

**Indiana General Conference Delegation
Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2021**

Present by Zoom: Derek Weber, Shirley Dominick, Leah Padgett, Michael Womack, John Lomperis, Shannon Priddy, Amy Land, Rob Fuquay, Duane Carlisle, Russ Abel, Aleze Fulbright, Greg Pimlott, Adriane Curtis, Matt Landry, Kim Arnott, Brett Loyd, Albert Hidalgo, Marty Lundy, Nathan Lundy, R.C. Muhlbaier, John Lomperis, Kenneth Einselen, Chiyona Bourne, John Shive

The meeting began with Worship time led by Derek Weber. Derek's devotion focused on scripture Zephaniah 3:14-20.

Knowing one another:

The group read the Christian Conferencing Guidelines. No issues were brought up nor any significant discussion came from reading these.

Knowing our work:

Jurisdictional Conference November 2021:

The group broke into 4 breakout groups to discuss these questions:

- How did it (the conference) help?
- How does the work done at Jurisdictional Conference impact our work as a delegation?

Summary of discussions: Each group reported back. Some acknowledged that the meeting did not bring about anything significant; others felt it provided a vision for the future. Some were concerned that the covenant statement fell short to represent the consensus of the group and was not well represented by a balanced of persons with theological perspectives (all persons on the statement writing team were progressive/centrist with no traditionalist as a representative); while others were encouraged by the statement and looking for ways to Indiana conference regarding race and inclusion perspectives. Most felt that the small group discussions were good, and people connected. Some felt the statement brought clarity to the NCJ and GMC future. Some felt that the statement wasn't representative of the feedback and priorities discussed in the small groups – example: amicable separation appeared as a top priority but was omitted from the statement. Some felt the initial covenant statement omitted scripture and had no mention of discipleship nor evangelism; but, was later corrected to include.

Russ requested that delegates wishing to submit a personal perspective keeping it to 150 to 200 words, that he would receive these and pass along to publish to the delegates web page.

Update from Task Force from September Meeting:

Chiyona, Greg, Mary and Chris were a part of this task force. (Chris couldn't make today's meeting.) The three attending the meeting talked about their experience and personal engagements as part of this task force. They were tasked by Russ to "bring back to the delegation ways that we might have fruitful discussion on the future of the UMC. Through their 5 week engagement with one another, they broke barriers and built relationships with each other. Their initial meeting met with some fear but eventually they opened up to one another and were able to learn who each are. They discussed that they could agree on amicable separation. They learned what trigger points were for the

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individuals. They learned to relate to those different from them. They all love God, showed grace, and want to carry forward the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. They discussed how as plans were made toward separation, how we could still be ecumenical to one another. As a result of their conversations, they also agreed on how they perceived the church could help with families of children struggling with sexual identities and to support the families through this difficult time until the children become adults and can choose their own paths forward. (Stated this but it is not an actionable item.) They created a statement of understanding that was offered to the delegation. (It is titled "Notes from Subgroup Meetings" in one of the documents Russ forwarded prior to the meeting.) It included how they felt God was leading them to agree to disagree on unresolvable issues, to agree on what unifies them, to be obedient in response to their love for God and to be mindful of the needs of others including each other. It also stated that they support that being homosexual doesn't negate salvation which is by grace through faith.

Their recommendation, seeing how that this group grew in their relationship, was to form other groups of 4 to do similarly. Mike Womack, John Shive, Russ Abel, and Shannon Priddy agreed to form the next group. Others were encouraged as well. A suggestion, generally accepted, that perhaps a person from this initial task force group would sit in on the new groups formed to help foster consistency in their approach.

A poll was taken on whether to continue breakout sessions at this meeting to start discussions like this. The poll was 50/50 and the task force opted not to do breakouts.

After agreeing to move forward with a new group(s), a challenge was made to defer this concept of small groups until all the delegation members were present for more discussion. The challenger was concerned that more structure was needed and was concerned about safety, confidentiality, accountability, boundaries, and the level of risk this may expose to some. While there was general understanding, it was cautioned that too many ground rules would circumvent or hinder the groups.

Update from Caucus groups:

- WCA – Nothing significant to add
- Room For All Coalition – Nothing significant to add
- A discussion did occur regarding the Iowa Conference statement in this link: <https://www.iaumc.org/newsdetail/15777927>. The question (paraphrasing) was whether the Room for All Coalition, based on the NCJ Conference or the Iowa Annual Conference statement, would advocate for the Indiana conference to break from BOD and allow same sex marriages by UMC clergy and/or on UMC property (as Iowa is planning). Some said they were unaware of the Iowa statement and there was a comment that the Iowa statement was not relating to same sex marriages from their interpretation.

Sending:

Russ gave the closing reflection using “winter” and “evergreen tree” as examples of Hope. He reminded us that evergreens bend but don’t break in a hard, windy season. So, even in our season of tough times, we have Hope that we too bend and not break.

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Next Meeting Schedules:

- February 12, 9:00-12:00 - Zoom
- March 19, 9:00-12:00 - Zoom
- April 23, 9:00-12:00 – Zoom or in person (if in person times may be adjusted)
- May 21, 9:00-12:00 – Zoom or in person (if in person times may be adjusted)
- June 18, 9:00-12:00 – Zoom or in person (if in person times may be adjusted)
- July 23, 9:00-12:00 – Zoom or in person (if in person times may be adjusted)
- August 20, 9:-12:00 – Zoom or in person (if in person times may be adjusted)