

## Resolution Approving Formation of a New Conference

Whereas: The Nashville Episcopal Area is comprised of the Memphis and Tennessee Conferences, and

Whereas: In 2014, the Memphis and Tennessee Annual Conference delegates adopted the same mission statement:

The mission of the Memphis and Tennessee Conference is to discover, equip, connect and send lay and clergy leaders who shape congregations that offer Jesus Christ to a hurting world one neighborhood at a time, and

Whereas: We are committed to our mission more than to our geographic boundaries, and

Whereas: Over the past five years, the following areas of ministry have been aligned between the two conferences:

- Appointive Cabinets meeting/working together as one
- Office of Leadership Formation and Development (formerly Office of Ministerial Concerns) provides shared services for both conference (ex: administration, licensing school, Orientation to Ministry, Healthy Boundaries training)
- Clergy Spiritual Life Retreat combined to serve both conferences
- Area wide Hispanic Ministries team
- Area wide New Church Development team
- Annual Conference Sessions have worshiped and learned around the same themes and speakers, and

Whereas: After successful alignment efforts demonstrated increased focus, efficiency and fruitfulness, an advisory team was identified to further pursue what benefits and challenges would be presented by formation of a new conference to include all geographic areas of the current Memphis and Tennessee Conferences, and

Whereas: In 2018, the Memphis Annual Conference and the Tennessee Annual Conference sessions voted to endorse the intent to

move forward with a plan to form a new conference, with the expectation that each Conference will vote to approve a plan for a new conference in 2019, send a motion to the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference in 2020, and to meet as a fully unified Annual Conference in 2021, and

Whereas: Both Conferences directed the advisory team to continue development of a plan to form a new Conference, with particular attention to challenges related to a unified method of funding the budget and a single health benefits plan, and

Whereas: The advisory team, as directed by both Conferences, has continued its work on two identified items, those being the methodology used to pay for the Conference budget, including health and pension costs, and the utilization of one employee health benefit plan for both Conferences, and has presented a recommendation related to those matters, appended to this resolution as Exhibit A, (funding plan) and Exhibit B (guiding principle plan for benefits), and

Whereas: The advisory team has developed strategic goals and initiatives for the new Conference that are outlined in Exhibit C.

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the Memphis Annual Conference affirms sending a motion to the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference, for action at its 2020 session, requesting that the Tennessee and Memphis Conferences be joined to form a new Conference, and to meet as a fully unified Annual Conference in 2021;

Be it further resolved, that the Memphis Annual Conference endorses the funding plan outlined in Exhibit A, subject to approval by the newly formed Conference as a unified body at its 2021 Annual Conference session;

Be it further resolved, that the Memphis Annual Conference endorses the guiding principle plan for benefits outlined in Exhibit B, subject to approval by the newly formed Conference as a unified body at its 2021 Annual Conference session;

Be it further resolved, that the Memphis Annual Conference endorses the goals and objectives outlined in Exhibit C, subject to approval by the newly

formed Conference as a unified body at its 2021 Annual Conference session.

Be it further resolved, that those appointments to Conference agencies, committees and other bodies that would ordinarily expire at 2020 Annual Conference shall continue through the end of calendar year 2020, so that their expiration will coincide with the effective date of creation of the new Conference.

Submitted by: The Memphis Conference Appointive Cabinet

## Exhibit A – Resolution Approving Formation of New Conference

### **CONNECTIONAL COMMITMENT**

#### Proposed Funding Plan for New Conference

1. We will ask each local church to remit to the New Conference 10% of their income as reported on line 62 (that line is now 52t) on their annual statistical report to the conference.
2. We will not ask local churches to self-determine their share to remit, rather we will calculate the amount for each church and inform them of their “fair share” six (or so) months ahead of the calendar year.
3. The amount will be calculated on a two year “lagging” method. I.E. the 2021 amount will be based on the 2019 conference statistical reports.
4. This method assumes that Clergy Health and Pension Costs will be direct billed to the local churches and participants, as appropriate, and the only portion of those benefit costs that ends up being included in this funding methodology, is for plan participants that are not appointed to a local church. I.E. District Superintendents, Conference staff, etc.
5. We will no longer use the terms “apportionments” or “tithe” and are suggesting the use of the term “connectional commitment”. We believe that term is more representative of what this is.
6. In addition, there will be a “transition adjustment” beginning at 1% for the first year and declining by ¼ % each year. (See diagram below) The purpose of this transition adjustment, is to cover the cost of churches that are unable to contribute their full 10% Connectional Commitment and allow the new conference to work with them to achieve their full Connectional Commitment and or to further reduce conference costs.
7. Our commitment is to reduce this “transitional adjustment” to 0% by the fifth year after the formation of the New Conference and ask for no more than 10% of revenue at that point. (See diagram below)
8. We will work with our District Superintendents, Bishop and others to understand the financial costs to the conference for a local church and appointed clergy. While recognizing the importance of our financial support for missional faith communities, we will work with local churches to complete the full payment of their 10% Connectional Commitment and 100% of the cost of Health and Pension benefits for their appointed clergy.
9. We will remain committed to challenging the ways that the conferences fund ministry, holding groups that request budgets accountable to the conference missional objectives and practices of good stewardship.
10. We propose that the New Conference will have one comprehensive budget that is developed with input from appropriate ministry teams and groups, vetted by CFA, and approved by the annual conference. So there would be no additional budgets for districts and other groups.

11. We propose that local churches would pay their 10% share with no need to designate to any specific portion of the conference approved budget.
12. We believe that this will leave more dollars “in the hands” of local congregations, for them to decide how to spend those dollars most effectively for ministry, while at the same time honoring the stated mission of the Annual Conference and recognizing the power of our connectional system.

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Connectional Commitment 10%	Connectional Commitment 10%	Connectional Commitment 10%	Connectional Commitment 10%	Connectional Commitment 10%
Transitional Adjustment 1%	Transitional Adjustment .75%	Transitional Adjustment .50%	Transitional Adjustment .25%	Transitional Adjustment 0%

Decreasing transitional adjustments

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
11.0%				
	10.75%			
		10.50%		
			10.25%	
				10%
Connectional Commitment				

## **Exhibit B – Resolution Approving Formation of New Conference**

### New Conference Medical Benefit Plan Design Guiding Principles

1. The new Conference will provide medical benefits for our full time appointed clergy and lay employees of the conference, district, and area.
2. The new Conference will not provide medical benefits for less than full time clergy. However, any participant who meets the definition of “full time” for purposes of the Affordable Care Act rules, will be offered the opportunity to participate in the new Conference’s health plan.
3. The new Conference will provide Affordable Health Benefits to eligible participants, including clergy under appointment to local churches and conference staff (lay and clergy). Any local church that meets the 50 FTE threshold is an “Applicable Large Employer” and will be responsible for providing health benefits to their staff as required by the ACA, except for their appointed clergy who may be participants in the new Conference’s plan.
4. The new Conference will cost share family coverage.
5. The cost of medical benefits will not be an issue in the appointment process because of the use of a blended rate plan.
6. Participation in the plan is mandatory for eligible lay and clergy.
7. The new Conference will provide an Employee Assistance Plan that includes counseling and mental health support
8. The new Conference will have a wellness program to encourage healthy living
9. The new Conference will offer tax advantaged medical reimbursement accounts
10. Our clergy will participate in the cost of their benefit package
11. The new Conference will provide access to a plan for Dental and Vision coverage.
12. The new Conference will offer a competitive and comprehensive benefit plan.
13. The new Conference benefit package will include a prescription drug plan
14. The new Conference needs to continue to find ways to reduce the cost of our participant pool.

15. The new Conference benefit package must be affordable for the new Conference and participants.
16. The new Conference will direct bill the cost of the benefit package for each participant. For local church based participants, the bill will be sent to and paid by the local church, with a TBD cost share split between the church and clergy.
17. The new Conference plan must consider Methodist Health Systems (Memphis) to be “In Network”

## **Exhibit C – Resolution Approving Formation of New Conference**

### **Nashville Episcopal Area – New Conference 2019-2021 Strategic Plan**

#### **Why Join Together as a New Conference?**

1. Builds a **stronger connection to share** assets, strengths, knowledge, expertise and spiritual gifts.
2. Increases our capacity to **engage and impact the mission field.**
3. Creates more **innovation for disciple making** because of more diverse voices at the table.
4. Allows for a **greater pool of leadership** to be effectively deployed for the mission of the church.

**Our Vision:** Uniting to embody the love of Christ in Spirit-led actions one community at a time.

**Our Mission:** To discover, equip, connect and send lay and clergy leaders who shape congregations that offer Christ to a hurting world, one neighborhood at a time.

#### **Our Values:**

1. The local church as the disciple making center
2. Transparency and integrity in our communication
3. Seeking a purposeful and more generous way of love
4. Courage to explore possibilities and take risks by being nimble, experimenting, permitting failure, and staying the course
5. Empowering all leaders and enabling leaders with gifts and graces for the task
6. Seeking input from both people and useful data
7. We welcome diversity, rooted in Christ, a deep love of one another, celebrating our differences

#### **Strategic Focus (Our What for 2019-2021):**

Develop transforming lay and clergy leaders to engage the mission field to grow fruitful and faithful congregations.

#### **Strategic Initiatives:**

1. **Develop Transforming Clergy and Lay Leaders**
  - Create a culture of call for lay and clergy



- Equip lay leaders for team ministry with clergy
- Foster emotional intelligence, invest in intercultural leadership
- Hold one another accountable in love

## **2. Invest and Empower Young (18-35) and Diverse People**

- Invest resources into young people so they can carry the light of Christ, both now and to future generations
- Celebrate & seek diversity as a means of transformation
- Create a culture of inclusiveness: discover and develop young and diverse leaders

## **3. Engage the Mission Field through Partnering with Communities**

- Assess and understand assets: needs, gaps and the church's role in its community
- Repurpose existing assets
- Invest in innovation, sustainability, and multiplying ministries
- Develop new faith communities
- Launch innovative expressions of church that engage evangelism more effectively

## **4. Create Fruitful and Faithful Congregations**

- Every church commits to a plan for making disciples
- Shift resources to areas of fruitfulness and vitality for mission achievement
- Adopt mentality of "enough": God's abundance vs. our human scarcity
- Provide resources for struggling churches that desire change: Financial, Leadership, Innovation
- Build a culture of collaboration, effectiveness and inter-dependency among connection

### **Timeline:**

- **June 2018:** Annual Conferences vote to intend to come together into a new conference.
- **June 2019:** Annual Conferences vote to approve new conference and strategic plan.
- **July 2019 – June 2020:** Continue alignment where possible
- **June 2020:** Annual Conferences meet separately
- **July 2020:** SEJ votes to approve new conference.
- **Fall 2020:** Special called Joint Annual Conference to approve new conference administration

- **January 2021:** Begin operating as new conference.
- **June 2021:** First Full Annual Conference of the new conference.

**Scriptural References:**

Psalm 46:4

Romans 12:1-8

Hebrews 10:24-25

Proverbs 11:4

Galatians 3:28

Colossians 1:16-17

Ephesians 4:1-6

Hebrews 11:1

Acts 2:42

2 Cor. 1:12-14

Proverbs 19:20

Revelation 7:9-10

Psalm 117:1-2

Matthew 28:19-20

1 Corinthians 15:58

Acts 20:28

Matthew 25:14-30

Luke 14:28

James 2:1-13

Ephesians 2:13-22

Colossians 3:12-17