

2022 Annual Conference Report Worksheet

Name of conference: Eastern PA Conference

Location of conference gathering: West Chester (PA) UMC and Zoom

Dates of conference gathering: May 20-21, 2022

Did the gathering have a theme or slogan, and if so, what was it? "Now."

Did the coronavirus affect how the conference met?

Yes. We met mostly online via Zoom, while limited staff and helpers convened and produced the session from West Chester UMC

Officiating bishop: Bishop John Schol

Guest speakers and memorable points or quotes by speakers:

Rev. Héctor A. Burgos. District Superintendent, Greater New Jersey Conference: Memorial Service (Presiding Bishop Schol also spoke twice: Episcopal Address and Ordination & Commissioning Service)

Main actions enacted by the conference:

The **Path Toward Wholeness Economic Justice** resolution (#2022-07) promises to take to the next level the conference's stated commitment to dismantling racism. It includes investment in:

- new and revitalized ministries among churches of color,
- reducing the conference Connectional Ministries apportionment for churches in low-income communities;
- more equity in pastoral opportunities for clergy of color; and
- helping leaders to face and dismantle racism in their churches and communities.

The **Discernment Pathways resolution** (#2022-08) recommends that all EPA congregations undergo a guided exploratory process to discern "what God has next for them." Apart from some congregations that may seek to disaffiliate from the UMC, the Pathways initiative will focus on helping remaining churches to fulfill their core mission and values, including: congregational vitality; financial sustainability; missional use of church properties; and resolving church conflicts.

Resolutions or action related to the coronavirus: None

Resolutions or actions related to the postponed 2020 General Conference, now set for 2024: None

Did any churches disaffiliate or leave the conference (and if so, please list each church)? No.

Number of churches that closed because no longer sustainable (please list each church and indicate whether financial issues related to the coronavirus were a cause): Two: St. Thomas UMC in Philadelphia (part of the Frankford Group Ministry); and Zion UMC in Shamokin. Closures not related to Coronavirus.

Any special annual conference set: No

Endorsement of episcopal candidate: No

Other resolutions adopted by the conference:

Did the bishop make any decisions of church law during this session, and if so, what were they? No; only a parliamentary decision.

Did your clergy session approve any openly gay candidates for ministry? If so, how many? No.

Names of delegates for General Conference and designation of lay or clergy: Same delegates approved for the 2020 General Conference, including a few alternates.

Did the conference have to elect replacement delegates due to the delay? If so, which delegates are replacements and why? No.

Was there a push at your conference to elect younger delegates? If so, how many delegates under 35 were elected and what are their names and ages? No delegates elected.

Number of people ordained, commissioned or received into associate membership, and average age:
Four clergy ordained, two commissioned.

Number of clergy retired: 27

- Membership for 2021 stands at 80,438, down 3,319 from 83,757 in 2020.
- Average on-site worship for attendance for 2021 stands at 16,759, down 4,483 from 21,242 in 2020. Average online worship attendance for 2021 stands at 23,806, down 43,302 from 67,108 in 2020.
- Average church school attendance for 2021 stands at 5,546, down 341 from 5,887 in 2020.
- Professions or reaffirmations of faith for 2021 were 592, up 69 from 523 in 2020.
- Adults and young adults in small groups for 2021 stands at 16,866, down 1,737 from 18,603 in 2020.
- Worshippers engaged in mission for 2021 stands at 533,985, up 127,219 from 406,766 in 2020.

Our coverage of AC2022: [Conference charts new pathways to a future that is Now](#)

Report prepared by John Coleman, Eastern PA Conference Communications Director, June 29, 2022