to articulate expectations, and to treat and talk about each other as a witness to the world that though we disagree, we recognize and affirm God's grace and blessing rather than strife and reproach.

2. Mutual Recognition

The two partners, the Annual Conference and the District Conference, agree to live into the future in mutually respectful relationships along the following lines:

a. Each recognizes in one another that they are constituent members of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church as expressed in the Scriptures, confessed in the Church's historic creeds, attested to in the doctrinal standards, and rooted in our shared Methodist, United Brethren in Christ, and Evangelical Association history.

- b. Each recognizes the authenticity of the other's sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion.
- c. Each recognizes the validity of each other's respective offices of ordained ministry, while stipulating that each may develop different qualifications for set-apart ministry that members of the other may or may not meet.
- d. Each commits to seek continued, good, and respectful relationships and, where possible, collaboration in mission and ministry and to welcome each other's members.

Signed by:

- a. Annual Conference: presiding bishop and secretary of the Annual Conference
- b. District Conference: two authorised signatories of the district council, and those clergy members as well as two authorised lay signatories of each local church that choose to merge with another denomination

Annexe:

Listing of properties of the District Conference included in merging with another denomination;

Listing of local churches / circuits having voted to merge, with their addresses and list of properties included in merging with another denomination;

Listing of clergy persons having voted to merge and who will follow the process of clergy leaving The United Methodist Church.

Appendix for information about BOD 2016, par. 2547 and 2548:

¶ 2547. *Interdenominational Local Church Mergers*—One or more local United Methodist churches may merge with one or more churches of other denominations and become a single church by pursuing the following procedure:

1. Following appropriate dialogue, which shall include discussions with the United Methodist district superintendent of the district in which the merging churches are located and the corresponding officials of the other judicatories involved, a plan of merger reflecting the nature and ministry of the local church (¶¶ 201-204) shall be submitted to the charge conference of the local United Methodist church and must be approved by a resolution stating the terms and conditions and missional plans of the proposed merger, including the denominational connection of the merger church.
2. The plan of merger, as approved by the charge conference of the United Methodist church, in a charge conference including two or more local churches must be approved by the church local conference of each local church in accordance with the requirements of ¶ 2527.
3. The merger must be approved in writing by the superintendent of the district, a majority of the district superintendents, and the bishop of the area in which the merging churches are located.
4. The provisions of ¶ 2503 shall be included in the plan of merger where applicable.
5. The requirements of any and all laws of the state or states in which the merging churches are located affecting or relating to the merger of such churches must be complied with, and in any case where there is a conflict between such laws and the procedure outlined in the *Discipline*, said laws shall prevail and the procedure outlined in the *Discipline* shall be modified to the extent necessary to eliminate such conflict.
6. Where property is involved, the provisions of ¶ 2548 obtain.”

¶ 2548. *Deeding Church Property to Federated Churches or Other Evangelical Denominations*—1. With the consent of the presiding bishop and of a majority of the district superintendents and of the district board of church location and building and at the request of the charge conference or of a meeting of the membership of the church, where required by local law, and in accordance with the said law, the Annual Conference may instruct and direct the board of trustees of a local church to deed church property to a federated church.

2. With the consent of the presiding bishop and of a majority of the district superintendents and of the district board of church location and building and at the request of the charge conference or of a meeting of the membership of the local church, where required by local law, and in accordance with said law, the Annual Conference may instruct and direct the board of trustees of a local church to deed church property to one of the other denominations represented in the Pan-Methodist Commission or to another evangelical denomination under an allocation, exchange of property, or comity agreement, provided that such agreement shall have been committed to writing and signed and approved by the duly qualified and authorized representatives of both parties concerned.

Elections (#9)

Elections since CC 2017 (#9a)

**grün = gewählt bis ZK 2024 /
green = elected until CC 2024**

**rot = Rücktritt - noch offen
red = Resignation -still open**

**blau = Nomination
blue = nomination**

Pfarrperson / clergy

Laie / lay

Büro - Office

Wahl Stellvertretung Vorsitz durch Exekutivkomitee auf Wahlvorschlag durch Bischof - Person ist Mitglied des Exekutivkomitees. Wahl von Sekretär und Kassier durch Zentralkonferenz - Personen müssen nicht Mitglieder der Zentralkonferenz sein; Wiederwahl ist möglich.

Election of Vice-chair by the executive committee on nomination by bishop - person is member of the executive committee. Election of secretary and treasurer by Central Conference; persons do not have to be members of Central Conference; re-election possible.

Bischof, Vorsitz - *Bishop, chair*

Patrick Streiff / Stefan Zürcher

Stv. Vorsitz - *Vice-chair*

vakant - vacant

Sekretär - *Secretary*

Markus Bach (CH)

Kassier - *Treasurer*

Iris Bullinger (CH)

Exekutivkomitee – Executive Committee

1 Superintendent und 1 Laie je Jährliche Konferenz. Wahl durch Zentralkonferenz auf Wahlvorschlag durch den Bischof nach Konsultation mit Delegationen.

1 Superintendent and 1 lay each annual conference. Election by the Central conference on nomination by the Bishop after consultation with the delegations.

Stimmberechtigte Mitglieder – members with voting rights:

Bischof, Vorsitz - *Bishop, chair*

Patrick Streiff till 30.6.23 / Stefan Zürcher

Stv. Vorsitz - *Vice-chair*

vakant - vacant

Sekretär - *Secretary*

Markus Bach

Kassier - *Treasurer*

Iris Bullinger

JK Österreich

Sup. Stefan Schröckenfuchs Ben Nausner

JK Schweiz-Frankreich-Nordafrika

Sup. Serge Frutiger

Lea Hafner

JK Tschechien

Sup. Ivana Procházková

Miluse Salkova

JK Ungarn

Sup. László Khaled

Dávid Csernák

JK Polen

Sup. Andrzej Malicki

Bozena Daszuta

JK Serbien-Nord-Mazedonien-Albanien

Sup. Daniel Sjanta

Daniela Stoilkova

Vorsitz AG Bischofsamt

Jörg Niederer

Mit beratender Stimme – members with voice, but not vote:

Bischöfe im Ruhestand - *retired Bishops*

Bischof / Bishop Heinrich Bolleter;

after 1.7.23 Patrick Streiff

Je 1 Superintendent aus jedem Land, sofern nicht bereits im Exekutivkomitee mit Stimmrecht.

1 superintendent from each country, if not yet member with voting rights in the executive committee.

Frankreich und Belgien

Sup. Grégoire Chahinian (Stv. Etienne Rudolph)

Algerien und Tunesien

Sup. Freddy Nzambe

Albanien

Sup. Wilfried Nausner

Rumänien

Sup. Rares Calugar

Nord-Mazedonien

Sup. Marjan Dimov

Koordinatorin des Frauendienstes

Barbara Bünger

Auf Einladung des Bischofs können die Räte und Arbeitsgruppen der Zentralkonferenz durch ihre Vorsitzenden mit beratender Stimme vertreten sein.

On invitation by the Bishop the councils and working groups of the central conference may be present with voice but not vote:

Rat für Finanzen und Administration		Adrian Wenziker (CH)
Rechtsrat		Christa Tobler (CH)
AG Theologie u. Ordinierte Dienste	vakant - vacant	
AG Kinder und Jugend		vakant - vacant
		Vakant - vacant
AG Kirche und Gesellschaft	Marietjie Odendaal (CH)	
AG Frauendienst	Monika Zuber (PL)	
		Barbara Büniger (CH)
AG Liturgie	Erika Stalcup (CH)	
AG Kirchenordnung u. Rechtsfragen	Wilfried Nausner (AT)	

Rat für Finanzen und Administration – Council on Finance and Administration

3 Personen; Nomination durch das Büro; Wahl durch das Exekutivkomitee.

3 persons; nominated by the office; elected by the Executive committee.

Vorsitz - <i>Chair</i>		Adrian Wenziker (CH)
		Stefan Hafner (CH)
		Daniel Burkhalter (CH)

Pensionsbehörde – Pension Board

Mitglieder des Rats für Finanzen und Administration. Zuwahl durch Exekutivkomitee von Pensions-Fachpersonen.

Members of the council on Finance and Administration. Additional persons with knowledge in pension elected by the Executive committee.

Vorsitz - <i>Chair</i>	amtsführender Bischof / active Bishop	
		Adrian Wenziker (CH)
		Stefan Hafner (CH)
		Daniel Burkhalter (CH)
Zusätzliche Fachperson – <i>additional person</i> :		Markus Hafner (CH)
Pension Benefits Officer (voice, no vote):		André Töngi (CH)

Untersuchungsausschuss – Committee on Investigation

7 pastorale Mitglieder in voller Verbindung; 2 Laien beratend; Nomination durch Bischof nach Konsultation mit der Arbeitsgruppe für das Bischofsamt, Wahl durch die Zentralkonferenz.

7 clergy in full connection; 2 lay without vote; nominated by Bishop after consultation with working group on episcopacy, election by the Central conference.

JK Österreich	Stefan Schröckenfuchs	Roland Siegrist
JK Schweiz-Frankreich-Nordafrika	Hanna Wilhelm (Einberuferin - <i>convener</i>)	
JK Tschechien	Petr Procházka	
JK Ungarn	László Khaled	Grethe Jenei
JK Polen	Sławomir Rodaszyński	
JK Serbien-Nord-Mazedonien-Albanien	Ana Palik-Kunčak	

Ersatzmitglieder: 5 pastorale Mitglieder in voller Verbindung; 1 Laie beraten; Nomination durch Bischof nach Konsultation mit der Arbeitsgruppe für das Bischofsamt, Wahl durch die Zentralkonferenz.

Reserve: 5 clergy in full connection; 1 lay without vote; nominated by Bishop after consultation with working group on episcopacy, election by the Central conference.

JK Österreich	Martin Obermeir-Siegrist	
JK Schweiz-Frankreich-Nordafrika	Gunnar Wichers	
JK Tschechien	Pavel Procházka	
JK Ungarn	Zoltán Kovács	
JK Polen		Olgierd Benedyktowicz
JK Serbien-Nord-Mazedonien-Albanien	Marjan Dimov	

Berufungsausschuss – Committee on Appeals

4 pastorale Mitglieder in voller Verbindung; 1 vollzeitlicher Lokalfarrer; 4 Laien; Nomination durch den Bischof, Wahl durch die Zentralkonferenz.

4 clergy in full connection; 1 Local pastor in full-time; 4 lay; nominated by the Bishop, election by the Central conference.

JK Österreich	Wilfried Nausner (Einberufer - convener)	Gerhard Weisenbrunner
JK Schweiz-Frankreich-Nordafrika	Etienne Rudolph	
JK Tschechien	Pavel Hradský	
JK Ungarn		Henrik Schauerermann
JK Polen	Józef Bartos	
JK Serbien-Nord-Mazedonien-Albanien		Maria Parnicki
Lokalfarrer - Local pastor	Ruedi Stähli (CH)	

Ersatzmitglieder: 4 pastorale Mitglieder in voller Verbindung; 1 vollzeitlicher Lokalfarrer; 4 Laien; Nomination durch den Bischof, Wahl durch Zentralkonferenz

Reserve: 4 clergy in full connection; 1 Local pastor in full-time; 4 lay; nominated by the Bishop, election by the Central conference

JK Österreich		Hayford Boateng
JK Schweiz-Frankreich-Nordafrika	Theo Rickenbacher (bis 2024)	Marc Berger
JK Tschechien-Slowakei		Josef Thal
JK Ungarn	Márton Hecker	
JK Polen		Bozena Daszuta
JK Serbien-Nord-Mazedonien-Albanien	Lila Balovski (RS)	
Lokalfarrer	vakant - vacant	

Rechtsrat – Judicial Court

5 Personen, mindestens 2 pastorale Mitglieder in voller Verbindung; dürfen nicht Mitglieder der Zentralkonferenz und ihrer Organe sein. Nomination durch das Exekutivkomitee, Wahl durch die Zentralkonferenz. Konstituiert sich selbst, inkl. Vorsitz.

5 Persons, at least 2 clergy in full connection; may not be members of the Central conference other their organs. Nomination by the Executive committee, election by the Central conference. Organizes itself, incl. chair.

Martin Streit (CH)	Christa Tobler (CH)
István Csernák (HU)	Philipp Hadorn (CH)
	Bernhard Pöll (AT)

Ersatzmitglieder: 2 pastorale Mitglieder in voller Verbindung und 2 Laien; Nomination durch das Exekutivkomitee, Wahl durch die Zentralkonferenz.

Reserve: 2 clergy in full connection and 2 lay. Nomination by the Executive committee, election by the Central conference.

Jean-Philippe Waechter (FR)	Regula Dannecker (CH)
vakant - vacant	vakant - vacant

Anwalt – Counsel for the Church

1 Anwalt und 4 Ersatzpersonen gemäss Disziplinar- und Schiedsgerichtsordnung; Wahl durch die Zentralkonferenz

1 Counsel and 4 reserve persons according to rules of judicial administration; election by the Central conference

Anwalt	vakant - vacant
Ersatz	Markus Bach (CH)
	Petr Procházka (CZ)
	Gábor Szuhánszky (HU)
	Etienne Rudolph (FR)

Arbeitsgruppe Bischofsamt – Working Group Episcopacy

1 Mitglied aus jeder Jährlichen Konferenz. Person muss Mitglieder des Exekutivkomitees sein; Nomination durch Büro bzw. ein Fünftel durch den Bischof; Wahl durch die Zentralkonferenz.

1 member of each annual conference. Person have to be member of the Executive committee; nominated by the Office respectively one fifth by the Bishop; elected by Central conference.

JK Österreich	Stefan Schröckenfuchs
JK Schweiz-Frankreich-Nordafrika	Jörg Niederer (Vorsitz)
JK Tschechien-Slowakei	Ivana Procházková
JK Ungarn	László Khaled
JK Polen	Bozena Daszuta
JK Serbien-Nord-Mazedonien-Albanien	Daniel Sjanta

Weitere Arbeitsgruppen, die die Zentralkonferenz bilden kann –

Other Working Groups which the central conference can organize

In der Regel nur 3 Personen. Mitglieder müssen nicht Delegierte an die Zentralkonferenz sein; Nomination durch die Arbeitsgruppe, Wahl von Mitgliedern und Vorsitzenden durch Zentralkonferenz.

Usually only 3 persons. Members do not have to be delegates to the Central conference; Nomination by the working group. Members and chairperson elected by Central conference.

Arbeitsgruppe Theologie und Ordinierte Dienste –

Working Group Theology and Ordained Ministry (ENGLISH)

Stefan Zürcher (CH), Vorsitzender - Chair
Michael Nausner (AT)
Zoltán Kovács (HU)
Daniel Sjanta (RS)
Edward Puślecki (PL)
Jana Daněčková (CZ) (+ 1 Vertretung aus der Zentralkonferenz Deutschland)

Arbeitsgruppe Kirche und Gesellschaft – Working Group Church and Society (ENGLISH)

Marietjie Odendaal (CH) (neu Vorsitz – chair)

David Chlupáček (CZ)

1 Person vakant - vacant

Arbeitsgruppe Kinder und Jugend – Working Group Children and Youth

vakant - vacant (Co-Vorsitzende – Co-Chair)

vakant - vacant (Co-Vorsitzende – Co-Chair)

und die Delegierten der Länder an den EMYC – *and the delegates of the countries EMYC*

Arbeitsgruppe Frauendienst – Working Group Women's Work (ENGLISH)

Monika Zuber (PL - Vorsitzende - Chair)

Maria Đurovka-Petraš (RS)

Murielle Rietschi Wilhelm (CH)

Zentralkonferenz-Koordinatorin – *Coordinator Central Conference: Barbara Büniger (CH)*

Arbeitsgruppe Liturgie – Working Group Liturgy (ENGLISH)

Erika Stalcup (CH), Vorsitzende ab ZK 2022 – Chair from CC 2022

Esther Handschin (AT)

Jana Křížova (CZ)

Arbeitsgruppe Kirchenordnung und Rechtsfragen –

Working Group Discipline and Legal Affairs (GERMAN + ENGLISH)

Petr Procházka (CZ)

Serge Frutiger (CH)

Wilfried Nausner (AT – AL), Vorsitzender - Chair

1 Person vakant - vacant

United Methodist Church – World Wide Level:

Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters

Zentralkonferenz MSE: 1 Bischof, 1 Pfarrperson; 1 Laie - *Central conference CSE: 1 Bishop, 1 clergy, 1 lay*

Bischof / *Bishop*

Patrick Streiff + Stefan Zürcher

Petr Procházka (CZ)

Christine Schneider-Oesch (CH)

Connectional Table

Zentralkonferenz MSE: 1 Person - *Central conference CSE: 1 person*

vakant - vacant

GBGM – General Board of Global Ministries

Von der ZK MSE zu wählen - *To be elected by CC CSE*

Andreas Stämpfli (CH)

IMT – In Mission Together

Partnerschaften zwischen USA und Mitteleuropa-Balkan; gewählt von den Jährlichen Konferenzen

Partnership between US and Central Europe and Balkan; elected by Annual Conferences

JK Tschechien-Slowakei

Jana Křížova (CZ)

~~Lenka Procházková (SK)~~

JK Ungarn

Laura Tordaj-Szuhánski (HU)

JK Polen

Adrian Myslinski (PL)

JK Serbien-Nord-Mazedonien-Albanien

Jennifer Moore (MK)

Maria Đurovka-Petraš (RS)

Mitglied im Koordinationsteam – *member of Coordinating Committee*

Urs Schweizer

GBCS - General Board of Church and Society

falls neu gebildet nach GK2020 / if newly constituted after GC2020 [Philipp Hadorn]

DMYP – Division on Ministries with Young People (GBOD – General Board of Discipleship)

Junge Erwachsene - *Young adults*

Maria Sonnleithner (AT)

Jugend - *Youth*

Stanislava Bako (RS)

Jugendmitarbeitende -

Adult workers with young people

vakant - vacant

GCAH – General Commission on Archives and History

Judit Lakatos (HU)

World Methodist Council:

World Methodist Historical Society – European Section

Vize-Vorsitzende - *vice-chair*

Judit Lakatos (HU)

WFMUCW – World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women

Wahl bzw. Ernennung durch den Weltbund.

Election respectively appointment by World Federation.

Vize-Vorsitzende Kontinentaleuropa – *vice-chair Europe Continental*

Lilla Kardosné Lakatos (HU)

Herausgeberin «Tree of Life» – *editor «Tree of Life»*

Ligia Istrate (RO)

World Evangelism

Regional Secretary Central and Southern Europe

vakant - vacant

Nomination list for by-elections (#9b)

At the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe of 2017 in Zurich, the final elections for the 2017-2021 term were held. Due to the pandemic, the Central Conference had to be postponed. Thus, the term of office was extended first by one year, later by two years and now even by four years, since the next ordinary Central Conference will not take place until after the General Conference in 2024. The list with all elected persons can be found under #9a.

At the extraordinary meeting of the Central Conference on November 16-20, 2022, replacement elections will be held for persons who have resigned their office or function on that date. All elected persons were contacted by the Secretary this summer with the request to come forward if they do not wish to continue in office until the regular session of the Central Conference following the 2024 General Conference.

Elections by Executive Committee:

- Vice Chair Executive Committee
- 2 pastors EMC
- 2 lay persons EMC
- Fund for Mission in Europe (FMIE)
- European Lay Seminar
- Board of Directors e-Academy

Election by new Exec. Committee

Adrian Myslinski (PL)
Vladimir Fazekas (RS)
Lilla Kardosné Lakatos (HU)
Anna Schamas (CH)
Lilla Kardosné Lakatos (HU)
Christa Wichers (CH)
Zoltán Kovács (HU)
Christoph Schluep (CH)

Elections by Central Conference:

- **Clergy CZ in Executive Committee**
 - **Lay person CZ in Executive Committee**
 - **Lay person HU in Executive Committee**
 - **Lay person PL in Executive Committee**
 - **Clergy CZ in WG Episcopacy**
 - **Clergy HU in WG Episcopacy**
 - **Lay person PL in WG Episcopacy**
 - **Chairperson WG Theology and ordained Ministries**
 - **Chairperson WG Liturgy**
 - **Chairperson in WG Church and Society**
 - **Member of WG Church and Society**
 - **Chair of WG Church Order and Legal Affaires**
 - **Member of WG Church Order and Legal Affaires**
 - **2 Co-chairs in WG Children and Youth**
 - **Counsel of the church**
 - **2 persons as alternate members Judicial Council**
 - **1 fulltime Localpastor as alternate member Committee on Appeals**
- Ivana Procházková**
Miluse Salkova
David Csernak
Bozena Daszuta
Ivana Procházková
László Khaled
Bozena Daszuta
vacant
Erica Stalcup (CH)
Marietjie Odendaal (CH)
vacant
Wilfried Nausner (AT-AL)
vacant
vacant
vacant
vacant

VIII. Devotions and worship events

Opening worship service with communion of November 16, 2022, 4:00 p.m., Zwinglihaus Basel

Mysterious Faith?

Sermon by Bishop Patrick Streiff

at the opening of the extraordinary session of the Central Conference¹

Scripture readings: Proverbs 8:1-4.13-14; Colossians 1:25b-28; John 17:1-5;

Sermon text: Colossians 2:2-3

What does faith have to do with a mystery? Does someone want to play secrecy here? Or does the church have something to hide? Distrust is not far away when things are done secretly in the church. In the wake of critical questions about the abuse of power in the state, the economy or the church, there is – in free societies – rightly criticism of institutions in which powerful people rule and decide in favour of their own interests. Abuse of any kind cannot be allowed to remain under a cover. Like other organisations and institutions, the church must be open about its dealings with material assets and people. As The United Methodist Church, we strive for clear, transparent criteria, regulations and structures in which decisions are made. Methodists have a right to know what is happening in their church. Nevertheless, when we reflect below on the positive value of a mystery, it does not refer to the church, but to faith in God. Faith in God has a lot to do with a mystery, even for believers.

God as mystery

God is mysterious. We can see other living beings and things, but not God. We can acquire a lot of knowledge about things of this world, but in relationships with other persons we already begin to realise our limitation of how much we know about them and how deeply we can understand them, and this is even more true with God. Already with other people it is important not only to see what they do, but to listen to them in order to understand them better – and with God we can “only” hear: hearing what is conveyed through words of the Bible and sometimes through a quiet inner voice. What we hear, whether from other people or from God, cannot be produced by us within ourselves. The voice must speak to us from outside. God can “only” be recognised through a word that reaches our inner ear from the outside. At the same time, what we hear is always shaped by our own state of mind, which includes our feelings, our attitude, and our situation. Even with other people, we sometimes hear things that the other person did not mean at all. This can also happen with what we hear from God. The fact that we can “only” hear from God and that this hearing is also influenced by our own state of mind is a signal that God is a mystery. A mystery must reveal itself.

That is the difference between a mystery and a riddle: you can crack a riddle. You can solve it by your own efforts and by correct understanding. With a secret, the most you can do is get the person holding the secret to spill the beans. But it is always only the person who knows the secret who can reveal it. And then there is the fact that people may not only have secrets, which they possibly tell you or do not tell you. It is also that other people, even if we know them very well, still have something mysterious about them. And in some situations in life, we

¹ All Bible quotations in the sermon and in the episcopal address come from the *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV 1989; Abingdon Press, Nashville 2003).

are a mystery to ourselves. This applies all the more to God, who is deeply mysterious to us. We can seek God and listen to God's word. But we can never fully understand God. God must reveal himself in order to be recognised. He must speak in order for us to hear from him. Even where another person reveals something to us about God, it is only a revelation about God. Similarly, when another person reveals something to us about a third person, it is not yet a direct encounter. For it is only when God reveals himself to us that we are grasped by him personally. And at the same time, something mysterious remains.

Already in the Old Testament, the stories of God's encounters with human beings preserve this continuing mystery. People want to know God's name, but God only gives Moses the mysterious answer: "*I am who I am.*" (Ex. 3:14) People want to see God's glory, but God tells Moses "*you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen.*" (Ex. 33:23). Where God reveals himself, we can see the traces of him behind. At the same time God remains mysterious.

The mystery of God in Jesus Christ

The New Testament points us to Christ in all its writings: we are to have knowledge of "*God's mystery, that is, Christ himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*" (Col. 2:2-3). In Jesus Christ the invisible God came visibly into our world as a man. The New Testament testifies in many ways to the traces left by Jesus of Nazareth. This gives us the opportunity to track the mystery of God that is revealed in him.

The sentence that all treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ sounds quite intellectual to our ears today. We think it is about knowledge. But the Jewish roots suggest something else. In the Old Testament, wisdom is the first of God's works of creation and it helps a person to live a meaningful life. Of course, wisdom praises the use of reason, but it is concerned with practical life. It aims at leading a life that promotes justice and happiness. We heard about this in one of the scripture readings. And in the same way, the treasures of knowledge hidden in Christ are not about mere knowledge. In the Old Testament, knowledge is also the word for conjugal love. Knowledge is about a deep, loving experience of belonging together. Knowledge happens in relationship and community.

For Paul, Jesus is the mysterious wisdom of God, previously hidden, but now revealed through the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 2). He proclaims Jesus, the crucified, as God's power. In another letter he calls Jesus the revelation of the mystery of God, which has been hidden for eternity and is now to be made known in Jesus Christ to all peoples around the earth (Rom. 16:25-27). And in the scripture reading from the Gospel of John we heard from Jesus' farewell discourse how much Jesus knew himself to be in union with his Father in order to reveal the mystery of God to the world. All the passages in the Bible about the mystery of God make it clear that it is about a relationship with God that is made possible through Jesus and then shapes and changes one's own life.

The transfer of faith to a next generation has stalled today. What needs to be transmitted is not head knowledge but wisdom of the heart. It is not about better knowledge, but deeper love. It is not about ready-made answers, but about a supporting foundation for life. It is not about gain for myself as an individual, but about growing in the community. It is not about better catechism knowledge for the next generation, but about awakening a hunger in our contemporaries to pursue the mystery of God beyond the visible and the possessable.

We can best follow the traces of God in the testimonies of the Holy Scripture. But to do this, we need to read the Bible. We must listen to its texts, what they have to tell us, and continue in dialogue with others about them. This is quite different from knowing a few biblical truths and repeating them as if they were mantras which guarantee happiness. If we as believers do not also remain seekers, our God resembles only a cracked riddle, remains a man-made idol,

and is not the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the prophets - and not the God and Father of Jesus Christ.

Discovering a mystery in astonished praise

In the Letter to the Colossians, Paul mentions with particular emphasis that the mystery of God appeared in Jesus Christ. This can only be spoken of with amazement. Astonishment is also appropriate when we hear the praise with which Paul sings of Jesus Christ as the image of God and head of the church (Col. 1:15-20):

*"Christ is the image of the invisible God,
the first born of all creation;
For in him all things in heaven and on earth were created,
things visible and invisible,
whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers -
all things have been created
through him
and for him.
He himself is before all things,
and in him all things hold together.
He is the head of the body, the church;
he is the beginning,
the firstborn from the dead,
so that he might come to have the first place in everything.
For in him
All the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,
and through him
God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things,
whether on earth or in heaven,
by making peace through the blood of his cross."*

This praise of Jesus Christ resounds in the midst of the community that believes in him. This praise reveals the breadth and length, height and depth of how God works in Christ (cf. Eph. 3:18). It embraces not only the significance of Jesus Christ for our salvation, but also for all of creation. It embraces the world. It is like a song that makes different strings twang, leads into new worlds of sound, and at the same time remains mysterious.

At first, I wanted to write a sermon only about this Christological hymn. But I couldn't, because it would have sounded too factual and doctrinal. When one begins to think about the mystery of God in Jesus Christ, it often leads to Christian teaching. This also has a value of its own - to a limited extent. But it is much more important not to make a dead, merely intellectual doctrine out of a mystery, as unfortunately still happens too often today. For the mystery of God in Christ always wants to move, shape and change life anew. He, Christ, the image of God, wants to change us into his image. In doing so, one may and should certainly "think about" a mystery, "think about what is behind" its traces, in order to discover it better and more deeply, without ever being able to fathom it out completely. I have quoted this Christological hymn in full because it makes us aware of how much greater the mystery of God in Christ is than what we have understood and proclaimed of it. Even as believers who have been gripped by the mystery of God in Christ, our understanding remains fragmentary. The Christological hymn in the Letter to the Colossians makes us plunge into how the triune God works in Christ, first in creation, then in redemption and then also once in perfection. When we see how God works, we are again amazed.

God as the mystery of the world

For many people, the Christian faith has nothing mysterious about it. There are people who think they know what the Christian faith teaches and that it is definitely no longer interesting for them. There are others who have no expectations of the Christian faith and rather look elsewhere for individually enriching experiences. And there are others again who have become full and satisfied and no longer expect anything new as believers. In a world where knowledge and "having understood something" are highly valued, God as the mystery of the world has got lost, unfortunately also among people who see themselves as believers. But the triune God as the mystery of the world can and should be witnessed to the world. For faith in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit remains invigorating at its core and allows believers to remain persons who both seek and are amazed.

In the Methodist movement, the promise that seekers can experience reconciliation with God and assurance of salvation in Christ has been important. Where this happens, it is the work of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, it was never an endpoint to have experienced the love of God, but a starting point for growing in love for God and fellow human beings. It was never an endpoint to have found the right knowledge of faith, but a starting point because one had been gripped by the inconceivably great love of Jesus Christ. It never remained an individual experience of salvation, but a starting point for discovering Christ in the face of another person. Whoever has been seized by the love of Christ will always discover new dimensions and continue the journey of following Christ. It does not become boring as if one had cracked a riddle and then that was it.

In the traditional basic forms of the Communion liturgy, we pray in the great prayer of thanksgiving that we "proclaim the mystery of faith: Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again". In these three short sentences the mystery of God in Christ shines out. It is further elaborated in the much longer Christological hymn in Colossians. A whole life is not enough to fathom this treasure of wisdom and knowledge. We are to proclaim it, but not as the final answer to all questions, but as the beginning of the path for all who let themselves be shaped by Christ. And that is why Paul says: "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly*" (Col. 3:16).

Amen.

Morning devotion by Bishop Christian Alsted of November 17, 2022, 8:30 a.m., Zwinglihaus Basel

The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace Galatians 5:1-6; 22-23

„Love, Joy, Peace“ sounds like a feel good story, or a leftover from the 1960's – love, peace and harmony. Only there is not much feel good about this letter to the Galatians. Paul is upset writing this letter, there is quite a bit of irony and even sarcasm in his words.

You don't have to become a Jew, by taking on the Mosaic law, and if you are male you don't have to be circumcised to become a fruitful follower of Christ in the new Christian community named the church, he says.

The issue is: How do we gain access to God - how are we saved, how do you become a Christian. Being here in the Zwingli house, some of you might say, its simple, salvation is through grace and by personal faith in Jesus Christ. But it wasn't that simple for the early Christians—they deeply disagreed on this issue. How does one become a citizen in your country – usually there are all kinds of requirements, in fact it can be almost impossible.

Peter – had a revelation on the roof of Simon the Tanners house – God invited him to eat all kinds of unclean food, Peter declined, and God told him not to turn down what he had declared clean. To make a long story short, Peter shared the gospel with the roman centurion Cornelius and his entire pagan family, the Spirit fell upon them, and Peter realized they were ready for baptism. That was a breakthrough for the church.

Not too long thereafter Paul had through revelation, his studies of the Jewish scriptures and his own experience come to the understanding... that not only is the gospel for all people, faith in Jesus is sufficient for Gentiles to become Christians, they don't need to obey the law or to be circumcised as the sign of the covenant.

In other words, his insight was, you do not have to meet all the conditions, it is fully sufficient that you desire to become a Swiss citizen to be a Swiss. But Paul really struggled to convince the other apostles and the church that this is true—they were not of the same mind —and yet in the end after much roundtable conversation and prayer, they decided in concert with the Holy Spirit to allow for flexibility in the church, and there was a Jerusalem way and an Antioch way. And this is when we get into Galatians.

Now Peter comes to visit Antioch — he really likes what he sees, and he engages in fellowship with these pagan Christians, but then someone who represents the Jerusalem way comes to visit, and suddenly Peter becomes insecure and confused and he withdraws from the Gentiles — and Paul has to stand up against Peter and publicly rebuke him.

Even after a large meeting, a general conference in Jerusalem, where they agree that the path to salvation for Gentiles does not have to go through becoming a Jew first, it is continuously an unresolved matter of conflict

The entire epistle to Galatians is focused on this, Paul argues his understanding in a very colorful language. But then in the middle of his passionate letter, in chapter 5, he pauses and says...

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love." There you have it, we struggle with this, but there is really only one thing that matters, faith working through love. That's what we need to hold on to, that will unite us.

"No motif in the Wesleyan tradition has been more constant than the link between Christian doctrine and Christian living." It's not me saying this—it's in the "Our Theological Task" in UMC book of discipline, and it's actually a very good book if only you read the right places.

It also says and now I quote again: "We do not preach any personal gospel that is not expressed in relevant social concerns, and we do not preach any social gospel that does not include the personal conversion of sinners."

Faith working through love - is the core of the Christian faith.

This what we see in Jesus' life — He is, as John says, the word that became flesh, God completely without a filter, they saw his glory, and he was full of grace and truth. None of us have seen God, but in Jesus they saw Him clearly—He made faith physical, He made the spiritual tangible, He made the ordinary special, and He included and loved everyone. He taught us to live with respect, to protect and care for the weakest, to make room, and to let love for others take priority above everything else.

Jimmy is 97 years old. He had brain cancer in 2015. In May 2019, he broke his hip. On a Sunday morning Jimmy fell and he needed 14 stitches at the hospital. On Monday morning, Jimmy showed up to build houses for poor people for Habitat for Humanity. Jimmy is a badass. (and that's a quote).

Jimmy Carter was also America's 39th president — he was not particularly popular and he lost the election after 4 years to Ronald Reagan. But afterwards he became a highly respected peacemaker. And now it comes, after his retirement, Jimmy has for 39 years regularly taught a Sunday school class for adults in the small insignificant Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Georgia.

I know some people like Jimmy, they are called, Artur, Gita, Veronika, Remigijus, Walla, Marjan, Camilla, Rainer, Carsten, Jarl, Klaus, Reidar, Vera, Jukka, Sergei, Walla, Volodymor, Regina I am sure you know some too.. and I am sure they inspire you, as they inspire me.

Being a Christian is not a program statement — it's a life, we live.

Paul speaks about the fruit of the Spirit. We should be careful to note that Paul speaks about the fruit of the Spirit in singular, and not in plural, fruits. When God's Spirit is at work, we will see all the nine varieties of fruit emerging. You cannot pick one or two, I am good at joy and kindness, but faithfulness, patience and self-control is not really the way I am wired. It is the full package, and there is a reason why the list begins with love and ends with self-control.

The fruit of the Spirit doesn't grow automatically, the fruit doesn't suddenly appear simply because someone starts to believe in Jesus. While fruit may certainly be present in your life, it takes quite a bit of work to deal with all kinds of blight, mold, parasites and insects that damage and limit the fruit, and the human tree, at least this human tree, needs quite a bit of trimming and pruning to cultivate the way of life and develop the habits of heart and mind.

The fruit of the Spirit is both infused and acquired. Theologically this a delicate balance, we are talking about something God does and something we as humans do — perhaps the most exact description of this unique relationship of infused and acquired is found in Paul's letter to the Philippians chapter two. Paul has just urged us to carry out our own salvation with fear

and trembling, and then he goes on to say in verse 13: "God is the one who enables you both to want and to actually live out his good purposes."

The fruit of the Spirit is the result of God's work in us and of our conscious choice and work with ourselves, and this is best done in fellowship with others.

We live in a world with many big words – but regardless of whether the words go viral on social media, are shouted out by a charismatic preacher with an edgy worship band behind him or are said in a microphone in a COP27 meeting – most big words make very little difference.

What focus does a church that produces disciples like Jimmy and all the others have? In summary it can be described with 4 words, and solidarity, generosity evangelization or climate change is not one of them. The 4 words are "Faith working in love"

It matters how we live – the way the fruit of the Spirit is embodied in your life matters.

Morning devotion by Bishop Eduard Khegay of November 18, 2022, 8:30 a.m., Zwinglihaus Basel

The fruit of the spirit is patience, kindness, generosity Galatians 5, 22-23

Dear sisters and brothers of the Central and Southern Europe Central Conference of the United Methodist Church,

I greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! I also bring you greetings from the Eurasia Episcopal area of the United Methodist Church! It is a great blessing and privilege to be part of the Christian body of Central and Southern Europe Episcopal Area. Your area is home for so many of my heroes in life like: Jean Piaget (Switzerland), Mozart, Roger Federer, Dominik Hasek, Jean Reno, Maria Skłodowska-Curie, Nikola Tesla, Viktor Frankl, ... and my favorite Swiss — Bishop Patrick Streiff!

Thank you, Patrick, for your generous invitation and strengthening our Christian solidarity in this difficult time for our church and our world! You are truly a leader who leads with patience, kindness and generosity. I thank God for you! Today, I am going to lead devotion on these three parts of the fruit of the spirit: Patience, kindness, generosity.

As humanity moves through the ages, let us acknowledge gigantic shifts of cultures, politics, and economics from the time of Apostle Paul to the modern time, post modern time or even metamodern time. But as an old school boy, I have always been taught that when things get confusing, you need to stick to the basics. Today I choose to stick with this basic idea — the fruit tree is created to bear fruit! Whether you live in Roman Empire of the Apostle Paul or in Europe of Metamodernism era, the fruit tree is made to bear fruit, and a disciple of Christ is created to bear fruit of the spirit! Amen?

Jesus said to His disciples in the Gospel of John 15:16: "You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name." (John 15:16 NRSV). Jesus chose us and appointed us to go and bear fruit! If we are spiritual beings than it is logical for each of us to bear fruit of the spirit. Let us imagine ourselves as spiritual tree that is designed by God to bear fruits. What fruit do we have? If we have had time to play, I would ask you to choose which fruit tree you want to be and why? — maybe apple tree, or peach tree, or maybe avocado tree?

1) Let us look at patience

What is patience? When I was in middle school, I remember one of my most hated experiences in my life. Living in Soviet Union, we often experienced shortage of food products in the store. My mother would often send me to the vegetable store to get some vegetables and fruits. It was quite an ordeal. Socialism at its worst. You come and stand in line for several hours. The line goes outside the building on a hot summer day and moves very very slowly. After several hours of this humiliating experience you reach the point of sale only to experience hostility of the sales lady who puts many bad quality vegetables on the weighing machine and curse you if you try to argue with her or ask her to change some of

the carrots for the better ones. "Be patient!" — you would often hear from the people behind you who are eager for you to leave as soon as possible.

When I grew older and reflected on my traumatic childhood experience I realized that patience was often taught to us, Soviet people, in a wrong and manipulative way. It was not producing any good, but was suppressing the dignity of the people. It was not changing the system for the benefit of the clients, but justifying the status quo. That is not the patience Bible tells us about!

What kind of patience Bible teaches us?

The Greek word μακροθυμία (Transliteration - makrothymia, Pronunciation - mak-roth-oo-mee'-ah) can be translated into English as patience, endurance, constancy, steadfastness, perseverance; especially as shown in bearing troubles and ill

Apostle Paul describes the hardships of Christian life to Corinthians (6:6). Let us listen and immerse ourselves in this context of patience, long suffering, perseverance...

"We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything."

2 Corinthians 6:3-10 NIV: 3 We put no stumbling-block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. 4 Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; 5 in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; 6 in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; 7 in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; 8 through glory and dishonour, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; 9 known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; 10 sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything. In the Russian translation of this passage the word μακροθυμία is translated as "Velikodushie" which literally means "great soul". We can already get a hint that patience is a relational fruit. Someone in the midst of troubles and challenges is called to bear this fruit. Someone is called to expand his soul to let God make it a great soul. We certainly need that in our life today!

In his letters to other churches, Apostle Paul emphasizes this relational aspect of patience or in some translations "longsuffering": Colossians 3:12-14 "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."

Ephesians 4:2: "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love". Patience: It is relational. It is between you and me, between us Christians, and between us and our world today. In order for us to build this kind of relationships, and

bear this fruit of the spirit, we need an example of patience. Where do we find it? In the vegetable store? Or in the security line at the airport? Or may be in the comment sections of the social media?

The answer is: Jesus Christ! 1 Timothy 1:15-17: "Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." God has shown his patience toward us. He gives us chance to repent.

In his book "Gulag Archipelago" Alexander Solzhenitsyn writes about long suffering of believers. They were different from others. They had high moral standards and spiritual strengths that helped them to persevere the hardships of life in the concentration camp. Their fruit of the spirit, namely, patience — μακροθυμία — was very visible and real. They had the right source and great example — Jesus Christ.

Patience is when you love others in spite of their betrayal or resistance, in spite of your own suffering and loneliness. You produce this fruit of the spirit because God works in you with His amazing grace and invites you to follow Him and His example.

2) Kindness (благость)

What is kindness? Wikipedia defines kindness in the following way: Kindness is a type of behavior marked by acts of generosity, consideration, rendering assistance or concern for others, without expecting praise or reward in return.

Kindness is a topic of interest in philosophy, religion, and psychology. Kindness was one of the main topics in the Bible. In Book II of "Rhetoric", Aristotle defines kindness as "helpfulness towards someone in need, not in return for anything, nor for the advantage of the helper himself, but for that of the person helped".

Kindness is what I have experienced when I first visited United Methodist Church in Moscow 30 years ago. People welcomed me, the sinner, and blessed me every week with their kindness, hospitality, listening and food. There were something special about these people, called Methodists. They did care about me without expecting anything in return.

That touched my heart and made me interested in what it means to be a Christian, a Methodist. Later on I learned that God expects all Christians to be kind. In Colossians 3:12 "As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience."

Apostle Paul uses the metaphor of clothe. That is one of the things you see when you first look at the person. It is our outward appearance. In Russia we have a saying about dating and if I paraphrase it the meaning is this: "we invite someone for a date based on the clothes, but continue to meet based on the brain".

Let kindness be the fruit that people experience when they meet us, Christians, and when they continue to meet us day after day. Just as patience, we can say that kindness is an

attribute of God. Ephesians 2:5-7 “even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ —by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

Jesus is kind towards us. In the Gospels we see Jesus especially kind to those who are marginalized — children, hungry people, women, the sick, the poor... In her book “The Kindness of God” Catholic theologian and philosopher Janet Soskice writes: “In Middle English, the words ‘kind’ and ‘kin’ were the same—to say that Christ is ‘our kinde Lord’ is not to say that Christ is tender and gentle, although that may be implied, but to say that he is kin—our kind. This fact, and not emotional disposition, is the rock which is our salvation.”

I want to share a personal story that happened to me just few days after military mobilization on September 21, 2022. I have two University friends. Both of them are originally from Ukraine, to be more precise — from Eastern Ukraine. Both of them became Russian citizens about 30 years ago when the Soviet Union collapsed. Their parents still live there near Donetsk city. We know each other for 35 years! We lived in one room with four beds, we did home work together, we cooked and ate together, we played sports together, and struggled to find our future wives together.

So once a year we go to the banya, which is the Russian version of sauna. We meet, share our stories, we laugh and remember our student life, we talk about the future of our county. So, in September we were planning to meet together in banya. We booked a place, and chose the day and time... Then suddenly one of my friend sent a instant message to our group. He said: before we go to banya, we shall clarify - do you support the invasion of Ukraine or not, are you for Russia or not? My other friend messaged: let us not bring this up when we meet. No, no, - said the first friend. We need to know before we meet. Because, I recently had conversation with one stupid man who actually does not support our Russian army. My second friend replied: Are you crazy? We have known each other for 35 years, and now you want to put the politics above our friendship. My first friend concluded: I got it. I see no point for us to meet. I almost cried when I read this conversation between my friends. I felt like my kin falls apart. My friends, my brothers break their relationships...

Kin and kindness — have the same root. If we truly mean when we say sisters and brothers, that means we are kin, we are called to be kind to each other. We need kindness today as we try to restore relationships between Russians and Ukrainians, between Russians who support the Russian army and those who don't. We need kindness today as we try to navigate the divisions in our own beloved United Methodist Church!

3) Generosity (милосердие)

ἀγαθωσύνη agathōsýnē, ag-ath-o-soo'-nay; goodness, i.e. virtue or beneficence: — goodness. Uprightness = honest, direct, the state of being in a vertical position. Generous - marked by abundance or ample proportions (Merriam Webster dictionary) generous <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/generous>.

A generous person gives more of something, especially money, than is usual or expected. A generous person is friendly, helpful, and willing to see the good qualities in someone or something. Ex. Christmas truce (ceasefire) https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christmas_truce

How can we be Generous in time of our world wide UMC divisions? How can we be generous in time of war in Ukraine and growing hostility between Western world and my beloved motherland Russia? I am grateful to you, sisters and brothers from Central and Southern Europe for your generosity towards millions of Ukrainian people during this crisis. I am grateful to the United Methodist people around the world for your generosity towards hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian people who became refugees in Europe and Russia. We soon will start the season of Advent. What gifts or rather fruits can we bear for this coming Christmas?

Sisters and brothers, I pray that your Central Conference will bear this good fruit — patience, kindness, generosity — that is so needed today in the world divided between East and West, and in our church divided between so called conservatives and liberals.

Morning devotion by Bishop David Bard of November 19, 2022, 8:30 a.m., Zwinglihaus Basel

The fruit of the Spirit is faithfulness, gentleness, self-control Galatians 5, 22-23

Dear friends, I greet you in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the peace and power of God's Holy Spirit. Guten Tag. Bon jour. I can also count to ten in both these languages, but conversational fluency in either is beyond my current abilities.

I am deeply grateful to be able to be with you this week as you celebrate the ministry of Bishop Patrick Streiff and elect a new bishop in your Central Conference. It is my honor to be able to represent the Council of Bishops.

"And the fruit of the Spirit is...". This morning we are focusing on the final three fruits of the Spirit, in the English language New Revised Standard Version "faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." It is the middle term I want to focus on – gentleness.

A number of years ago, when I was pastor of a church, I invited my congregation to read through the New Testament with me. Reading five chapters a week for fifty-two weeks gets one through the New Testament exactly. While I had read through the New Testament before, one thing that captured my attention this time was the frequency of the word "gentleness." There are so many places where "gentleness," or something akin like "tenderness," appears as a desired quality. In the Letter of James, we followers of Jesus are encouraged, "show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom" (3:13). The author of I Peter writes: "Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind" (3:18). It would seem that to be faithful in living our faith, we need to cultivate gentleness – faithful gentleness.

The theologian and ethicist Paul Lehmann, in his classic book *Ethics in a Christian Context*, wrote that the heart of Christian ethics is being attuned and attentive to "what God is doing in the world to make and keep human life human" (14). God is about the work of making and keeping human life human, encouraging a humaneness in our lives and relationships. When I consider what humaneness entails, it is compassion, kindheartedness, in another words, "gentleness." God's work is humane work, humanizing work. It is the work of gentleness. Our calling is faithful gentleness.

If faithfulness in following Jesus, in living our faith, has something to do with gentleness, if a mark of the Spirit's soul-shaping work in our lives is gentleness, what does this mean? What do we mean by "gentleness"? I think of three dimensions of gentleness.

One dimension of gentleness is humility. Krista Tippett, host of radio shows "Speaking of Faith" and "On Being" writes that humility is "woven through lives of wisdom and resilience." She calls humility "a companion to curiosity and delight." "Like humor, it softens us for hospitality and beauty and questioning and all the other virtues.... Spiritual

humility is not about getting small, not about debasing oneself, but about approaching everything and everyone else with a readiness to see goodness and to be surprised.... It has a lightness of step, not a heaviness of heart." (Becoming Wise, 266).

Humility is about deep self-knowledge. Theologian Donald Evans: "Humility is a realistic, unashamed acceptance and exercise of the limited power and finite freedom which I have as a human being" (Struggle and Fulfillment, 6).

Humility is about being open to new learning and new growth. One can always learn more about the wonder and mystery of life and the love and grace of God. We can always see more broadly, feel more deeply, and think more imaginatively. I love the prayer/meditation of Howard Thurman: "I seek this day an active wonder. An active wonder is the desperate need of my mind and spirit. The awareness of the unexplored and the untried.... The illumination of wonder over my familiar landscape, revealing in ordinary things, fresh glories" (Meditations of the Heart, 101).

Krista Tippett said that humility softens us up for hospitality and hospitality is a second dimension of gentleness. If humility is centered in how we see, hospitality is centered in relationships. Hospitality is about creating space for others, welcoming, affirming and caring space, space of deep conversation, humane space. Hospitality is about building beloved community. Hospitality challenges us. What might hospitality mean in a world of displacement and migration? What might hospitality mean in a world of stark and sharp differences?

In the U.S. context Anand Giridharadas {gear-dra-das} writes about a disturbing element in our culture, one of "writing people off – assuming that they would never change their minds or ways, dismissing them as hopelessly mired in identities they couldn't escape, viewing those who thought differently as needing to be resisted rather than won over, refusing to engage the work of persuasion" (The Persuaders, 4). He shares, "new research shows that if you want to change someone's mind, you need to have patience with them, ask them to reflect on their life, and listen. It's not about calling people out or labeling them" (302). Giridharadas encourages a "gentleness toward people who haven't got it all figured out" (*New York Times*). Hospitality has something to do with developing that kind of persuasion culture, giving each other space to think together and converse together, in contrast to an oppositional culture where we see others who disagree as only opposition to be defeated or dismissed. Hospitality is more than this persuasion culture, but certainly includes this.

The last dimension of gentleness I want to identify is healing. On the day in 1968 that U.S. civil rights leader and Nobel prize winner, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated, Senator Robert Kennedy was campaigning for his party's nomination for President of The United States. He shared these words to a hurting and shocked crowd. "We can make an effort... to understand and to comprehend, and to replace violence with compassion and with love. What we need in the United States is love and wisdom and compassion toward one another, and a feeling of justice toward those who still suffer.... Let us dedicate ourselves to what the Greeks wrote so many years ago: to tame the savageness of men and make gentle the life of the world." (April 4, 1969)

The world is hurting and broken and in turmoil and suffering trauma. We see human savageness in war, and in extreme poverty. We see willful human neglect in our turning away from the climate crisis. In the name and spirit of Jesus, we need to bring gentle healing to our world. We are called in Jesus Christ to make gentle the life of the world.

Faithful gentleness – humility, hospitality, healing. Ah, but I’ve neglected self-control! Let me remedy this. Faithful gentleness requires self-control, in the translation of the New Testament The Message, “the marshalling and directing our energies wisely.” To cultivate humility, we need disciplines of seeing truthfully and opening our minds, hearts and souls to beauty, wonder awe, and sometimes to terror and trauma and incredible inhumanity. To cultivate hospitality requires disciplines of listening and respect, of seasoning our conversation with salt and of asking difficult questions of what hospitality may require in a complex world. To be a healing presence in the world, we need to marshal the courage to see the hurt and trauma and brokenness of the world and the courage to reach out with the healing grace of God.

In his book *A Pretty Good Person*, Lewis Smedes writes: “There is only one way to stay in control of anything... Practice!” (111). Self-control is about continuing to practice gentleness, engage in practices that cultivate humility, that produce hospitality, that make us better instruments for healing in the world. These include practices of worship and prayer, of attending and listening, of cultivating a rich Scriptural imagination and a keen intelligence. Gentleness, as a fruit of the Spirit is both a gift and a series of practices. God in the Spirit puts the spark of the gift within, and we have responsibility to fan the flames, and as we do our part, God seems to add more of the gift. In his sermon, “On Working Out Our Own Salvation,” John Wesley wrote: “Stir up the spark of grace which is now in you, and he will give you more grace.”

Let me begin to wrap up by offering a lovely image of gentleness, of faithful gentleness nurtured by self-control. Howard Thurman whose deep wells of theological acumen and vivacious spirituality allowed him to be a powerful voice for civil rights for Black Americans in the United States, Thurman once offered the image of being an “Apostle of Sensitiveness.” “To have a sense of what is vital, a basic and underlying awareness of life and its potentialities at every level of experience.” (*Deep is the Hunger*, xi). “To drink in the beauty that is within reach, to clothe one’s life with simple deeds of kindness, to keep alive a sensitiveness to the movement of the spirit of God in the quietness of the human heart and the workings of the human mind” (*Meditations of the Heart*, 111).

Gentleness. Faithful gentleness. Humility as openness and honesty and wonder and curiosity. Hospitality as making space for others, conversation space, persuasive culture, space of caring and compassion, beloved community. Healing as responding in compassion to the brokenness and pain and trauma of the world, making gentle the life of the world. Faithful gentleness responding to the God who is at work to make and keep human life human. Let us be God’s faithful, gentle people. Let us show by our good lives that our works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. Let us be people living with sympathy, love for one another, tender hearts, and humble minds. This is the work of the Spirit in our souls. This is what God asks of us as we live as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world. The renewal of the church is found along this way of being God’s

faithful gentle people, apostles of sensitiveness. People hunger for communities of curiosity and wonder and care, hunger for hospitable places, hunger for deeply conversational communities, hunger to both be healed and to participate in the healing of the world. In the Spirit let us create such communities. In the Spirit let us be such people. May it be so by the grace of God and in the power of God's Spirit. Amen.

**Worship service with episcopal consecration
of 20 November 2022, 14.00, Basel Cathedral**



Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche
Zentralkonferenz Mittel- und Südeuropa
United Methodist Church
Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

Gottesdienst
mit Weihe des neuen Bischofs
Service
with consecration of the new bishop



Sonntag, 20. November 2022
14.00 Uhr Basler Münster

Mitwirkende:

Orgel: Münsterorganist Andreas Liebig

Sopran: Pfarrerin Gudrun Sidonie Otto

Trompete: Olivier Koerper

Chor: Projektchor der EMK Region Basel, Leitung: Sylvia Wilhelm

Klavier: Martina Gebhart

Lektorin: Pfarrerin Erika Stalcup (EMK Lausanne)

Lektor: Pfarrer Stefan Weller (EMK Basel)

Zum Bischof gewählter Pfarrer: Stefan Zürcher

Vorstellung durch: Boszena Daszuta (Delegierte JK Polen) und

Pfarrer Markus Bach (Sekretär der ZK MSE)

I. Ankommen – Gott bringt uns zusammen

- Chor Viktor Hug (*1939) «Du bist der Anfang»
- Grussworte der gastgebenden Gemeinden
Pfarrerin Caroline Schröder-Field (Ev.-ref. Müstergemeinde)
Pfarrerin Marietjie Odendaal (Pfarrteam Basler EMK-Gemeinden)
- Eingangsglied (siehe nächste Seite) mit Einzug der Mitwirkenden
(Die Gemeinde erhebt sich)
- Grusswort und Gebet (PS)
(Die Gemeinde bleibt stehen und antwortet Bischof Patrick Streiff):

Die Gnade unseres Herrn Jesus Christus sei mit euch.

Und auch mit dir.

Unsere Hilfe steht im Namen des Herrn,

der Himmel und Erde gemacht hat.

Lasst uns gemeinsam beten:

Allmächtiger Gott, durch deinen Sohn Jesus Christus und den Heiligen Geist hast du deinen Aposteln viele ausgezeichnete Gaben verliehen. Schenk deine Gnade allen Mitarbeitenden deiner Kirche, damit wir mit Sorgfalt und Treue unsere vielfältigen Dienste verrichten. Gewähre uns als deinem Volk, dass wir gehen, wohin du uns führst, und dass wir im fröhlichen Gehorsam nach deinem Willen leben; durch Jesus Christus, unseren Herrn. Amen.

Bishops participating:

Bischof Patrick Streiff (Mittel- und Südeuropa) – Leitung
Bischof Harald Rückert (Deutschland) - Predigt
Bischöfin i. R. Rosemarie Wenner (Deutschland)
Bishop Guy Muyombo Mande (DR Congo)
Bishop David Bard (USA)
Bishop Christian Alsted (Northern Europe and Baltics)
Bishop Eduard Khegay (Eurasia)

I. Arriving – God brings us together

- *Choir: Viktor Hug (*1939) «Du bist der Anfang»*
- *Greeting by hosting congregations*
Rev. Caroline Schröder-Field (Ev.-ref. Münstergemeinde)
Rev. Marietjie Odendaal (Team UMC Basel)
- *Processional hymn (next page)*
(people stand up)
- *Greeting and opening prayer*
(People remain standing and respond to Bischof Patrick Streiff):
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

The Creator of heaven and earth.

Let us pray.

*Almighty God, by your Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit
you gave to your apostles many excellent gifts.
Give your grace to all servants of your Church, that we may
with diligence and faithfulness fulfill our various ministries.
Grant that we your people may follow where you lead and live
in joyful obedience to your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

- Eingangslied/Hymn (EM 42, UMH 88):
«Schöpfer der ganzen Welt» «Maker, in Whom We Live»

D Bm G

1 Schöp - fer der gan - zen Welt, du

D Em A D Bm

Quell und Le - bens - grund, der lie - be - voll uns

E A D A E

führt und trägt, dir dan - ken Herz und

A A⁷ D G

Mund und mit der En - gel Heer er -

E E⁷ A A⁷ D G

schal-le un-ser Lied. Wir brin-gen Lob und

A⁷ D G A⁷ D

Preis und Ehr und dan-ken dei-ner Güt.

- 2 *Incar-nate Deity, let all the ransomed race
render in thanks their lives to thee for thy redeeming grace.
The grace to sinners showed ye heavenly choirs proclaim
and cry, "Salvation to our God, salvation to the Lamb!"*
- 3 *Spirit of Holiness, let all thy saints adore
thy sacred energy and bless thine heart renewing power.
Not angel tongues can tell thy love's ecstatic height,
the glorious joy unspeakable, the beatific sight.*
- 4 *Ewig dreiein'ger Gott, hilf jedem Menschenkind,
dass es mit deiner Schar vereint im Himmel Heimat findt.
Wenn alle Welt erscheint vor Gottes Angesicht,
singt, Heilge, Gottes Liebeslied zum Lob im ewgen Licht.*

Text: Charles Wesley 1747

Deutsch: Annegret Klaiber 2000

Melodie und Satz: George J. Elvey 1868

- Vorstellung

Eine Laienperson und ein Ältester, ausgewählt vom vorsitzenden Bischof, stellen die gewählte Person dem Bischof vor:

Bischof Patrick,

wir stellen dir vor: Stefan Zürcher, ein Ältester der Kirche, der als Bischof der Kirche von Jesus Christus geweiht werden soll.

Nach der Vorstellung spricht der vorsitzende Bischof zur Gemeinde:

Volk Gottes, Stefan Zürcher soll durch Gottes Gnade als Bischof der Kirche geweiht werden. Er ist gemäss der Ordnung in dieses Amt gewählt worden. Wir bitten euch nun, euer Einverständnis zu erklären.

Vertraut ihr darauf, dass er durch Gottes Gnade würdig ist, als Bischof geweiht zu werden?

Wir vertrauen darauf und danken Gott.

Werdet ihr ihn in seinem Amt als Bischof der Kirche unterstützen?

Mit Gottes Hilfe werden wir das tun!

- Gebet

(PS) Die Heilige Schrift sagt uns, dass unser Erlöser Jesus Christus die ganze Nacht im Gebet verbrachte, bevor er die zwölf Apostel auswählte und aussandte. Auch die Apostel haben gebetet, bevor sie Matthias zu einem der ihren ernannten.

Wir wollen uns mit unseren Gebeten an den allmächtigen Gott wenden, bevor Stefan Zürcher für das Werk geweiht wird, zu dem der Heilige Geist ihn berufen hat.

Lasst uns in der Stille beten: ... Stille ...

Allmächtiger Gott, Geber aller guten Gaben, durch deinen Heiligen Geist hast du in deiner Kirche eine Vielfalt von Ämtern eingesetzt. Schau gnädig auf diesen deinen Diener, der jetzt für das Amt eines Bischofs ausgewählt ist. Begabe ihn mit der Heiligung des Lebens, und erfülle ihn mit der Kraft deines Heiligen Geistes, damit er dir durch Wort und Tat, treu und fröhlich dienen kann, zur Ehre deines Namens und zum Aufbau deiner Kirche; durch Jesus Christus, unseren Herrn, der mit dir und dem Heiligen Geist lebt und regiert, jetzt und in Ewigkeit. Amen.

- Musikstück Georg Friedrich Händel (1685 – 1759), „Let the bright seraphim“ aus dem Oratorium Samson

- *Presentation*

One layperson and one elder, chosen by the presiding bishop, present the bishop-elect to the presiding bishop:

*Bishop Patrick,
we present to you Stefan Zürcher, an elder in the Church, to be consecrated a bishop in the Church of Jesus Christ.*

After the presentation the presiding bishop addresses the congregation:

People of God, Stefan Zürcher is, by God's grace, to be consecrated bishop in the Church. He has been duly elected to this ministry. We ask you to declare your assent.

Do you trust that he is worthy, by God's grace, to be consecrated bishop?

We do! Thanks be to God!

Will you uphold him in his ministry as bishop of the Church?

With God's help, we will!

- *Prayer*

The scriptures tell us that our Savior Jesus Christ spent the whole night in prayer before he chose and sent forth the twelve apostles. The apostles also prayed before they appointed Matthias to be one of their number.

Let us offer our prayers to almighty God before Stefan Zürcher is consecrated for the work to which the Holy Spirit has called him.

Let us pray in silence. ... All pray in silence ...

Almighty God, giver of all good things, by your Holy Spirit you have appointed a diversity of ministries in your Church.

Look in mercy upon this your servant, now to be set apart for the ministry of a bishop, so replenish him with holiness of life, and fill him with the power of your Holy Spirit, that both by word and by deed, he may serve you faithfully and joyously, to the glory of your name and the building up of your Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

- *Music: Georg Frideric Handel (1685 – 1759) „Let the bright seraphim“ from the oratorio Samson*

II. Hören – Gott spricht zu uns

- Biblische Lesung: Jesaja 6, 1 - 8 (Basisbibel)

In dem Jahr, in dem König Usija starb, hatte ich eine Vision: Ich sah den Herrn auf einem hoch aufragenden Thron sitzen. Die Schleppen seines Gewandes füllten die ganze Tempelhalle aus. Serafim standen dienend vor ihm. Jeder von ihnen hatte sechs Flügel. Mit zweien verhüllte er sein Gesicht, mit zweien seine Beine, und mit zweien flog er. Einer rief dem anderen zu: »Heilig, heilig, heilig ist der Herr Zebaoth! Sein herrlicher Glanz erfüllt die ganze Erde.« Sie riefen so laut, dass die Türschwellen im Tempel bebten. Das ganze Gebäude füllte sich mit Rauch. Da sprach ich: »Wehe mir, ich bin verloren! Denn ich bin ein Mensch mit unreinen Lippen und lebe in einem Volk mit unreinen Lippen. Und doch habe ich den König, den Herrn Zebaoth, mit eigenen Augen gesehen.« Da kam einer der Serafim zu mir geflogen. In seiner Hand hielt er eine glühende Kohle. Die hatte er mit einer Zange vom Altar genommen. Damit berührte er meine Lippen und sagte: »Wenn ich jetzt deine Lippen berühre, ist deine Sünde verschwunden und deine Schuld vergeben.«

Dann hörte ich den Herrn sagen: »Wen soll ich senden? Wer will unser Bote sein?« Ich antwortete: »Hier bin ich, sende mich!«

- Gemeindelied/Hymn (EM 552) «Ich, der Meer und Himmel schuf»

Strophen (Begleitsatz)

G Am D

1 »Ich, der Meer und Him - mel schuf,
Ich, der Mond und Stern' ge - macht,

G Em C D

hör - te mei - nes Vol - kes Ruf.
sen - de Licht in ih - re Nacht.

>>>

II. Listening – God speaks to us

- *Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 6, 1 - 8 (New International Version)*
In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.
“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.”
Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”
Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

>>>

Die aus Knecht-schaft zu mir schrein, will ich be-
Wer will Frie - dens-bo-te sein?

frein. Wer ist be - reit?« _____

Refrain (Singsatz)

G Em G

Ich bin hier, Herr. Meinst du mich, Herr?

Em Am D

Dei-nen Ruf ver - nahm ich in der Nacht.

G Em G

Ich will gehn, Herr. Füh-re du mich!

Em Am D G

Leg dein Volk mir tief in Herz und Sinn!

Text und Melodie: Daniel L. Schutte (USA) 1981
 Deutsch: Annegret und Walter Klaiber 1999
 Begleitsatz: Daniel L. Schutte 1981 / Carlton R. Young 1988
 Rechte: bei den Autoren

2 Ich, der Herr von Sturm und Schnee, / trug des Volkes Leid und
Weh, / habe oft um sie geweint. / Sie sind verirrt. // Ich zerbrech ihr
Herz aus Stein, / pflanze Liebe in sie ein, / will sie rufen durch mein
Wort. / Wer ist bereit?

Refrain: Ich bin hier, Herr...

3 Ich, der Feuer lenkt und Wind, / sorg für die, die elend sind, / lade sie zu
meinem Fest / und rette sie. // Ich schenk ihnen gutes Brot, / dass kein
Hunger sie bedroht, / geb mein Leben für sie hin. / Wer ist bereit?

Refrain: Ich bin hier, Herr...

1 *I, the Lord of sea and sky, / I have heard my people cry. / all who dwell
in dark and sin / my hand will save. // I, who made the stars of night, /
I will make their darkness bright. / Who will bear my light to them? /
Whom shall I send?*

Chorus: *Here I am, Lord.
Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord,
If you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

2 *I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people's pain. / I have
wept for love of them. / They turn away. // I will break their hearts of
stone, / give them hearts for love alone. / I will speak my word to them.
/ Whom shall I send?*

3 *I, the Lord of wind and flame. I will tend the poor and lame. / I will set
a feast for them. / My hand will save. // Finest bread I will provide / till
their hearts be satisfied. / I will give my life to them. / Whom shall I
send?*

- Biblische Lesung: Galater 5, 22 - 26 (Zürcher Bibel)
Die Frucht des Geistes aber ist Liebe, Freude, Frieden, Geduld, Güte, Rechtschaffenheit, Treue, Sanftmut, Selbstbeherrschung. Gegen all dies kann kein Gesetz etwas haben. Die aber zu Christus Jesus gehören, haben das Fleisch samt seinen Leidenschaften und Begierden gekreuzigt. Wenn wir im Geist leben, wollen wir uns auch am Geist ausrichten. Lasst uns nicht eitlem Ruhm nachjagen, einander nicht reizen, einander nicht beneiden!
- Predigt Bischof Harald Rückert
- Musikstück Antonin Dvořák (1841 – 1904) «Hör, o Gott, o höre mein Gebet» (Slyš, ó Bože! slyš modlitbu mou) Psalm 55, 2–9
aus den Biblischen Liedern op. 99

III. Teilen – Gott verbindet uns miteinander

- Wechselgebet zum sozialen Bekenntnis der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche (RW)

Gott, offenbart in Jesus Christus,
ruft uns in seiner Gnade durch den Heiligen Geist:

Lasst euch erneuern zum Ebenbild eures Schöpfers,
dass ihr eins seid in der Liebe Gottes für die Welt.

Dies ist der Tag:

Gott sorgt sich um die Bewahrung der Schöpfung,
will Heilung und Heil allen Lebens
und weint über die Ausbeutung der Erde.

Und wir mit Gott.

Dies ist der Tag:

Gott schließt die gesamte Menschheit in seine Arme,
freut sich an Vielfalt und Verschiedenheit
und hat Gefallen, wenn Fremde zu Freunden werden.

Und wir mit Gott.

Dies ist der Tag:

Gott schreit mit den Massen verhungerner Menschen,
verabscheut die wachsende Kluft zwischen reich und arm
und fordert Gerechtigkeit in Arbeit und Handel.

Und wir mit Gott.

- *New Testament Lesson: Gal. 5, 22-26 (New International Version)*
But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.
Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.
Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.
- *Sermon Bishop Harald Rückert*
- *Music Antonín Dvořák (1841 – 1904) «Hear, O God, hear my prayer» (Slyš, ó Bože! slyš modlitbu mou) Psalm 55, 2–9 from Biblical Songs op. 99*

III. Sharing – God bonds us together

- *A Companion Litany to the Social Creed of the United Methodist Church*
God in the Spirit revealed in Jesus Christ,
calls us by grace

to be renewed in the image of our Creator,
that we may be one in divine love for the world.

Today is the day
God cares for the integrity of creation,
wills the healing and wholeness of all life,
weeps at the plunder of earth's goodness.

And so shall we.

Today is the day
God embraces all hues of humanity,
delights in diversity and difference,
favors solidarity transforming strangers into friends.

And so shall we.

Today is the day
God cries with the masses of starving people,
despises growing disparity between rich and poor,
demands justice for workers in the marketplace.

And so shall we.

Dies ist der Tag:

Gott beklagt die Gewalt in unseren Häusern und Strassen,
verurteilt den Kriegswahn der Welt,
erniedrigt die Mächtigen und erhöht die Niedrigen.

Und wir mit Gott.

Dies ist der Tag:

Gott ruft alle Nationen und Völker auf, in Frieden zu leben,
feiert, wo Recht und Erbarmen sich küssen,
und jubelt, wenn Wolf und Lamm einträchtig zusammen sind.

Und wir mit Gott.

Dies ist der Tag:

Gott bringt den Armen gute Nachricht,
verkündet den Gefangenen Freiheit,
gibt den Blinden das Augenlicht
und richtet die Zerschlagenen auf.

Und wir mit Gott.

- Chorlied Joseph Haydn (1732 – 1809) “Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes” aus dem Oratorium «Die Schöpfung»

- Befragung

Mein Bruder, jeder christliche Dienst ist ein Dienst der versöhnenden Liebe von Christus. Alle getauften Christen sind berufen, dieses Amt des Dienstes in der Welt zu leben, zur Ehre Gottes und zur Erlösung der Menschheitsfamilie.

Unter den Getauften sind einige von Gott berufen und von der Kirche gewählt für einen diakonischen, ordinierten oder bischöflichen Dienst am Volk Gottes.

Als Ältester wurdest du bereits für den Dienst an Wort und Sakrament ordiniert; als Bischof in der Kirche bist du nun aufgefordert, das dort gesprochene Gelübde zu bekräftigen und den Dienst Christi in dem besonderen Amt der Aufsicht zu versehen.

Du bist berufen, über den Glauben zu wachen, die Einheit zu suchen und die Ordnung der Gesamtkirche zu wahren. Du sollst das Leben, die Arbeit und die Mission der weltweiten Kirche beaufsichtigen und unterstützen.

*Today is the day
God deplores violence in our homes and streets,
rebukes the world's warring madness,
humbles the powerful and lifts up the lowly.*

And so shall we.

*Today is the day
God calls for nations and peoples to live in peace,
celebrates where justice and mercy embrace,
exults when the wolf grazes with the lamb.*

And so shall we.

*Today is the day
God brings good news to the poor,
proclaims release to the captives,
gives sight to the blind, and
sets the oppressed free.*

And so shall we.

- *Choir Joseph Haydn (1732 – 1809) “Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes”
from the oratorio «Die Schöpfung»*

- *Examination*

My brother: All Christian ministry is Christ's ministry of reconciling love. All baptized Christians are called to share this ministry of service in the world, to the glory of God and for the redemption of the human family.

From among the baptized some are called by God and set apart by the Church to serve God's people as deacons, elders, and bishops.

You have been ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament; you are now called, as bishop in the Church, to reaffirm the vows made at your ordination as elder, and to represent Christ's servanthood in a special ministry of oversight.

You are called to guard the faith, to seek the unity, and to exercise the discipline of the whole Church; and to supervise and support the Church's life, work, and mission throughout the world.

Du bist gerufen, die Wahrheit des Evangeliums für das gesamte Volk Gottes zu predigen und zu lehren. Du sollst die Menschen zum Gottesdienst und zur Feier der Sakramente anleiten, aber auch zum Zeugnis und Dienst in der Welt. Denn so nehmen sie teil am Auftrag des Evangeliums, alle Völker in die Nachfolge Christi zu rufen.

Als Bischof und Hirte sollst du alle Menschen, die dir anvertraut sind, führen und leiten. Du sollst an der Weihe von Bischöfinnen und Bischöfen teilnehmen, Diakone und Älteste ordinieren, Lokalpfarrpersonen und andere Mitarbeitende für den Dienst in der Kirche und in der Welt beauftragen, so dass sie für den Dienst an Wort und Sakrament in den Ihnen anvertrauten Gemeinden sorgen.

Jesus Christus nachzufolgen, sei deine Freude, denn er kam nicht, um sich dienen zu lassen, sondern um zu dienen.

(PS) Wirst du die Berufung zu diesem Dienst als Bischof annehmen und diesem Vertrauen im Gehorsam gegenüber Christus gerecht werden?

Ich werde es tun, durch die Gnade Gottes.

Wirst den Glauben, die Bestimmungen, die Liturgie, die Lehre und die Ordnung der Kirche vor allem beschützen, was im Widerspruch zu Gottes Wort steht?

Ich werde es tun in der Liebe Gottes.

Willst du zusammen mit den Diakonen, Ältesten und Lokalpfarrpersonen, alle Getauften in ihren Gaben und Ämtern anleiten und unterstützen, für sie beten, ihnen das Evangelium von Christus verkünden und deuten und mit ihnen die Sakramente unserer Erlösung feiern?

Ich will, im Namen Christi, des Hirten und Bischofs unserer Seelen.

Wirst du gemeinsam mit anderen Bischöfinnen und Bischöfen die Aufsicht über die ganze Kirche wahrnehmen, die Superintendentinnen und Superintendenten unterstützen und dich mit ihnen beraten. Willst Du Personen ordinieren, beauftragen und aussenden, um in Christi Namen zu dienen?

All dies werde ich tun durch die mir verliehene Gnade.

Möge der Gott, der dir den Willen gegeben hat, diese Dinge zu tun, dir auch die Gnade geben, sie auszuführen, damit das in dir begonnene Werk vollendet wird.

Amen.

As servant of the whole Church, you are called to preach and teach the truth of the gospel to all God's people; to lead the people in worship, in the celebration of the Sacraments, and in their mission of witness and service in the world, and so participate in the gospel command to make disciples of all nations.

As bishop and pastor, you are to lead and guide all persons entrusted to your oversight, join in the consecration of bishops, ordain deacons and elders, and commission local pastors and other ministers for service to the Church and to the world; and provide for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in the congregations committed to your care.

Your joy will be to follow Jesus the Christ who came not to be served but to serve. (end GM)

Will you accept the call to this ministry as bishop and fulfill this trust in obedience to Christ?

I will, by the grace of God.

Will you guard the faith, order, liturgy, doctrine, and discipline of the Church against all that is contrary to God's Word?

I will, for the love of God.

Will you, in cooperation with deacons, elders and local pastors, encourage and support all baptized people in their gifts and ministries, pray for them without ceasing, proclaim and interpret to them the gospel of Christ, and celebrate with them the Sacraments of our redemption?

I will, in the name of Christ, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

Will you share with other bishops in the supervision of the whole Church; support the superintendents and take counsel with them; and ordain, commission, and send others to minister in Christ's name?

All this I will do, by the grace given to me.

May the God who has given you the will to do these things give you grace to perform them that the work begun in you may be brought to perfection.

Amen.

- Handauflegung und Weihegebet
(PS) Lasst uns den Heiligen Geist für Stefan Zürcher anrufen und für ihn beten.

Gesang: Solo – Gemeinde (Psalm 104, 30)

Sen - de aus dei - nen Geist, o Herr, und er - neu - re das Ant - litz der Welt.

Melodie und Text: Michel Guimont, dt. L. Düsterhus, L. Molitor, Rechte: Bonifatius-Verlag

Die gewählte Person kniet nieder. Die anderen teilnehmenden Bischöfe treten hinzu. Der vorsitzende Bischof hält die Hände über die kniende Person und spricht das Weihegebet:
(PS) Gott und Vater unseres Herrn Jesus Christus, Geber der Gnade und Quelle allen Trostes, der in der Höhe wohnt, aber die Niedrigen achtet, der alle Dinge kennt, bevor sie geschehen: Wir danken dir, dass du von Anfang an ein Volk gesammelt und bereitet hast, um Erben des Bundes von Abraham und Sara zu sein, und Propheten, Herrscher und Priester erweckt, und deinen Tempel nie ohne Amt gelassen hast. Wir preisen dich auch dafür, dass du seit der Schöpfung gnädig den Dienst derer angenommen hast, die du erwählt hast.

Gnädiger Gott,
giesse über Stefan Zürcher den Heiligen Geist aus,
für die Weihe eines Bischofs in deiner Kirche,
im Namen des Vaters, des Sohnes und des Heiligen Geistes.

Allmächtiger Gott, erfülle das Herz dieses Dieners, den du zum Bischof in deiner Kirche erwählt hast, mit so grosser Liebe zu dir und zum ganzen Volk, dass er die Herde Christi weiden und hüten kann, den Dienst der Versöhnung vollbringt sowie das Leben und die Arbeit der Kirche beaufsichtigt und unterstützt.

In allen Dingen möge er dir das Opfer eines reinen, sanften und heiligen Lebens darbringen;
durch Jesus Christus, deinen Diener,
dem mit dir und dem Heiligen Geist Ehre und Macht und Herrlichkeit in der Kirche gehören,
jetzt und in Ewigkeit.
Amen.

- Überreichen einer Bibel
Stefan Zürcher empfang die Heilige Schrift. Sei eine prophetische Stimme im Volk Gottes. Trete mutig ein für Frieden und Gerechtigkeit für alle Menschen.
Sei ein guter Hirte, unterstütze die Schwachen, heile die Kranken, füge zusammen, was zerbrochen ist, suche die Verlorenen und befreie die Unterdrückten.
Setze dich ein für die Ordnung, aber vergiss nicht die Gnade, damit, wenn der ewige Hirte erscheint, du die Lebenskrone empfangen wirst.
- Grusswort des Bischofsrats Bischof Guy Muyombo Mande
- Mitteilungen
- Kollektensammlung für die Gehälterunterstützung in Mitteleuropa und Balkan (Connexio hope).
Georges Delerue (1925 – 1992) Cantate pour trompette et orgue

IV. Weitergehen – Gott segnet uns

- Gemeindelied (siehe nächste Seite) «Geht Gottes Weg»
- Gemeinsames Gebet (RW)
Unser Vater im Himmel.
Geheiligt werde dein Name.
Dein Reich komme.
Dein Wille geschehe wie im Himmel so auf Erden.
Unser tägliches Brot gib uns heute,
und vergib uns unsre Schuld,
wie auch wir vergeben unsern Schuldigern.
Und führe uns nicht in Versuchung,
sondern erlöse uns von dem Bösen.
Denn dein ist das Reich und die Kraft
und die Herrlichkeit in Ewigkeit.
Amen.
- Gruss durch den neuen Bischof
und Segen (*Gemeinde steht*)
- Ausgangsspiel mit Auszug der Mitwirkenden
Léon Boëllmann (1862 – 1897): Menuet gothique & Toccata
aus der Suite gothique op. 25

- *Handing out a bible (GM)*
Stefan Zürcher receive the Holy Scriptures. Be to the people of God a prophetic voice and a courageous leader in the cause of justice for all people.
Be to the flock of Christ a shepherd; support the weak, heal the sick, bind up the broken, restore the outcast, seek the lost, relieve the oppressed.
Faithfully administer discipline, but do not forget mercy, that when the Chief Shepherd shall appear you may receive the never fading crown of glory.
- *Greeting of the Council of Bishops Bishop Guy Muyombo Mande*
- *Announcements*
- *Offering for salary support in Central Europe and the Balkans (Connexio hope).*
Georges Delerue (1925 – 1992) Cantate pour trompette et orgue

IV. Moving on – God blesses us

- *Hymn (next page) «Go forth for God»*
- *Common prayer*
Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.
- *Greeting by the new bishop and blessing (people stand)*
- *Postlude with recessional of worship leaders*
Léon Boëllmann (1862 – 1897): Menuet gothique & Toccata from the Suite gothique op. 25

- Gemeindelied (EM 554, UMH 670) «Geht Gottes Weg»

D G D A G A D

1 Geht Got-tes Weg, bringt Frie-den in die Welt!

D G D G A

Habt gu-ten Mut, weil Gott sich zu euch stellt.

D A Bm Em F#

Sei - ne Ge-dan - ken werden eu - re sein.

D A D A D E⁴ E A

Ihr wer-det wach - sen in sein Reich hi-nein.

D A Bm F# Bm Em D A⁴ A D

Geht Got-tes Weg, bringt Frie-den in die Welt!

2 *Go forth for God; go to the world in love;
strengthen the faint, give courage to the weak;
help the afflicted; richly from above
God's love supplies the grace and power we seek.
Go forth for God; go to the world in love.*

3 *Geht Gottes Weg, bringt Stärke in die Welt,
Stärke, bei der ein neuer Massstab zählt:
Die überzeugt, nicht unterdrücken will
und sich doch durchsetzt – nachhaltig und still.
Geht Gottes Weg, bringt Stärke in die Welt.*

4 *Go forth for God, go to the world in joy,
to serve God's people every day and hour,
and serving Christ, our every gift employ,
rejoicing in the Holy Spirit's power.
Go forth for God, go to the world in joy.*

Text: John Raphael Peacey (England vor 1971)

Deutsch: Stefan Weller 2000

Melodie: Loys Bourgeois 1551 / London 1562

Satz: Nach Charles W. Douglas (USA 1940)

Rechte: bei den Autoren

Ein kleiner Apéro steht nach dem Weihegottesdienst auf der Pfalz (hinter dem Münster auf der Rhein-Seite) bereit für alle, die den neuen Bischof noch persönlich grüssen möchten. *A small aperitif will be available after the consecration service on the Pfalz (behind the cathedral on the Rhine side) for all who would like to greet the new bishop personally.*

Wir danken der evangelisch-reformierten Münster-Kirchgemeinde für ihre Gastfreundschaft. *We thank the evangelical reformed church for their hospitality.*

Weiter danken wir allen, die sichtbar und unsichtbar an diesem Gottesdienst mitgewirkt haben. *We also thank all those who have contributed visibly and invisibly to this service.*

Öffentliche Toiletten befinden sich gegenüber dem Münster-Haupteingang und auf dem Bischofshof. *Public toilets are located opposite the main entrance of the cathedral and on the Bischofshof.*

Die Kollekte zur Unterstützung der Gehälter kirchlicher Mitarbeiter*innen in Mitteleuropa und Balkan (Connexio hope) können Sie auch per TWINT mit dem untenstehenden QR-Code überweisen. *You can also transfer the offering to support the salaries of church workers in Central Europe and the Balkans (Connexio hope) via TWINT using the QR code below.*



Connexio
hope



Sermon at the consecration service of Bishop Harald Rückert of 20 November 2022, 2:00 p.m., Basel Cathedral

1. Sich einigeln

In atemberaubendem Tempo legt sich derzeit Krise über Krise. Es bleibt kaum Gelegenheit, sich zu sortieren und Ruhe zu finden. Werte und Überzeugungen, die als unumstößlich galten, gerieten ins Wanken – in unserer Welt, in unseren Heimatländern und in der Kirche. Vieles scheint immer komplizierter und aussichtsloser zu werden. Einigeln möchte man sich und abschotten; nichts mehr hören und sehen von Krieg und Ungerechtigkeit; nichts mehr mitbekommen vom Hunger der Welt und den übermächtigen Herausforderungen der Klimakrise; ausblenden, dass Lüge als Wahrheit und die Wahrheit als Lüge ausgegeben wird. Ach, wenn man doch einfach verfügen könnte, dass Kirchenspaltung ab sofort ein Ende hat; dass Paragrafenreiterei, Gerangel um Macht, Geld und Gebäude, der scharfe Ton und das Misstrauen, der elende Streit ums Rechthaben und die sich immer wieder aufschaukelnde Worte und Widerworte, Aktionen und Reaktionen ... ab sofort nicht mehr vorkommen! Einigeln möchte man sich und abschotten.

Vom „Sich-Einigeln“ und Abschotten spricht auch folgender Bibelabschnitt: „Es war am Abend jenes ersten Tages der neuen Woche. Die Jünger hatten solche Angst vor den Juden, dass sie die Türen des Raumes, in dem sie beisammen waren, verschlossen hielten. Mit einem Mal kam Jesus, trat in ihre Mitte und grüßte sie mit den Worten: »Friede sei mit euch!« Dann zeigte er ihnen seine Hände und seine Seite. Als die Jünger den Herrn sahen, wurden sie froh. »Friede sei mit euch!«, sagte Jesus noch einmal zu ihnen. »Wie der Vater mich gesandt hat, so sende ich jetzt euch.« Und er hauchte sie an und sagte: »Empfangt den Heiligen Geist! Wem ihr die Sünden vergebt, dem sind sie vergeben; wem ihr sie nicht vergebt, dem sind sie nicht vergeben.« (Joh 20,19-23)

2. Was einweckt

Von Furcht ist die Rede: "Die Türen waren verschlossen aus Furcht vor den Juden." Die Jünger sitzen beieinander, eingesperrt und abgeriegelt von der Außenwelt. Keiner soll reinkommen können. Und solange der Riegel vor der Tür ist, kommt auch keiner raus. Irgendwie war ihre Furcht verständlich. Sie hatten Sorge, dass sie das gleiche Schicksal erleiden könnten, wie Jesus. Ihn hatte man gefangen und getötet. Sie waren seine engsten Vertrauten. Könnte ein ähnliches Schicksal also auch sie erwarten? Die Furcht hat die Jünger aber nicht nur von der Außenwelt abgeschnitten. Zusammen mit der dumpfen Leere in ihrem Inneren hat sie auch die Gemeinschaft untereinander getötet. Sie hocken zwar nebeneinander in der engen Stube und doch ist jeder ängstlich vor sich hinbrütend mit sich allein.

Furcht ist eine Kraft, die unser Leben einengt und die Freude verscheucht. Furcht lähmt. Furcht schränkt ein. Aus Furcht kann Angst werden, die das Denken und Fühlen mit Beschlag belegt. Angst lässt die Gedanken rotieren, treibt ins Grübeln. Wer sich fürchtet, lebt unter seinen Möglichkeiten. Furcht raubt die Kraft und die Hoffnung. Kommt Euch das bekannt vor, liebe Schwestern und Brüder? Kennt Ihr die Furcht? Kennt Ihr die Angst? Angst vor dem Ungewissen, das auf uns zukommt; Angst, zu versagen; Angst vor Veränderungen und all dem Neuen; Angst, dabei etwas Wichtiges zu verlieren ... Was bewegt Euch im Blick auf Eure Gemeinde zuhause? Was im Blick auf unsere Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche in Mittel- und Südeuropa? Was im Blick auf unsere Kirche weltweit? Was bewegt Euch im Blick auf die Gesellschaft, in der ihr lebt? Was im Blick auf die die riesigen Herausforderungen unserer Welt?

3. Was aufweckt

"Die Türen waren verschlossen aus Furcht ..." Doch Gott sei Dank! Unser biblischer Bericht schildert, wie die Furcht sich wandelt. Da wird erzählt, wie die dumpfe Leere und das trostlose Alleinsein mit tiefer Gemeinschaft gefüllt werden. Da wird berichtet, wie die verschlossenen Türen geöffnet werden. Die entscheidende Veränderung geschieht nicht, weil einem der Jünger eine zündende Idee gekommen wäre; auch nicht, weil ihnen klar geworden wäre, dass alles Trübsalblasen ja doch nichts nützt. Was Leben in diesen Kreis von furchtsamen, eingeeigneten Leuten bringt: „Da trat Jesus mitten unter sie und spricht zu ihnen: Friede sei mit euch!" Jesus, der Totgelebte und der Totgesagte, tritt ein. Quicklebendig! Er durchbricht die Mauern und Schranken, Riegel und Schlösser. Jesus überrascht seine Jünger. Sie fangen an zu staunen. Erst nach und nach begreifen sie, was da vor sich geht: Jesus hat den Tod überwunden. Grausamkeit und Schrecken, Unrecht und Tod haben nicht Recht behalten! Die Jünger fangen an, zu vertrauen. Die Furcht beginnt zu weichen. Türen fliegen auf. Durch die überraschende Begegnung mit dem auferstandenen Jesus Christus stehen auch die Jünger auf. Durch die überraschende Begegnung mit dem von Gott auferweckten Jesus Christus werden aus „eingeweckten“ aufgeweckte Leute.

"Friede sei mit euch!", sagt Jesus. Zweimal sagt er es ganz betont. Zweimal spricht er ihren wunden Seelen Frieden zu; seinen Frieden. Der Frieden hat es so schwer, geglaubt und gelebt zu werden. Zweimal bittet Jesus sie aber damit zugleich: "Hört auf mit euren Selbstvorwürfen! Hört auf mit eurem Selbstmitleid. Lasst eure Zweifel fahren. Lasst den Frieden Gottes für euch gelten. Steht auf. Fasst Mut. Wagt neue Schritte."

Die Begegnung mit dem auferstandenen Jesus Christus und der zugesprochene Friede sind nichts, was einfach bestaunt werden könnte. Nein, sie setzen vielmehr einen Aufbruch in Gang. "Gleich wie mich mein Vater gesandt hat, so sende ich euch." Wir sollen Gottes Boten sein – auch wenn uns nicht immer danach zumute ist. Wir sollen Gemeinschaft pflegen mit Menschen – gerade mit denen, die wir uns nicht selbst ausgesucht haben. Wir sollen mit Tat und Wort einstehen für das Evangelium von Jesus Christus – auch wenn wir wissen, dass unser Tun oft unvollkommen ist. Wir sollen Glauben bewähren – nicht nur sonntags, sondern am Montag und an jedem Tag der Woche. Wir sollen Friedensstifter sein im Kleinen wie im Großen – auch wenn Bosheit und Gewalt sich so übermächtig gebärden. "Gleich wie mich mein Vater gesandt hat, so sende ich euch."

"Und als Jesus das alles gesagt hatte, blies er sie an und spricht zu ihnen: 'Nehmt hin den Heiligen Geist!'" Der Heilige Geist öffnet auch heute immer wieder die Augen für Jesus, den Frieden in Person, die Liebe in Person, das Leben in Person. Der Heilige Geist gießt Gottes Liebe ins Herz und schenkt Frieden, der höher ist als alle Vernunft. Der Heilige Geist schenkt die Kraft und die Fantasie, um aufzustehen, um aufzubrechen, um sich senden zu lassen. Der Heilige Geist verleiht Mut.

4. Die Frucht des Geistes: Aufgeweckter Mut

Vier Tage liegen hinter uns, an denen die ao.ZK beraten und gebetet, entschieden und gewählt hat. Vier Tage, an denen wir auch versucht haben, der „Frucht des Geistes“ (Thema der ZK) auf die Spur zu kommen; dem, was der Heilige Geist in unserem Leben wachsen lässt, dem, was aus unserem Leben erwächst, wenn wir es für das Wirken des Heiligen Geistes offenhalten und ihn nur machen lassen. Zu den inspirierenden Impulsen der zurückliegenden Tage möchte ich heute einen weiteren Aspekt hinzufügen: Die Frucht des Geistes ist Mut, „aufgeweckter Mut“.

Liebe Schwestern und Brüder, diese Auswirkung des Heiligen Geistes haben wir dringend nötig, wenn es darum geht, von dieser Zentralkonferenztagung aufzubrechen und als Nachfolgerinnen und Nachfolger des quicklebendigen Jesus Christus zu reden und zu handeln. Hellwache Sinne für unsere Umgebung und hellwache Offenheit für Gottes Absichten und Möglichkeiten. Aufgeweckten Mut, um als Einzelne und Gemeinden immer wieder die Komfortzonen der eigenen Meinung und des seit langem Vertrauten zu verlassen. Mut, um zuversichtlich die Illusion fahren zu lassen, die meint, alles selbst im Griff zu haben.

„Aufgeweckter Mut“ war bereits nötig für dich, liebe/r N.N., als du dich darauf eingelassen hast, den Ruf in den bischöflichen Dienst zu hören und ihn bei dieser ZK-Tagung anzunehmen. Und eine kräftige Portion Mut kannst du weiterhin vertragen, wenn es darum geht, diesen Dienst zu versehen, in den wir dich heute einführen. Wache Sinne für die Menschen in deinem Sprengel – innerhalb und außerhalb der Kirche. Hellwache Aufmerksamkeit für die Gegenwart des auferweckten Jesus Christus in all dem und seine Absichten und Möglichkeiten. Mut, um wahrhaftig und liebevoll zu sprechen und zu handeln – profetisch zu sein.

Mut als Geistesfrucht, brauchst auch du, lieber Patrick, wenn es darum geht, loszulassen, was bisher deine Zeit, deine Kraft, deine Leidenschaft sowie deine menschlichen und geistlichen Gaben bis an die Grenzen gefordert hat; abzugeben, was unvollendet bleiben muss; neu zu sortieren, wie du deiner bleibenden Berufung nun als Bischof i.R. folgen kannst. Wachheit dir und anderen gegenüber; hellwache Offenheit für Gottes Absichten und seine Wohltaten. Aufgeweckter Mut.

In allem gilt euch und uns allen das Versprechen von Jesus: "Nehmt hin, den heiligen Geist!" Er ist die Kraft, die wir brauchen; der Tröster, der uns aufhilft; der Zeuge, der uns vergewissert; der Befähiger, der Gottes Liebe in unsere Herzen ausgießt und uns anspornt aus dieser Liebe zu leben. Gottes Geist schenkt Mut – reichlich!

Liebe Schwestern und Brüder, Jesus ist hier in unserer Mitte. Er spricht euch zu: »Friede sei mit euch! Wie der Vater mich gesandt hat, so sende ich jetzt euch. Empfangt den Heiligen Geist!«

Jesus spricht euch Kraft und Fantasie zu, um mutig aufzustehen. Brecht auf! Jesus spricht euch Frieden zu, der menschliches Verstehen und Tun weit übersteigt. Proklamiert beharrlich diesen Frieden Gottes, der sich der Wirklichkeit von Bosheit und Tod widersetzt. Lebt diesen Frieden mit Überzeugung.

Gottes Geist macht aus „eingewekten“ „aufgeweckte“ Christen. Ihr könnt unerschütterlich hoffen und glauben, dass der Teufel entzaubert, das Böse besiegt und der Tod überwunden ist. Hört nicht auf, zu bezeugen, dass Jesus als menschgewordener Friede Leben schafft und erhält.

"Nehmt hin, den heiligen Geist!" Lebt aufgeweckt. Seid mutig.

Amen.

Obituaries on the occasion of the memorial service of November 18, 2022

In memory of Adam Kuczma (Poland) 1.3.1924 - 24.9.2017

KUCZMA Adam (b. 1924), Methodist clergyman, from 1983 to 1989 superintendent-in-chief, director of English Language College - Methodist English Language School. Married (1951) to Lidia (née Grzybek), children Jolanta, Christopher and Erlina Marzena.

Biographical sketch

He was born into a Protestant Pietist family, March 1, 1924 in the eastern borderlands of the Republic of Poland, in Petrykovo on the Seret River, just outside Ternopil (now Ukraine), one of the three vojvodship towns of the then Eastern Lesser Poland. His mother died quite early, which also somehow affected his life. The outbreak of World War II found him in Ternopil and he spent the years of occupation there. In 1944 the area was occupied by the Soviet Army. Adam Kuczma was then drafted into the army and ended up in the Far East, where in 1945 he participated in the war against Japan and, together with the Red Army's eastern front, almost reached Korea. After the surrender of the enemy, he returned to Vladivostok. There he immediately began efforts to repatriate himself and returned to Poland in November 1946. He immediately began applying for admission to the Theological Seminary of the Methodist Church (1947-1951), whose rector at the time was Dr. Werner Wickstrom, an American of Swedish descent.

In 1957 he is ordained as a deacon, and a year later (1958) as a presbyter. Both ordinations were performed in Warsaw by the then head of the Geneva Diocese of the Methodist Church of the Central and Southern European Conference, Bishop Dr. Ferdinand Sigg of Zurich.

After completing his seminary studies in 1951, he was placed as a probationary pastor to work in the parish of Glaznoty in Masuria. Here, after two years (1953), he moved to Silesia (settled in the house of his wife's parents) while waiting to take up the position of assistant pastor of the church in Katowice.

From 1954 to 1962 he was pastor of the Methodist parish in Bytom.

In 1958, he undertakes studies at the Christian Academy of Theology, graduating with the defense of his thesis entitled. "The Catholic Church in Poland in the post-partition period," written under the supervision of Rev. Prof. Dr. Woldemar Gastpary, receiving the title of M.A. in Evangelical Theology. In the same year he receives a church scholarship and is sent to study linguistics. - He goes to the United Kingdom for two years (1962-1964), where he studies at the Faculty of Teaching at the University of Manchester, the culmination of this stage of training is a diploma as an English teacher. Upon his return to the country, in 1965, he is elected secretary of the General Conference and is appointed as deputy director of the Methodist School of English in Warsaw (Rev. Prof. Jozef Szczepkowski served as director).

In 1965, he enters the close leadership of the Church and from 1965 to 1969 serves as secretary of the Church Council, and is deputy director of the English Language College (Methodist English Language School in Warsaw).

In 1968 he goes to the USA, where he continues his specialized studies in English philology at the University of Michigan.

The Annual Conference held in Warsaw in 1969 appoints him as Deputy Superintendent-in-Charge, and he is also entrusted with the position of Superintendent of the Central District, as well as Director of the English Language College, which he will hold until his retirement in 1990.

In 1983, he is elected Superintendent-in-Chief. He would hold this office for six consecutive years, i.e. until 1989. As Superintendent-in-Chief, he was a clergy delegate to the 1987 General Conference. He was also elected as a delegate to the World Methodist Council.

From 1970 to 1989 he represented the Polish Methodist Church regularly, every four years, in the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe, which includes Methodists from ten countries of our continent and North Africa, and during this period he also sat on the Executive of the Central Conference.

Ecumenical involvement

In addition to his pastoral and teaching work, his sphere of interest also included ecumenical activities in the broadest sense. This ecumenical commitment found expression in his active participation in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and in his various functions in national and foreign ecumenical bodies. In 1970-1979 he is treasurer of the Polish Ecumenical Council, and later chairman of the Audit Committee of the PRE.

The General Assembly of the Conference of European Churches, meeting in 1974 in Engelberg, Switzerland, appointed him to the Advisory Committee of the organization, in which he actively participated until 1986. The General Assembly in Stirling, Scotland, appointed him for 1986-1992 to the inner circle of the Presidium of the Conference of European Churches of this European organization, uniting the churches of the Orthodox, Old Catholic, Anglican and Protestant traditions. In this group he was the first Pole since the establishment of the KEK.

In 1987-1989 he was president of the Polish Ecumenical Council. Speaking at an ecumenical meeting at the residence of the Primate of Poland in Warsaw during John Paul II's third pilgrimage to his homeland (1987), on behalf of the Polish Ecumenical Council, he invited the pope to visit one of the non-Catholic churches on his next visit to Poland. The Pope, in response to this speech, said: "I'd like to add that the previous time it was the Primate of Poland who had anticipated the upcoming trip, this time the President of the Polish Ecumenical Council. We will see what will come of it."

He published in print dozens of sermons printed in the monthly magazine "Pilgrim of Poland" and an autobiographical book under "History of my life" published in English in the USA.

He passed away on September 24, 2017 in Warsaw.

The funeral ceremony began with a service at 10 a.m. in the Evangelical-Reformed Church, and then the urn with the ashes of the Deceased was placed in the family grave in the Evangelical-Augsburg cemetery in Warsaw. The funeral was attended by all the heads of the churches affiliated with the PRE, as well as a personal envoy of the Roman Catholic Metropolitan of Warsaw, Rev. Cardinal Kazimierz Nycz.

An extensive posthumous memoir of Rev. Zbigniew Kaminski's acting was included in the December 2017 issue of Polish Pilgrim.

Rev. Zbigniew Kaminski

In memory of Ruth Bickel (Switzerland)

15.11.1925 - 19.5.2019

Ruth Bickel-Stauffer wurde am 15. November 1925 als Tochter von aus der Deutschschweiz nach Genf ausgewanderten Eltern und als Älteste von vier Geschwistern geboren. Am Stadtrand von Genf folgte eine glückliche Kinder- und Jugendzeit.

Nach der Handelsschule und verschiedenen Sprachkursen trat Ruth eine Stelle im Hochkommissariat für Flüchtlinge der UNO an. Damit öffnete sich ihr auch die Tür zu Reisen und zum Kennenlernen vieler Menschen unterschiedlichster Herkunft.

Nach ihrer Heirat 1958 mit dem 27 Jahre älteren Pfarrer Willy Bickel übernahm Ruth die Aufgaben einer Pfarrfrau. Ihre gemeinsamen Stationen waren Rheineck und Zürich-Wollishofen.

In dieser Zeit trat Ruth in den Vorstand des Frauendienstes der EMK ein, wo sie insgesamt 26 Jahre mitarbeitete. Auch in der Arbeitsgruppe Frauendienst der Zentralkonferenz engagierte sie sich für die Anliegen der Frauen, nämlich von 1964-1981, 5 Jahre davon als Vorsitzende. Auch dies ermöglichte es ihr zu reisen! In den Jahren 1964 bis 1981 wurde Ruth zudem sechs Mal an die Zentralkonferenz delegiert.

1968 wurde Willy in den Ruhestand versetzt, und sie zogen nach Biel. Knapp 50jährig wurde Ruth dann aus heiterem Himmel Witwe. Die Nähe zur Familie ihrer Schwester in Biel, ihr Engagement im Frauendienst, in Seniorenwochen und bei unzähligen Krankenbesuchen, aber auch das Gebet halfen ihr über diesen grossen Verlust hinweg und hielten ihre Lebensfreude wach, so dass sie bis ins hohe Alter stets betonte: Ich lebe gerne und hoffentlich noch lange!

Mit gut 90 Jahren zog sie dann zu ihrem Neffen. Am 19. Mai 2019 starb Ruth Bickel nach einem reichen Leben.

Als Kirche, aber auch wir als Familie sind von Herzen dankbar für die segensvolle Wegstrecke, die wir mit ihr gehen durften.

Stefan Zürcher

In memory of Liljana Sjanta (Serbia)

1.8.1960 - 29.6.2020

Liljana Sjanta, born as the first of three children, grew up in a small village in south-east Macedonia, Yugoslavia at the time, in a Methodist family.

Being active in the church since her early life, she became involved in various areas, and this became even more so after she got married to Jano Sjanta, in 1980, a Methodist pastor from Serbia, which back then was simply referred to as „the North District“, within the same country at the time. So, she moved from the South District, which „lost“ a faithful servant, to the North, where she continued developing her gifts and using them in her ministry.

Even though she never studied theology, nor attended a pastoral course of any kind, next to her husband she learned many of the skills and she served alongside him. Wherever they were appointed, she was his constant support.

Her education was actually in civil engineering, but because of her church involvement, the Communist government at the time never allowed her to work in her field of study. However she did not despair, but she understood this as nudging from the Lord to be more involved in church ministry. Which she did.

Besides serving in the local churches, she was also very much involved on literally every church level. She was the District chair of the women’s work for about twenty years, when she would often lead women’s retreats and seminars in Serbia and abroad.

For many years, she was also the District In Mission Together coordinator. Likewise, for years, she was part of the District council and a delegate to many Annual Conferences and several Central and General Conferences. And the list goes on and on. She was happy to take up any task she could.

And then, year 2018 changed everything. She received a very unpleasant diagnosis of ALS. This was a very difficult and challenging time for our family, especially for my father, who was her primary caregiver.

As the illness progressed, we, as her family looked at her wither away before our eyes.

She passed away in June 2020, after two years of battling her illness, just a month shy of her 60th birthday and some 4 months shy of my parents’ 40th anniversary.

We give thanks to God for the mercy that we were able to have her in our lives, and for the life and ministry she led.

Daniel Sjanta

In memory of Wilhelm Nausner (Austria)
17.3.1931 - 30.4.2018
and Helene Nausner (Austria)
12.12.1929 - 29.4.2018

Wilhelm Nausner wurde am 17. März 1931 als ältester Sohn methodistischer Missionare in Srednie Siolo, Weißrussland geboren. Er verbrachte einen Teil seiner Kindheit in Königsberg (Preussen) und flüchtete aufgrund von Krieg mit seiner Familie nach Österreich. Sein Vater, Pastor Ernst Nausner, begann vor Ort in der Flüchtlingsseelsorge – aus dieser Arbeit ging die heutige EmK-Gemeinde in der Wienerstraße in Linz hervor.

Als ältester Sohn fragten sich nun viele, ob Wilhelm, liebevoll „Willy“ genannt, sich als Pastor eignen würde und man ihn auf diesen Weg aufmerksam machen könnte. Doch noch innerhalb des gleichen Jahres wurden sie eines Besseren belehrt, denn Willy fing eine Ausbildung als Reproduktionstechniker für Offsetdruck an.

Das hielt ihn jedoch nicht davon ab, ehrenamtlich in der Kirche aktiv zu sein. Wie viele andere hat er seine Laitentätigkeit im Bereich der Jugend begonnen. 1958 wurde er erstmals als Laienmitglied an die Jährliche Konferenz delegiert. Von da an folgten viele weitere Dienste: Mitglied im Kirchenvorstand, Konferenzlaienführer, Kassier, Leiter der Eigentumsverwaltung uvm.

Aber auch auf der Ebene der Zentralkonferenz von Mittel- und Südeuropa übernahm er verschiedene Aufgaben. 1963 wurde er Mitglied des Exekutivkomitees und übte zwischen 1973 und 1997 die Rolle des Sekretärs der Zentralkonferenz aus.

In der Zeit des Eisernen Vorhangs bereiste er allein oder in Begleitung von Bischof Franz Schäfer die Jährlichen Konferenzen in Polen, Tschechoslowakei, Ungarn, Serbien, Makedonien und Bulgarien. In der Zeit der Wende begleitete er Bischof Heinrich Bolleter. Er half den Superintendenten in diesen Ländern funktionierende Kirchenbüros einzurichten und versorgte sie technischem Equipment und der dafür notwendigen finanziellen Mittel. Es war ihm ein Herzensanliegen Kontakt zu halten und die Beziehungen zwischen den Ländern der Zentralkonferenz zu stärken. Er wurde 1996 zum Superintendenten der EmK in Makedonien ernannt – diese Tätigkeit übte er 12 Jahre lang aus.

Neben seinem Engagement in der EmK war er auch tätig in der Ökumene und ist einer der Begründer der Diakonie Österreich.

In all den Jahren war ihm seine in Rumänien geborene Ehefrau Helene Nausner eine treue und fleißige Begleiterin. Helene unterstützte Willy nicht nur tatkräftig und gab ihm Rückhalt, sondern engagierte sich in besonderer Weise ehrenamtlich in der Arbeit mit Mädchen und Frauen – sie war über viele Jahre Leiterin des Frauennetzwerkes in Österreich, und im Vorstand des Weltgebetstag der Frauen. Dem Ehepaar wurden acht Kinder geschenkt. Ihre tiefe Verbundenheit begleitete sie schließlich bis in den Tod. Wilhelm Nausner starb nur einen Tag nach seiner Ehefrau Helene am 30. April 2018.

„Seid dankbar in allen Dingen“ – mit dieser Haltung hat Wilhelm Nausner sein Leben geführt. Er war ein überzeugter Christ und Brückenbauer der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche in Mittel- und Südeuropa und darüber hinaus in der Ökumene. Seine vielfältigen Dienste, seine Hilfsbereitschaft und seine Liebe zu den Menschen waren Ausdruck seines christlichen Glaubens.

Ben Nausner

In memory of Lothar Pöll (Austria)

5.12.1951 - 16.9.2020

Lothar Pöll wurde am 5. Dezember 1951 in Wien geboren. Seine Eltern und auch schon seine Großeltern — sowohl väterlicher- wie mütterlicherseits — waren in der Methodistenkirche in Österreich engagiert. Schon gegen Ende seiner Schulzeit am Technischen Gymnasium in Wien organisierte er in der Gemeinde Wien-Bennogasse ökumenisch verantwortete Pop-Gottesdienste und war dort für die Verkündigung zuständig. Trotz seiner großen Liebe für die Eisenbahn entschied er sich für den Dienst als Pastor in der EmK. Nach dem Vorpraktikum in Linz, zu dem er schon seine Frau Helga mitgenommen hatte, studierte er in Reutlingen Theologie.

Mitte der 70er Jahre kam er in den Gemeindedienst, zunächst in Salzburg, dann in Linz und Ried, teilweise betreute er alle drei Gemeinden gleichzeitig und legte dabei viele Kilometer mit dem Auto zurück. Mit seiner Berufung als Superintendent im Jahr 2001 wechselte er dann nach Wien und war neben seinem kirchenleitenden Dienst auch für die Gemeinden Wien-Floridsdorf und St. Pölten zuständig. In seinem Ruhestand zog er nach Linz, wo zwei seiner Kinder und fünf Enkelkinder leben. Er übernahm von dort aus noch für zwei Jahre die Verantwortung für die Gemeinde in Salzburg.

Lothar Pöll erkrankte im Lauf seines Lebens mehrfach und schwer. Schon während seines Studiums hing sein Leben an einem seidenen Faden, was seine Berufung zum Pastor allerdings nicht in Frage stellte. Eine seltene Autoimmunerkrankung im Jahr 2011 machte eine Nierentransplantation notwendig und erforderte aber in seinem letzten Lebensjahr wieder Dialyse. In allen Zeiten der Krankheit und der Schwäche klagte er nie. Aber er erfuhr neu was es heißt, dass Gottes Kraft in den Schwachen mächtig ist.

Lothar Pöll war ein Mensch mit vielen Begabungen. Wozu man ihn berief, das machte er oder er eignete es sich an. Seine technische Affinität ließ ihn Heizungssysteme unterschiedlichster Generationen bedienen und der nächsten Generation von Pastoren und Pastorinnen erklären. Er war auch schon früh mit dem Computer befasst und in seiner Zeit als Konferenzsekretär und Sekretär der Zentralkonferenz brauchte er dafür das Zwei-Finger-System. Ich benutze noch heute von ihm geschaffene Vorlagen.

Er hatte einen ordnenden Geist, sowohl was die Leitung von Sitzungen betraf als auch die Ablage im Büro oder bei den Bücherregalen. Er straffte die Tagesordnungen des Ökumenischen Rates der Kirchen in Österreich und stieß so einige Neuerungen in der Verwaltung seiner eigenen Kirche an: ein neues Gehaltsschema, die Organisation des schulischen Religionsunterrichts oder die Ordnung im Archiv.

Nebst dem Organisatorischen gab es bei ihm auch eine gestaltende und künstlerische Ader. Für die Kinder in Linz trat er als Direktor des Puppentheaters auf, das die Jugendlichen aufbauten. Einige Jahre gab er die Zeitschrift „Methodist“ heraus und gestaltete sie grafisch. Und für die letzte Seite suchte er jeweils den methodistischen Witz heraus. Er spielte Klavier und Gitarre, wo nötig und in ruhigen Stunden widmete er sich der Ikonenmalerei. Was er an Übersetzungen von Liedern aus dem Englischen ins Deutsche schuf, das wird bleiben und vermutlich noch weite Kreise ziehen bis ins neu entstehende Evangelische Gesangbuch für Deutschland und Österreich.

An erster Stelle aber stand sein Dienst der Verkündigung des Evangeliums und der Seelsorge. Hier kam seine sprachliche Begabung zum Tragen. Seine Predigten zur Eröffnung der Jährlichen Konferenzen waren nicht nur ein rhetorischer Genuss. Sie enthielten manch unbequemen und herausfordernden Gedanken, neue exegetische Einsichten und eine tiefe systematische

Durchdringung. In allem war stets sein Ergriffensein von Gottes Liebe für die Menschen spürbar. Er war ein Prediger der Liebe Gottes und davon war auch seine Seelsorge getragen.

Wir sind dankbar für seinen Dienst, den mein Kollege Stefan Schröckenfuchs so charakterisierte: Lothar steht einem immer zur Seite, aber nie im Weg.

Esther Handschin

IX. Statistics

based on the Annual Conferences 2020

Local Churches Pastoral Charges Members Services										
	Pastoral Charges	Local Churches	Professing members	Baptized members	Friends	Total of persons	Adults in Church service	Childrens in Church service	Professing members in Pastoral Charge	Professing members in Local Church
by countries										
Albania	3	6	195	2	80	277	200	60	65.0	32.5
Algeria	4	5	146	0	32	178	185	20	36.5	29.2
Belgium	1	1	45		15	60	25	15	45.0	45.0
Bulgaria	9	30	1137	44	706	1887	831	275	126.3	37.9
France	17	17	1045	7	478	1530	933	162	61.5	61.5
Croatia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
North-Macedonia	7	11			2000	2000			0	0.0
Austria	7	8	735	498	349	1582	287	57	105.0	91.9
Poland	20	37	1895	255	251	2401	?		94.8	51.2
Rumania	2	3	32	2	110	144	64	17	16.0	10.7
Switzerland	69	105	4820	436	3436	8692	3916	807	69.9	45.9
Serbia	9	14	416	107	256	779	375	45	46.2	29.7
Slovakia	7	13	222	157	134	513	220		31.7	17.1
Czechia	15	22	881	202	489	1572	621		58.7	40.0
Tunisia		1				0				
Hungary	12	28	498	571	876	1945	1273	305	41.5	17.8
Total	182	301	12067	2281	9212	23560	8930	1763	66.3	40.1
<i>Previous year 2019</i>	183	305	12262	2295	9000	23557	8832	1876	67.0	40.2
<i>Difference +/-</i>	-1	-4	-195	-14	212	3	98	-113	-0.3	-0.1
by Conferences										
Prov. AC Austria	7	8	744	498	349	1591	287	57	106.3	93.0
Prov. AC Bulgaria-Rumania	11	33	1192	46	816	2054	895	292	108.4	36.1
AC Switzerland-France-North Africa	90	129	6215	443	3961	10619	5059	1004	69.1	48.2
AC Czechia-Slovakia	22	35	1131	359	623	2113	841	0	51.4	32.3
Prov. AC Hungary	12	28	516	571	876	1963	1273	305	43.0	18.4
AC Poland	20	37	1924	255	251	2430	?		96.2	52.0
Prov. AC Serbia-North Macedonia-Albania	19	31	631	109	2336	3056	575	105	33.2	20.4

Clergy Collaborating

by countries	Ordained Elders in full Connection active	Probationary and as-sociate memb. active	Local pastors active	Laypersons active	Full connection + as-sociate in retirement	Clergy active	Clergy total	Beginning of the work
Albania	0	1	2	1	0	3	3	1922/1990
Algeria	0	0	1	2	3	1	4	1886
Belgium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1920/2008
Bulgaria	7	2	9	0	2	18	20	1857/1989
France	8	2	2	1	11	12	23	1791/1868/1907
Croatia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1923/1995
North-Macedonia	1	0	3	3	2	4	6	1873/1921
Austria	5	1	2	1	1	8	9	1870
Poland	21	4	0	2	4	25	29	1895/1920
Rumania	2	1	0	0	0	3	3	2011
Switzerland	54	6	23	0	48	83	131	1840/1856/1866
Serbia	8	0	3	1	0	11	11	1898
Slovakia	5	1	3	17	1	9	10	1924
Czechia	10	0	2	1	6	12	18	1920
Tunisia	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	
Hungary	10	0	2	2	6	12	18	1898/1905
Total	132	18	52	31	84	202	286	
<i>Previous year 2019</i>	133	20	63	31	86	216	302	
<i>Difference +/-</i>	-1	-2	-11	0	-2	-14	-16	

Professing members:	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Difference
Prov. AC Austria	748	738	732	742	746	744	-2
Prov. AC Bulgaria-Rumania	1'297	1'290	1'277	1'220	1'195	1'192	-3
AC Switzerland-France-N. Africa	7'107	6'932	6'812	6'605	6'407	6'215	-192
AC Czechia-Slovakia	1'147	1'157	1'125	1'160	1'179	1'131	-48
Prov. AC Hungary	456	467	479	477	509	516	7
AC Poland	2'248	2'146	2'083	2'105	1'925	1'924	-1
Prov. AC Serbia	497	489	467	457	434	631	197
Albania and Croatia	132	142	142	169	169		-169
Total	13'632	13'361	13'117	12'935	12'564	12'353	-211
+ Bulgaria							
+ North-Macedonia	1'000	1'000	1'000	1'200	1'200	1'200	0
Grand Total	14'632	14'361	14'117	14'135	13'764	13'553	-211
<i>Change in %</i>	-4.23	-1.85	-1.70	0.13	-2.62	-1.53	-1.55

Statistics

based on the Annual Conferences 2020

Local Churches Pastoral Charges Members Services										
	Pastoral Charges	Local Churches	Professing members	Baptized members	Friends	Total of persons	Adults in Church service	Childrens in Church service	Professing members in Pastoral Charge	Professing members in Local Church
by countries										
Albania	3	6	195	2	80	277	200	60	65.0	32.5
Algeria	4	5	146	0	32	178	185	20	36.5	29.2
Belgium	1	1	45		15	60	25	15	45.0	45.0
Bulgaria	9	30	1137	44	706	1887	831	275	126.3	37.9
France	17	17	1045	7	478	1530	933	162	61.5	61.5
Croatia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
North-Macedonia	7	11			2000	2000			0	0.0
Austria	7	8	735	498	349	1582	287	57	105.0	91.9
Poland	20	37	1895	255	251	2401	?		94.8	51.2
Rumania	2	3	32	2	110	144	64	17	16.0	10.7
Switzerland	69	105	4820	436	3436	8692	3916	807	69.9	45.9
Serbia	9	14	416	107	256	779	375	45	46.2	29.7
Slovakia	7	13	222	157	134	513	220		31.7	17.1
Czechia	15	22	881	202	489	1572	621		58.7	40.0
Tunisia		1				0				
Hungary	12	28	498	571	876	1945	1273	305	41.5	17.8
Total	182	301	12067	2281	9212	23560	8930	1763	66.3	40.1
<i>Previous year 2019</i>	183	305	12262	2295	9000	23557	8832	1876	67.0	40.2
<i>Difference +/-</i>	-1	-4	-195	-14	212	3	98	-113	-0.3	-0.1
by Conferences										
Prov. AC Austria	7	8	744	498	349	1591	287	57	106.3	93.0
Prov. AC Bulgaria-Rumania	11	33	1192	46	816	2054	895	292	108.4	36.1
AC Switzerland-France-North Africa	90	129	6215	443	3961	10619	5059	1004	69.1	48.2
AC Czechia-Slovakia	22	35	1131	359	623	2113	841	0	51.4	32.3
Prov. AC Hungary	12	28	516	571	876	1963	1273	305	43.0	18.4
AC Poland	20	37	1924	255	251	2430	?		96.2	52.0
Prov. AC Serbia-North Macedonia-Albania	19	31	631	109	2336	3056	575	105	33.2	20.4

Clergy Collaborating

by countries	Ordained Elders in full Connection active	Probationary and as-sociate memb. active	Local pastors active	Laypersons active	Full connection + as-sociate in retirement	Clergy active	Clergy total	Beginning of the work
Albania	1	2	0	1	0	3	3	1922/1990
Algeria	0	0	0	2	3	0	3	1886
Belgium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1920/2008
Bulgaria	9	0	9	0	2	18	20	1857/1989
France	8	3	3	1	11	14	25	1791/1868/1907
Croatia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1923/1995
North-Macedonia	1	0	3	2	2	4	6	1873/1921
Austria	5	1	2	1	1	8	9	1870
Poland	22	2	0	2	4	24	28	1895/1920
Rumania	2	1	0	0	0	3	3	2011
Switzerland	54	6	24	0	49	84	133	1840/1856/1866
Serbia	7	0	3	1	1	10	11	1898
Slovakia	5	0	3	3	1	8	9	1924
Czechia	10	2	5	1	3	17	20	1920
Tunisia	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	
Hungary	10	0	2	2	5	12	17	1898/1905
Total	135	17	54	16	82	206	288	
<i>Previous year 2019</i>	132	18	52	31	84	202	286	
<i>Difference +/-</i>	3	-1	2	-15	-2	+4	+2	

Professing members:	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Difference
Prov. AC Austria	738	732	742	746	744	646	-98
Prov. AC Bulgaria-Rumania	1'290	1'277	1'220	1'195	1'192	1'113	-79
AC Switzerland-France-N. Africa	6'932	6'812	6'605	6'407	6'215	6'138	-77
AC Czechia-Slovakia	1'157	1'125	1'160	1'179	1'131	1'078	-53
Prov. AC Hungary	467	479	477	509	516	521	5
AC Poland	2'146	2'083	2'105	1'925	1'924	1'978	54
Prov. AC Serbia	489	467	457	434	631	595	-36
Albania and Croatia	142	142	169	169			
Total	13'361	13'117	12'935	12'564	12'353	12'069	-284
+ Bulgaria							
+ North-Macedonia	1'000	1'000	1'200	1'200	1'200	1'200	0
Grand Total	14'361	14'117	14'135	13'764	13'553	13'269	-284
<i>Change in %</i>	-1.85	-1.70	0.13	-2.62	-1.53	-2.10	-2.14

X. Bodies of the Central Conference

elected for 2021 - 2024

	Clergy:	Lay:
Büro		
Bishop, Chair	Patrick Streiff	
Bishop, Chair	Stefan Zürcher	
Vice Chair		vacant
Secretary	Markus Bach (CH)	
Treasurer	Iris Bullinger (CH)	

Executive Committee

Members with voting rights:

Bishops, Chair	Patrick Streiff/Stefan Zürcher	
Vice Chair		vacant
Secretary	Markus Bach	
Treasurer	Iris Bullinger	
AC Austria	Sup. Stefan Schröckenfuchs	Ben Nausner
AC Switzerland-France-North Africa	Sup. Serge Frutiger	Lea Hafner
AC Czechia	Sup. Ivana Procházková	Miluse Salkova
AC Hungary	Sup. László Khaled	Dávid Csernák
AC Poland	Sup. Andrzej Malicki	Bozena Daszuta
AC Serbia-North-Macedonia-Albania	Sup. Daniel Sjanta	Daniela Stoilkova
Chair WG Episcopacy	Jörg Niederer	

Members with voice, but not vote::

Bishops in retirement	Bishop Heinrich Bolleter from 1.7.2023: Bishop Patrick Streiff	
France and Belgium	Sup. Grégoire Chahinian (Vice: Etienne Rudolph)	
Algeria and Tunisia	Sup. Freddy Nzambe	
Rumania	Sup. Rares Calugar	
North-Macedonia	Sup. Marjan Dimov	
Albania	Sup. Wilfried Nausner	
Council on Finance and Administration		Adrian Wenziker (CH)
Judicial Court		Christa Tobler (CH)
WG Theology and Ordained Ministry	vacant	
WG Children and Youth		vacant (Co-Chair) vacant (Co-Chair)
WG Church and Society	Marietjie Odendaal (CH)	
WG Women's work	Monika Zuber (PL)	
Coordinator of the Women's work		Barbara Bünger (CH)
WG Liturgy	Erika Stalcup (CH)	
WG Church Discipline and Legal Affaires	Wilfried Nausner (AT)	

Council on Finance and Administration

Chair	Adrian Wenziker (CH) Stefan Hafner (CH) Daniel Burkhalter (CH)
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Pension Board

	Bishop Patrick Streiff	Adrian Wenziker (CH) Stefan Hafner (CH) Daniel Burkhalter (CH)
Additional specialist:		Markus Hafner (CH)
Pension Benefits Officer:		André Töngi (CH)

Committee on Investigation

AC Austria	Stefan Schröckenfuchs	Roland Siegrist
AC Switzerland-France-North Africa	Hanna Wilhelm (Convener)	
AC Czechia	Petr Procházka	
AC Hungary	László Khaled	Grethe Jenei
AC Poland	Sławomir Rodaszyński	
AC Serbia-North-Macedonia-Albania	Ana Palik-Kunčák	

Reserve members:

AC Austria	Martin Obermeir-Siegrist	
AC Switzerland-France-North Africa	Gunnar Wichers	
AC Czechia	Pavel Procházka	
AC Hungary	Zoltán Kovács	
AC Poland		Olgierd Benedyktowicz
AC Serbia-North-Macedonia-Albania	Marjan Dimov	

Committee on Appeals

AC Austria	Wilfried Nausner (Convener)	Gerhard Weissenbrunner
AC Switzerland-France-North Africa	Etienne Rudolph	
AC Czechia	Pavel Hradský	
AC Hungary		Henrik Schauer mann
AC Poland	Józef Bartos	
AC Serbia-North-Macedonia-Albania		Marija Parnicki
Local Pastor	Ruedi Stähli (CH)	

Reserve members:

AC Austria		Hayford Boateng
AC Switzerland-France-North Africa	Theo Rickenbacher	Marc Berger
AC Czechia		Josef Thal
AC Hungary	Márton Hecker	
AC Poland		Bozena Daszuta
AC Serbia-North-Macedonia-Albania	Lila Balovski (RS)	
Local Pastor	vacant	

Judicial Court

Members	Martin Streit (CH) István Csernák (HU)	Christa Tobler (CH) Philipp Hadorn (CH) Bernhard Pöll (AT)
Reserve members	Jean-Philippe Waechter (FR) vacant	Regula Dannecker (CH) vacant

Council for the church

Council	vacant
Reserve	Markus Bach (CH) Petr Procházka (CZ) Gábor Szuhánszky (HU) Etienne Rudolph (FR)

Working Group Episcopacy

AC Austria	Stefan Schröckenfuchs	
AC Switzerland-France-North Africa	Jörg Niederer (Vorsitz)	
AC Czechia	Ivana Procházková	
AC Hungary	László Khaled	
AC Poland		Bozena Daszuta
AC Serbia-North-Macedonia-Albania	Daniel Sjanta	

Working Group Theology and Ordained Ministry

Stefan Zürcher (CH - Chair)
Michael Nausner (AT)
Zoltán Kovács (HU)
Daniel Sjanta (RS)
Edward Puślecki (PL)
Jana Daněčková (CZ)
(and 1 representation from the Central Conference Germany)

Working Group Church and Society

Marietjie Odendaal (CH - Chair)

David Chlupáček (CZ)

1 Person vacant

Working Group Children and Youth

vakant (Co-Chair)

vakant (Co-Chair)

and the delegations of each country to the EMYC

Working Group Women's Work

Monika Zuber (PL - Chair)

Maria Đurovka-Petraš (RS)

Murielle Rietschi Wilhelm (CH)

Coordinator Central Conference: Barbara Büniger (CH)

Working Group Liturgy

Monika Stalcup (CH - Chair)

Esther Handschin (AT)

Jana Křížova (CZ)

Working Group Church Discipline and Legal Affairs

Wilfried Nausner (AT/AL - Chair)

Petr Procházka (CZ)

Serge Frutiger (CH)

1 Person vacant

Representatives beyond the Central Conference CSE

European level:

European Methodist Council (EMC) and Joint Commission of UMC in Europe

Bishop	Stefan Zürcher Adrian Myslinski (PL) Vladimir Fazekas (RS)	Lilla Kardosné Lakatos (HU) Anna Shammas (CH)
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European Commission on Mission (ECOM)

Connexio Co-Chair	Daniel Hänni (CH)
Connexio General Secretary	Ulrich Bachmann (CH)

Fund for Mission in Europe (FMIE)

Bishop	Stefan Zürcher	Lilla Kardosné Lakatos (HU)
Geschäftsführer, beratend		Andreas Stämpfli (CH)

European Lay seminary

Christa Wichers (CH)

Methodist e-Academy (Governing Board)

Bishop	Patrick Streiff, Chair Zoltán Kovács (HU) Christoph Schluep (CH)
Coordinator, with voice	vacant

Community of Protestant Churches in Europe - CPCE (South-East Europe regional group)

Novica Brankov (RS)
1 Person vakant

Community of Protestant Churches in Europe - WG Church Community

Jana Křížova (CZ)

Conference European Churches (CEC)

Standing Member of the Board	vacant
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Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe (EYCE)

Member in the Executive Committee	vacant
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Worldwide level:

Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters

Bishop	Patrick Streiff / Stefan Zürcher Petr Procházka (CZ)	Christine Schneider-Oesch (CH)
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Connectional Table

vacant

General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM)

Andreas Stämpfli (CH)

In Mission Together (IMT)

AC Czechia	Jana Křížova (CZ)	
AC Hungary		Laura Tordaj-Szuhánski
AC Poland	Adrian Myslinski	
AC Serbia-North-Macedonia-Albania		Jennifer Moore (MK) Maria Đurovka-Petraš (RS)
Coordinator		Urs Schweizer

General Board of Church and Society (GBCS)

if newly formed after GK 2020	[Philipp Hadorn]
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Division on Ministries with Young People (DMYP)

Young Adult		Maria Sonnleithner (AT)
Youth		Stanislava Bako (RS)
Youth worker	vacant	

General Commission on Archives and History (GCAH)

Judit Lakatos (HU)

World Methodist Council:

World Methodist Historical Society – European Section

Vice-Chair	Judit Lakatos (HU)
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World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women (WFMUCW)

Vice-Chair Continental Europe	Lilla Kardosné Lakatos (HU)
Editor «Tree of Life»	Ligia Istrate (RO)

World Evangelism

Regional Secretary Central and Southern Europe	vacant
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X. Addresses

Last update: November 2022

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