

**Guidelines for a responsible way of life**

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**Process and decisions for the withdrawal of  
the Czech Republic from the UMC**

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**New Constitution and Bylaws of the  
European Methodist Council**

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**Report of the  
80<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Executive Committee  
from March 14-17, 2024 in Vienna (AT) and  
81<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Executive Committee  
from July 4, 2024, Online-Meeting and  
82<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Executive Committee  
from September 27-28, 2024 in Budapest (HU)**

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**The United Methodist Church**

Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe



## **The United Methodist Church**

Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

Report of the 80<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Executive Committee  
from March 14 – 17, 2024 in Vienna (Austria) and

Report of the 81<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Executive Committee  
from July 4, 2024, Online-Meeting and

Report of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Executive Committee  
from September 27 – 28, 2024 in Budapest (Hungary)

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# Our common Agreement for fruitful and respectful Executive Committee Meetings



- Every voice should be heard and has equal value.
- We encourage one another to speak out openheartedly.
- We engage in dialogue with respectful and active listening.



- We are willing to learn and consider what we say.
- Our work builds on mutual trust and we assume good intention.
- We are aware of cultural and language barriers and differences and patiently take time to understand one another.



- We ask, if things are unclear and help one another in understanding.
- We promote a culture in which mistakes are allowed and dealt with constructively.



- We understand our meetings as confidential.
- We are well-prepared for meetings and know the goals and limits of our work.
- We keep an eye on our overarching and connecting goals.
- We are on time or communicate delays in advance.



- We avoid hybrid meetings.
- We foster our relations and show our willingness to learn from one another by participating in devotions and joint activities.



Executive Meeting in Vienna, March 14-17, 2024

# Facts of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

Date: November 2023

## 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 February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023

Bishop Dr. Stefan Zürcher

#### Bishops retired

Bishop Heinrich Bolleter  
Bishop Dr. Patrick Streiff

### The agents of the Central Conference

Chair: Bishop Dr. Stefan Zürcher  
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Secretary: Markus Bach  
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Treasurer: Iris Bullinger  
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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

- 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting from October 14 to 17, 1954 in Brussels, Belgium
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting from February 7 to 10, 1954 in Geneva, Switzerland
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting from October 13 to 16, 1960 in Linz, Austria
- 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting from September 22 to 27, 1964 in Strasbourg, France
- 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting extraordinary from September 2 to 4, 1966 in Lausanne, Switzerland
- 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting from March 5 to 9, 1969 in Berne, Switzerland  
Theme: »Die Kirche lebt«
- 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting from March 21 to 25, 1973 in Schaffhausen, Switzerland  
Thema: »Es ist in keinem anderen Heil«
- 8<sup>th</sup> 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.«
- 9<sup>th</sup> 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.«
- 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting from March, 13 to 17, 1985 in Zurich-Zelthof, Switzerland  
Theme: »Gott dienen - ein Leben lang.«
- 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting from March 15 to 19, 1989 in Baden, Switzerland  
Theme: »Christus der Weinstock - wir die Reben.«
- 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting from March 10 to 14, 1993 in Berne-Bümpliz, Switzerland  
Theme: »Wo der Geist des Herrn ist, da ist Freiheit«
- 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting from March 12 to 16, 1997 in Aarau, Switzerland  
Theme: »Mit Grenzen leben - in Christus überwinden«
- 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting from March 14 to 18, 2001 in Bülach, Switzerland  
Theme: »Lasst uns aber Gutes tun und nicht müde werden« (Gal. 6,9)
- 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting from April 13 to 17, 2005 in Berne-Altstadt, Switzerland  
Theme: »Furcht ist nicht in der Liebe« (1. Joh. 4, 18)
- 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting from March 11 to 15, 2009 in Bülach, Switzerland  
Theme: »Seek God and Live - the Methodist Way
- 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting from March 13 to 17, 2013 in Winterthur, Switzerland  
Theme: »Faith, Hope and Love - these three«
- 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting from March 8 to 12, 2017 in Zurich-Zelthof, Switzerland  
Theme: »Jesus is Lord«
- 19<sup>th</sup> 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. Directory of Decisions

## of the 80<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Executive Committee of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

### Book of Discipline and Regulations

- 80-1 The Executive Committee unanimously adopts the document "Our common agreement for fruitful and respectful Executive Committee meetings".

### Elections

- 80-2 The Executive Committee unanimously elects the two Co-Chairs Ivana Pastor and Cedric Zangger as members of the Executive Committee of the CC CSE in an advisory capacity, with only one person attending each meeting.
- 80-3 Stefan Hafner is unanimously elected as interim Chairman of the Council for Finance and Administration.
- 80-4 Stefan Hafner is unanimously elected as auditor of the Central Conference accounts.
- 80-5 The Executive Committee unanimously confirms the delegation of Andrzej Malicki to the Standing Committee for Central Conference Matters from the 2024 General Conference.
- 81-1 The Executive Committee unanimously elects Jean-Paul Dietrich as member of the Board of Directors of the General Board of Global Ministries.

### Financial decisions

- 80-6 The Executive Committee unanimously approves the 2023 accounts on the basis of the auditors' report, grants discharge to the treasurer and expresses its sincere thanks to her for her services.

### Resolutions for the Executive Committee / Central Conference

- 80-7 The Executive Committee unanimously decides to propose to the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe that the regulations of the Central Conference be amended as follows:

Article 7.5: "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."

Article 8.1: "The office shall be composed of the Bishop, ~~the vice-chairperson,~~ the secretary, and the treasurer. Chairperson shall be the Bishop."

Article 8.2: "The office can through a motion of the Bishop include a ~~fifth~~ fourth person, who is elected by the executive committee from among its members."

- 82-1 The Executive Committee accepts the invitation to the meeting in Warsaw in fall 2025 with heartfelt thanks.

## **Decisions for Working Groups / Office of the Central Conference**

### **All Working Groups**

- 80-8 Based on the feedback, the Working Groups define their tasks and next steps for the attention of the Executive Committee meeting in September 2024.

### **Working Group Discipline and Legal Affairs**

- 80-9 The Executive Committee unanimously approves document 2.3.1 of the Working Group Discipline and Legal Affairs "Process and Decisions for the Withdrawal of the UMC Czech Republic".
- 80-10 The Executive Committee commissions the Working Group Discipline and Legal Affairs to publish the Church Order in consultation with the Central Conference Germany.

The secretary:  
Markus Bach

# II. Minutes

## of the 80<sup>th</sup> 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, March 14, 2024

Thursday, March 14, 2024, 2:15 p.m.

**Plenary session in the EMK Vienna Fünfhaus, Sechshausstrasse 56**

Bishop Stefan Zürcher (hereinafter Bishop Stefan) welcomes those present. He thanks the people on site who have prepared everything for our well-being. He sends greetings from retired Bishop Heinrich Bolleter, who is unfortunately unable to be present, but is accompanying us in his thoughts and prayers. Retired Bishop Patrick Streiff will arrive in Vienna this evening and join us tomorrow.

In particular, he welcomes Martina Chlupáčková, who is able to join us in person for the first time.

Bishop Stefan also welcomes the guests: Üllas Tankler from GBGM and Gjergj Lushka from Albania.

Present or absent:

as members with voting rights:

#### **Bishop**

Presiding Bishop	Bishop	Stefan Zürcher	present
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#### **Office**

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

#### **Executive Committee**

Serbia-North Macedonia-Albania	Sup.	Daniel Sjanta	excused
	Layperson	Emil Zaev	present from Friday
Austria	Sup.	Stefan Schröckenfuchs	present
	Layperson	Ben Nausner	present
Poland	Sup.	Andrzej Malicki	excused
	Layperson	Bozena Daszuta	excused
Switzerland-France-North Africa	Sup.	Serge Frutiger	present
	Layperson	Lea Hafner	present
Czech Republic	Sup.	Ivana Procházková	present
	Layperson	Martina Chlupáčková	present
Hungary-Rumania	Sup.	László Khaled	present



	Layperson	Dávid Csernák	present
<b>Chair WG Episcopacy</b>	Pastor	Jörg Niederer	present

as advisory members:

<b>Retired bishop</b>	Bishop	Patrick Streiff	present as of Friday
	Bishop	Heinrich Bolleter	excused

**Additional superintendents**

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

**Chairpersons of the Working Groups**

WG Theology and Ord. Ministries	Pastor	Zoltán Kovács	present
WG Liturgy	Pastor	Erika Stalcup	present
WG Discipline and Legal Affairs	Sup.	Wilfried Nausner	present
WG Children and Youth	Layperson	Cedric Zangger	present from Saturday
	Layperson	Ivana Pastor	present from Saturday
WG Church and Society	Pastor	Marietjie Odendaal	present
WG Women's Service	Pastor	Monika Zuber	excused
Coordinator	Layperson	Barbara Bünger	present

are present as quests:

Assistant to the Bishop	Urs Schweizer	present
GBGM - European Secretary	Üllas Tankler	present
from Albania	Gjergj Lushka	present

**Total attendance: 27**

*Thursday, March 14, 2024, 2:30 p.m.*

**Reflection of the EMK Vienna Fünfhaus, Sechshausstrasse 56**

*Erika Stalcup* leads us through the reflections at the conference. Together with Božena Daszuta, she has prepared a booklet with songs from the different countries.

We will then read and sing the Serbian-language song "Mi smo jedna u duhu" (We are One in the Spirit). The reading is from Psalm 143, 5-10, after which we are invited to formulate our thoughts and prayers in the direction of the East (North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia). This is followed by a prayer followed by "Our Father" in all available languages. We read and sing the Macedonian song: "Na pat si za vechnosta". Erika Stalcup places us under God's blessing.

*Bishop Stefan* pointed out that various people had helped to prepare this conference and he thanked them warmly: Erika Stalcup, Božena Daszuta, Ben Nausner, László Khaled - and for Saturday's theme day, the Children and Youth Working Group.

Thursday, March 14, 2024, 3:00 p.m.

**Plenary session in the EMK Vienna Fünfhaus, Sechshausstrasse 56**

*László Khaled* invites us to talk in small groups about where we come from. It's not about talking about the church in our countries, but about our own personal situation. We divide into small groups.

*Bishop Stefan* then points out where we as the Executive Committee come from and he recalls the results of the meeting in Cluj-Napoca. These results are displayed as posters in the room and we are invited to look at them and pick out a point that is important to us.

The following important keywords are mentioned:

- Pastoral exchange
- Seeking and strengthening relationships
- Networking, conference in different countries
- How can we work more effectively in the Executive Committee?
- Encourage each other, share good ideas
- Pastoral care, church visits
- Helping each other
- The Central Conference is more than just our conference!
- Strengthening relationships and promoting trust
- Strengthening relationships with one another, reaching more people with the Gospel
- Team building
- A preparation team helps to organize the conference.
- How can we integrate young people into our work?
- Strengthen relationships, because otherwise nothing can develop
- What we do together brings us together!
- More walks
- Building trust
- Try something new
- Search for solutions
- Spirituality

*Bishop Stefan* gives an overview of the next items on the agenda and the further planning of the Executive Committee meeting.

*Bishop Stefan* distributes a paper "Our Common Agreement for Fruitful and Respectful Executive Committee Meetings", which Ben Nausner and Marietjie Odendaal have put together based on our last meeting. He asks us to look through it and make comments or point out if something is missing.

*Ullas Tankler*: What exactly is meant by "We regard our meetings as confidential"? A lot of our meetings are published. Can it still be confidential?

*Wilfried Nausner*: There is a difference between 'confidential' and 'secret'. We can handle our meetings confidentially, even if they are not secret.

*Bishop Stefan:* The title is "Our agreement..." It is therefore good if we now also give an official sign that we stand behind it and make the document "ours". Do you agree with this?

**Resolution:**

**All those present unanimously adopt the document "Our common agreement for fruitful and respectful Executive Committee meetings".**

*Ben Nausner:* It should be important that this document remains present in the Executive Committee. New members should be made aware of it.

*Markus Bach:* I will include the document in the negotiation report at the beginning of the regulations and save it in the documents for each meeting in the Dropbox. I will also translate it into German.

We take a break.

*Thursday, March 14, 2024, 4:30 p.m.*

***Plenary session in the EMK Vienna Fünfhaus, Sechshauserstrasse 56***

**Report of the Office of the Central Conference CSE (Report 1.0)**

Markus Bach, Secretary

*Bishop Stefan:* We will now go through the Office's report point by point.

re 1.2 Reports on the proceedings of the 78<sup>th</sup> and 79<sup>th</sup> sessions of the Executive Committee of the CC CSE

*Markus Bach points* out that the negotiation reports have not yet been uploaded as small details are still missing. However, they will be made available in the next few days.

2.4 Election to the Working Group Children and Youth

**Resolution:**

**The Executive Committee unanimously elects the two Co-Chairs Ivana Pastor and Cedric Zangger as members of the Executive Committee of the CC CSE in an advisory capacity, with only one person attending each meeting.**

Re 2.5 Council for Finance and Administration

**Resolutions:**

- 1. Stefan Hafner is unanimously elected as interim Chairman of the Council for Finance and Administration.**
- 2. Stefan Hafner is unanimously elected as auditor of the Central Conference accounts.**

*Lea Hafner:* Are there any succession discussions or even solutions?

*Bishop Stefan:* Yes, we are talking to a person and hope that we will be able to propose them at the Central Conference next year.

#### Re 2.6 Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee

*Bishop Stefan:* We have been thinking for a long time in the office about how we can and want to deal with the long-standing vacancy of the Vice-Chairman. We were always able to work. But we realized that the meetings of the CC office and the "Hilfe im Sprengel" association, which are held in German, are an obstacle, so the circle of potential candidates was rather small. Here you can see our proposed solution, which we would like to propose to the Central Conference if you agree.

*Jörg Niederer:* Does the bishop also have to run the office? What happens if he is absent?

*Markus Bach:* According to the regulations, the bishop is also the Chairman of the Office. The regulations do not provide for a deputy. It would therefore have to be resolved somehow with the existing members of the office, regardless of what we decide today.

*Bishop Stefan:* Are there any further questions? Are you ready to vote on this?

#### **Resolution:**

**The Executive Committee unanimously decides to propose to the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe that the regulations of the Central Conference be amended as follows:**

**Article 7.5: "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.~~"**

**Article 8.1: "The office shall be composed of the Bishop, ~~the vice-chairperson,~~ the secretary, and the treasurer. Chairperson shall be the Bishop."**

**Article 8.2: "The office can through a motion of the Bishop include ~~a fifth~~ fourth person, who is elected by the executive committee from among its members."**

#### 2.7 Further elections and vacancies

#### **Resolution:**

**The Executive Committee unanimously confirms the delegation of Andrzej Malicki to the Standing Committee for Central Conference Affairs from the 2024 General Conference.**

#### Re 3.1 Account 2023 of the Central Conference CSE

#### **Resolution:**

**The Executive Committee unanimously approves the 2023 accounts based on the auditor's report, grants discharge to the Treasurer and expresses its sincere thanks to her for her services.**

*Bishop Stefan* thanks Iris Bullinger warmly and asks the Executive Committee for acclamatory support. The request is granted.

#### Re 4.4 Next General and Central Conference 2027 and 2029

*Bishop Stefan*: We now have the certainty that we do not have to hold a Central Conference after an Extraordinary General Conference. We will therefore be able to decide very practically whether or not we want to hold an Extraordinary Central Conference in 2027.

#### Re 5.1 Church Order of the Central Conference MSE

*Bishop Stefan*: We need to clarify with each other how we want to proceed in the current situation. There is an error in the printed version of the Church Order. We have since been able to correct the electronic version on our website. Do we need a reprint? Or do we make a corrective insert sheet for the already printed and published church orders? There are about 50 of them. We know exactly where they are. It should also be noted that we will probably have to revise the current version again fairly quickly due to General Conference decisions.

*Wilfried Nausner*: It seems important to me that we publish our Church Order in consultation with the Central Conference of Germany. I am not happy with the way things are going now. The text must be well edited and must not contain any errors.

*Stefan Schröckenfuchs*: I am actually of the opinion that we should recall the Church Order. It doesn't help much to make a supplement. I was also surprised that there was a book. Is that really what we decided?

*Markus Bach*: At the meeting in Cluj-Napoca, we decided that we would upload the Church Order with all the changes made digitally to the website and also print it. However, we did not decide exactly how we would print it, whether as a book or a folder.

*Stefan Schröckenfuchs*: A folder like the one we had before would have the advantage that such and future changes would be easier to make.

*Bishop Stefan*: It seems clear to me that we will not be reprinting the book.

*Wilfried Nausner*: We have to coordinate well with the Central Conference Germany.

*Markus Bach*: I propose that the Church Order working group take the lead in this matter of publishing the Church Order and let us know when what is to be printed and how.

*Wilfried Nausner*: We are happy to do that. We are ready for that.

*Bishop Stefan*: Can we instruct the working group to do this?

**Resolution:**

**The Executive Committee instructs the Working Group Church Discipline and Legal Affairs to publish the Discipline in consultation with the Central Conference Germany.**

*Bishop Stefan:* This brings us to the end of the report of the Central Conference Office. Can we accept the report as a whole?

**Resolution:**

**The Executive Committee approves the report of the Office of the Central Conference.**

**Working Group Discipline and Legal Affairs (Annex 2.3.1 to Report 2.3)**

Wilfried Nausner, Chairman

*Bishop Stefan:* We now turn to the question of the Czech Annual Conference leaving the UMC. At the last meeting of the Executive Committee in Cluj-Napoca, we asked the Working Group on Church Order and Legal Issues to show us the way forward. They present us with Appendix 2.3.1.

*Wilfried Nausner:* Enclosure 2.3.1 is the short version of how the church constitution provides for a withdrawal such as that of the Annual Conference of the Czech Republic.

*Jörg Niederer:* Point 3 is not clear to me. The English-language version says that instead of an annual conference, authorized bodies can also decide on this. What exactly does this mean? In the German version, it says that the Annual Conferences *and* their committees decide on this. How exactly does this work?

*Wilfried Nausner:* What is actually meant is that the Annual Conferences always decide on this.

*Ivana Procházková:* We have already voted on this once, and we have informed the Executive Committee about it. Doesn't that already fulfill point 1?

Wilfried Nausner: The bishop would have to decide whether that is enough. It was a petition that was decided on at the Annual Conference. However, I am of the opinion that we need more, especially in the explanatory statement.

*Ivana Procházková:* But it will be difficult if we have to take another vote. There is a document on the withdrawal of an Annual Conference that was submitted to the Central Conference. Do we have to answer these questions?

*Bishop Stefan:* I think it is best if we sit down together in a small group and look for a common solution. We will also have to discuss the exact steps with the Standing Committee for Central Conference Affairs. It is important that we do not lose any unnecessary time, as the application to the Central Conference should be ready next year.

*Bishop Stefan:* Are you ready to walk the path as we have it before us in supplement 2.3.1?

**Resolution:**

**The Executive Committee unanimously approves document 2.3.1 of the Working Group Discipline and Legal Affairs "Process and Decisions for the Withdrawal of the UMC Czech Republic".**

**European Methodist Council (Report 3.1)**

Lilla Kardosné Lakatos

*Bishop Stefan:* Lilla Kardosné was with me at the last meeting of the EMC and subsequently wrote the report for us. Other members of the EMC from our CC are Adrian Mysliński from Poland, Vladimir Fazekas from Serbia and Anna Shammass from Switzerland. Do you have any questions?

*Bishop Stefan:* If there are no questions, we will move on to the report of the Commission for Theological Education in the Central Conferences.

**Commission for Theological Education in the Central Conferences (Report 3.2)**

Bishop Patrick Streiff

*Bishop Stefan:* Well, there are no questions, as I probably wouldn't be able to answer them. However, retired Bishop Patrick Streiff will be arriving in Vienna this evening, so we could take any questions later, if there are any.

*Bishop Stefan:* If there are no questions, we will move on to the next report.

**General Board of Global Ministries (Report 3.3)**

Andreas Stämpfli

*Bishop Stefan:* We will have a time slot tomorrow for Üllas Tankler and the work of GBGM. I would ask you to ask any questions you may have about Andreas Stämpfli's report 3.3 then.

**The Methodist Conference in Britain from June 22-29, 2023 (Report 3.4)**

Lilla Kardosné Lakatos

*Stefan Schröckenfuchs:* "Prophetic voice" is interesting to hear. I believe that we can learn from this conference how we can have an impact in society. There are some areas in society where we can incorporate more of our understanding of social justice as a "prophetic voice". I don't yet know exactly how that might happen, but I'm fascinated to hear

about it from England. Perhaps they have more to say to us than our American brothers and sisters?

*Bishop Stefan:* Thank you for pointing this out and for including the keyword. We are pleased to receive the report and would like to thank Lilla Kardosné Lakatos.

### **Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters (Report 3.5)**

Christine Schneider-Oesch

*Bishop Stefan:* The text came at very short notice. I hope you were still able to read it.

*Lea Hafner:* The report is helpfully formulated and helped me a lot to understand what regionalization is all about. Nevertheless, if we have any questions, it might be useful to ask the author, Christine Schneider-Oesch, directly.

*Bishop Stefan:* She will be with us on Sunday and Monday.

### **Working Group Church and Society (Annex 2.4.1 to Report 2.4)**

Marietjie Odendaal, Chairwoman

*Bishop Stefan:* At the last meeting in Cluj-Napoca, the Church and Society Working Group presented us with an initial proposal for newly revised guidelines for a responsible life-style. We did not have enough time to take a closer look at these at the time. But now we want to take the time to do so.

*Marietjie Odendaal* gives some explanations on how they proceeded as a working group.

*Jörg Niederer:* I think it's a good new version. I like it. The end with the conflicts comes from the document that we once made in Switzerland. Perhaps this is no longer so necessary in the new version? At the time, we were of the opinion that there could be many objections to the wording used at the time, which is why people don't want to adopt these guidelines. By making it possible to name conflicts, we helped to ensure that they could still be adopted.

*László Khaled:* What do you mean by the "German version"? Does it come from the EMK Germany?

*Marietjie Odendaal:* Yes, we were surprised to find this German version, which was published by the EMK in Germany.

*Markus Bach:* It seems important to me to point out that we are not looking at exactly the same thing in the English-language and German-language documents. In the English-language version, the introduction is followed by the working group's proposal and then a translation of the German-language version into English. However, this latter version is missing from the German-language version.



*Marietjie Odendaal: I'm sorry, I forgot to forward these.*

*Ben Nausner: I googled the versions. In Germany there is a little booklet called "Kennzeichen eines Methodisten", in which there is a translation. There are also explanations in the booklet. It goes a lot further, but it's interesting to compare.*

*Jörg Niederer: The General Rules (the German version translates these) and the Guidelines for a Responsible Lifestyle are not the same thing. This is only about the guidelines.*

*Bishop Stefan: Many thanks to the Church and Society working group for the work they have done - and to you for the discussion that has taken place. We will continue this tomorrow and discuss how we want to proceed.*

*Bishop Stefan: We will now take a short break before we turn to a reflection.*

*Thursday, March 14, 2024, 5:45 p.m.*

**Reflection of the EMK Vienna Fünfhaus, Sechshausstrasse 56**

### **Reflection on the South part**

*Erika Stalcup says a prayer. We read and sing the Albanian-language song "Ati ynë që je në qiell" (Father, God I Wonder / I will Sing Your Praises). The psalm reading is from Psalm 37, 3-4 + 23-24. Erika invites us to a musical meditation - and to record our thoughts, prayers and impressions of the "South" (Albania, Algeria, Tunisia). She invites us to take a marble of a color that matches our feelings and thoughts and place it in a basket (with or without an explanation) that is passed around. After a prayer, we close with a second Albanian-language song "Zoti ynë është një Zot besnik (Our God is an Awesome God). Erika Stalcup says a night prayer.*

*Thursday, March 14, 2024, 6:15 p.m.*

**Dinner at the EMK Vienna Fünfhaus, Sechshausstrasse 56**

## Minutes of the Executive Committee of Friday, March 15, 2024

Friday, March 15, 2024, 8:30 a.m.

**Plenary session in the EMK Vienna Fünfhaus, Sechshausenstrasse 56**

*Bishop Stefan* welcomes those present and asks Erika Stalcup to give the reflection.

*Erika Stalcup* begins with a prayer and invites us to join in praying the "North" part (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland). We read and sing the Polish-language song "Tchnij moc, tchnij miłosc" ("More Love, More Power"). The reading is from Psalm 25: 4-10, and with a musical accompaniment we have the opportunity to direct our thoughts and prayers towards the "North" (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland). The prayer is concluded with the Our Father prayer, which we say together. We sing the Hungarian song "Olyan örömöt, mint a forras" ("I've got joy like a fountain").

*Bishop Stefan* greets Emil Zaev among us and also welcomes Bishop Patrick Streiff. He asks Üllas Tankler to address us and tell us about his work.

*Üllas Tankler*: Thank you very much for having me here. I have read Andreas Stämpfli's report. If there are any questions, I should be able to answer them. I am the regional manager for Europe and Eurasia at GBGM.

*Üllas Tankler* gives an overview of his work, which he has been doing since 2005. One particular development is that the GBGM and GBHEM are working more closely together. From July 2024, there will be a joint General Secretary for both General Conference Authorities (Roland Fernandes, currently General Secretary of GBGM). However, there will still be two separate bodies. He hopes that not too many people will lose their jobs as a result. He reported on a GBGM program that has been running for some time: "Global Mission Fellows". This involves two-year mission assignments around the world. It is a pity that it is not possible to recruit young people from Europe for this. Since last year, Joy Eva Bohol has been employed in Geneva as the Regional Migration Officer. She does not report to GBGM, but to UMCOR. Üllas Tankler presents the "Institute for multicultural ministry" project, in which some of our central conference members have already taken part - Erika Stalcup, Marietjie Odendaal and Freddy Nzambe are among those present. They are enthusiastic about this program. Finally, he adds that the GBGM's financial resources have dwindled considerably. Nevertheless, the work of the mission agency remains a priority for the church.

*Bishop Stefan* thanks Üllas for the report and the networking work he does for us time and again.

The members of the Executive Committee applaud warmly.

## **Working Group Church and Society (Report 2.4; Annex 2.4.1)**

Marietjie Odendaal, Chairwoman

*Bishop Stefan:* We will return to the guidelines for a responsible lifestyle of the Church and Society working group (report 2.4.1). I ask you to talk at the tables about where you have questions, what you like or what is missing.

The members of the Executive Committee exchange ideas in table groups.

*Bishop Stefan:* Now I ask you to share the results with us.

*Stefan Schröckenfuchs:* We wondered whether the title of the first section is helpful: "Avoid evil and do no harm". In the Wesley original it says "do no harm by avoiding evil". Now it is worded the other way round, and the reference to shunning evil becomes a justification for actions that then cause harm. It is quite sufficient if it simply says: "Do no harm".

*Jörg Niederer:* I don't like the term "ordinances" in the title of 3. It is not as inviting as it is in the Wesley original, where it says that we should use the means of grace. We have the opportunity to experience God's grace and help when we go to worship.

*Jörg Niederer:* I would delete the second section in the preamble (reference to the General Rules), as we are doing something other than rewriting the General Rules.

*Emil Zaev:* What does it mean when we sign a sentence like the one in part 2: "This includes taking an active stand against systems that endanger life." In some contexts, that would mean opposing Putin or being against abortion. But this is not directly stated.

*Lea Hafner:* Attempts have been made to simplify the rules, and we now have the impression that they have been raised to a higher level, made more general, but also less specific. However, we think they should be simpler and clearer.

*Urs Schweizer:* We live in very different contexts and read this text very differently. It is understood differently by people who have everything and have to learn to deal with it, and by people who are struggling to survive.

*László Khaled:* We asked ourselves whether the term "conflicts" in Part 4 is helpful. Shouldn't we rather talk about "challenges"?

*Wilfried Nausner:* I miss the fact that the Wesley original does not say to sanctify the Lord's Day. This has been important for 2000 years because the Bible says so and it is a helpful thing. I live in Albania, where there is a 7-day working week. On the other hand, we should formulate this document in such a way that we want to keep the promises we made, for example when we were accepted as professing members.

*Marietjie Odendaal:* Is the third part not enough for you?

*Retired Bishop Patrick Streiff:* John Wesley formulated his General Rules in such a way that it is first about what we have in common and then, as a result, about what this means for me personally. Now it seems to be the other way around.

*Bishop Stefan:* Thank you very much for your feedback. May we hear something more about how we want to deal with this document?

*Ben Nausner:* As it says in the document, it's about signing it. So I think the document goes into small groups, discussion groups. It still needs some help on how we can get it there. We need people who can explain what this document is about. On the other hand, we could form discussion groups to discuss it in Zoom groups and possibly even talk about it across national borders.

*Stefan Schröckenfuchs:* I could imagine using the document in church services, especially in the covenant renewal service. I could also use it at confession celebrations. I am unsure whether I will always need it with a signature, because the signature makes it a one-off. But sometimes it would certainly be helpful with a signature. Maybe it would be good to have two versions of it.

*Bishop Stefan:* I would like to thank the working group and ask them to revise the document in line with the feedback. And we also ask you to show us how we can continue to deal with it and apply it. It would be nice if we could have it in front of us again in September.

*Marietjie Odendaal:* Thank you very much! We'll see how we get on.

*Bishop Stefan:* We will now turn to the reports from our working groups. Many thanks to Ben Nausner, with whom I was able to discuss the procedure in advance. May I ask you to introduce us to how we will now proceed?

*Ben Nausner:* I would now like to invite you to a discussion on how we want to deal with working groups in the future. We will do this with the table groups we are already in.

According to our regulations, there are only two working groups that we absolutely must have: The Bishop's Office working group and the Legal Council, which is not an actual working group. We have set up all other working groups ourselves in the past.

We now want to consider which working groups we actually need and what their remits are. We will do this in two parts. In the first part, we will hear what is important for the working group. We have read their report and their feedback, which they formulated in response to our mandate from the last Executive Board meeting. All chairpersons will tell us about their task and current situation. We will then discuss the following three questions at the tables:

- What have I heard?
- What would I like to emphasize/underline
- Do I have any questions or comments?

But first we're going to take a break.

Friday, March 15, 2024, 10:40 a.m.

**Plenary session in the EMK Vienna Fünfhaus, Sechshausstrasse 56**

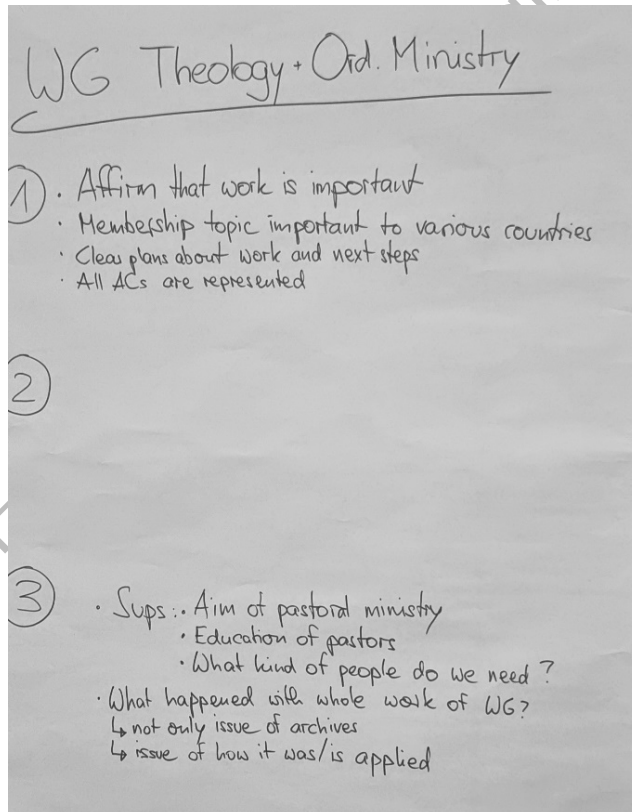
*Ben Nausner:* We begin with the report of the Theology and Ordained Ministries working group.

### **Theology and Ordained Ministries Working Group (Report 2.1)**

Zoltán Kovács, Chairman

*Zoltán Kovács:* We are eight members of the working group. There was a change in the chairmanship, which I took over from Stefan Zürcher. We had an online meeting last November. We currently have a topic that we are working on: The importance of church membership. You can find everything else in our report 2.1.

*Ben Nausner:* I would now ask you to discuss the three questions at your tables. We talk in table discussion groups. The results are summarized on a flipchart.

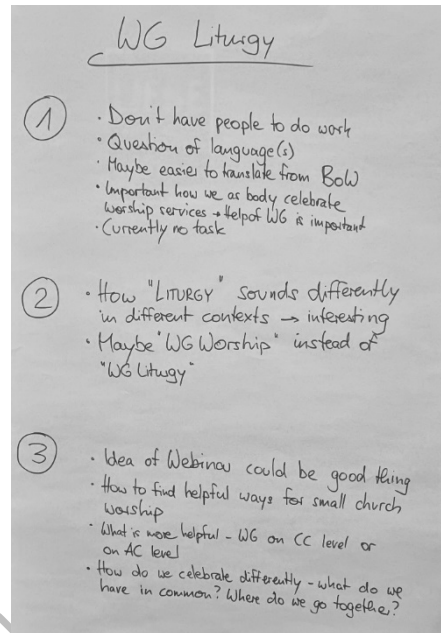


## Working Group Liturgy (Report 2.2)

Erika Stalcup, Chairwoman

*Erika Stalcup:* We work closely with Germany, and I find that helpful. But we don't have a clear mandate. The difficulty is that we speak so many languages, which doesn't make it easy. We want to take on board what we are commissioned to do. We are very curious to see what assignments we get. But we want to move away from simply working out something for German speakers or dictating how a service should be celebrated.

We discuss in table discussion groups and collect the results on a flipchart.

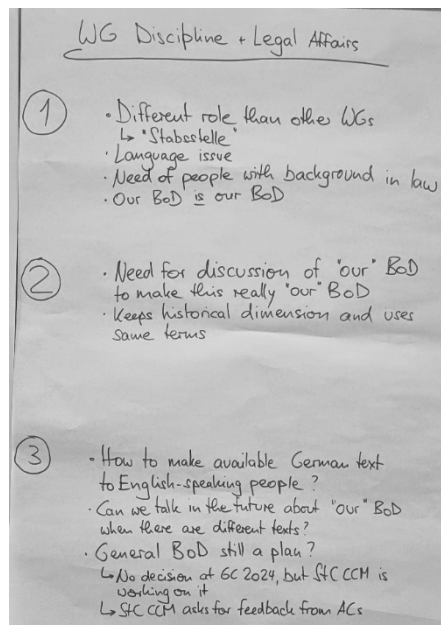


## Working Group on Discipline and Legal Affairs (Annex 2.3)

Wilfried Nausner, Chairman

*Wilfried Nausner:* The task of the working group is very simple. It is to translate the text of the Book of Discipline into our context. We have the opportunity to make adaptations. We translate the texts and coordinate with the Central Conference Germany. Our aim is to have a church order that is as similar as possible. We are four people: Laszlo Khaled, Serge Frutiger, Petr Prochazka and myself as chairman, although Petr is not good at working with German texts.

We discuss in table discussion groups and collect the results on a flipchart.

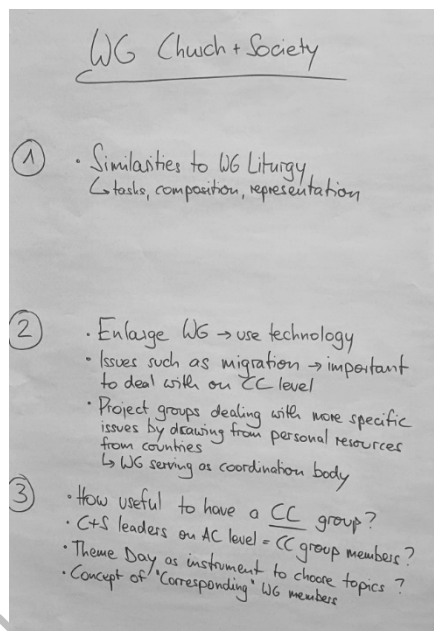


## Working Group Church and Society (Report 2.4; Annex 2.4.1)

Marietjie Odendaal, Chairwoman

*Marietjie Odendaal:* We are three members of the working group and have now focused on revising the guidelines for a responsible lifestyle. We have also asked ourselves how we can map the entire Central Conference. We also struggled to find suitable times for our work.

We discuss in table discussion groups and collect the results on a flipchart.



## Working Group Children and Youth (2.5; 2.5.1)

Cedric Zangger and Ivana Pastor, Co-Chairs

*Ben Nausner:* The children and youth working group is brand new. I asked Gjergj Lushka to tell us about it, as he is also a member.

*Gjergj Lushka:* We are various young adults from all countries. We started with online meetings and have met three to four times online and most recently in Hungary in Budapest, where we organized ourselves. We are looking at how we can organize camps or seminars for young people and leaders. As the EMYCF, we are part of the EMC.

*Ben Nausner:* As I said, this working group has been launched from scratch. We will be able to put our questions to Cedric Zangger, the new co-chair, tomorrow.

*Emil Zaev:* What is meant by the meeting in 2025?

*Lea Hafner:* I am very happy about what has happened in the meantime. I like to remind us that we as the Executive Committee took the initiative.

## Working Group Women's work

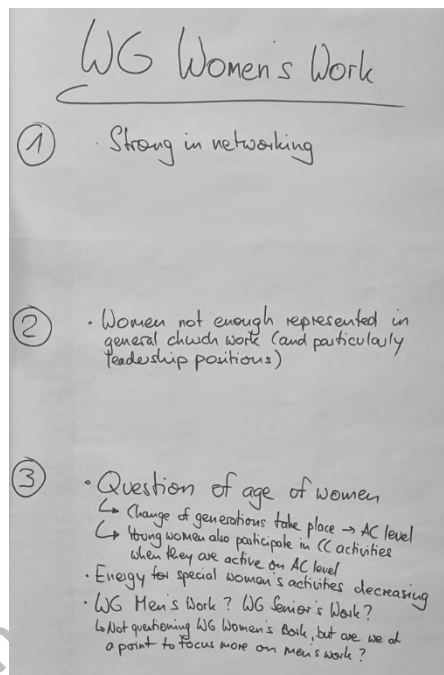
Monika Zuber, Chairwoman, and Barbara Bunger, Coordinator

*Barbara Bunger:* My job is to organize the seminars for women. You were able to read about this in my report. I would like to ask you if there are any other tasks that we can do. We are not currently working on a meta-level, but rather in a very pragmatic way.

We discuss in table discussion groups and collect the results on a flipchart.

*Ben Nausner:* Thank you very much for your cooperation. That will help us further. We will look at the remaining two working groups after the lunch break.

We go for our lunch break.



Friday, March 15, 2024, 12:30 p.m.

**Lunch at Restaurant Das Eduard, Sparkassaplatz 1, Vienna**

Friday, March 15, 2024, 2:15 p.m.

**Plenary session in the EMK Vienna Funfhaus, Sechshausenstrasse 56**

## Working Group Episcopacy (Report 2.7; Annex 2.7.1)

Jorg Niederer, Chairman

*Jorg Niederer:* Yesterday we had another meeting with the Bishop's Office Working Group. You can find a report on what we did in supplement 2.7.1. We believe that we know our mission well by accompanying the bishop (and even the retired bishops) in their office and task.

## Judicial Court (Report 2.8)

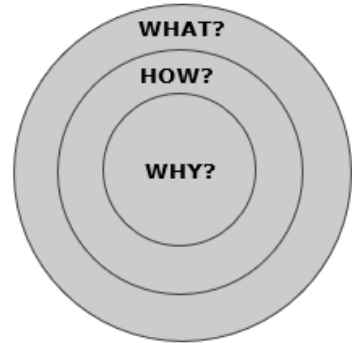
Christa Tobler, Chairwoman

*Ben Nausner:* The Legal Council clearly indicated in the report that it only works when it receives an order to do so, but this has not happened in recent years.



Ben Nausner: We will now work with the "Golden Circle" concept:

- In the middle is the question of "WHY?"
- Once we know why the working group exists, we ask "HOW?"
- And then we ask the question of "WHAT?"



Ben Nausner: People often only ask "what". But if we want to clarify a task, it's important that we start with the "why". I will now ask you to discuss these three questions in a table group for each assigned working group and write them down on a flipchart.

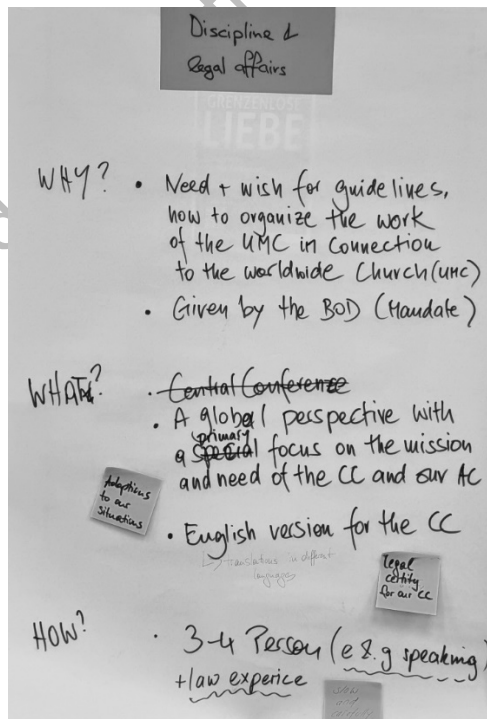
We work in table discussion groups.

Friday, March 15, 2024, 4:30 p.m.

**Plenary session in the EMK Vienna Fünfhaus, Sechshauserstrasse 56**

Ben Nausner: Thank you for your cooperation. It was not always easy to distinguish between the "why", "how" and "what". I would now like to invite the table groups to present their results.

Wilfried Nausner presents the result for the Working Group Discipline and Legal Affairs:



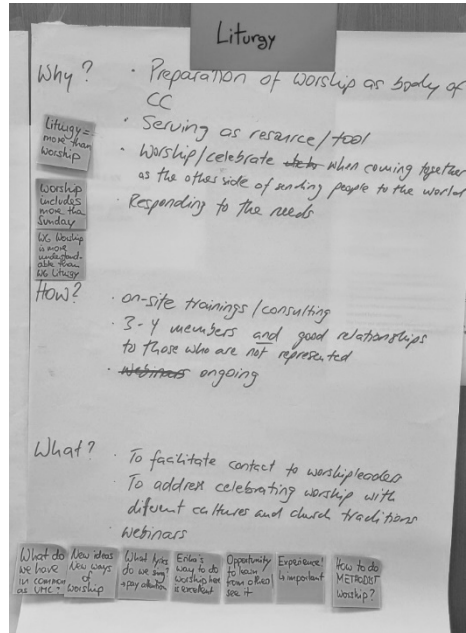
Urs Schweizer presents the result for the Working Group Liturgy:

Bishop Stefan suggests that we hand over the papers to the chairs of the working groups. They can then discuss the next steps and their task with their working group and give us feedback at the meeting in September.

The chairs of the working groups agree to this.

**Resolution:**

**Based on the feedback, the Working Groups will define their tasks and next steps for the Executive Committee meeting in September 2024.**

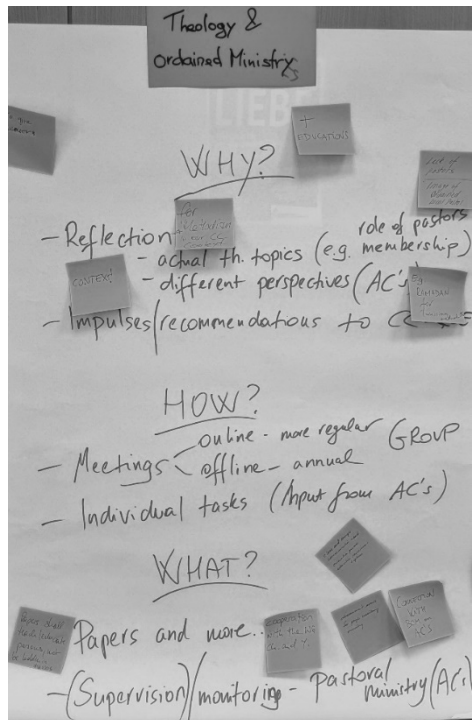


Zoltán Kovács presents the result for the Working Group Theology and Ordained Ministries.

Bishop Streiff: When I look back over the last 10 to 20 years, I realize that this working group has worked much more on the topic of theology than on the topic of ordained ministries. In view of the current situation of the shortage of pastors, it seems important to me that we work on these issues of ordained ministry. Which pastors do we need?

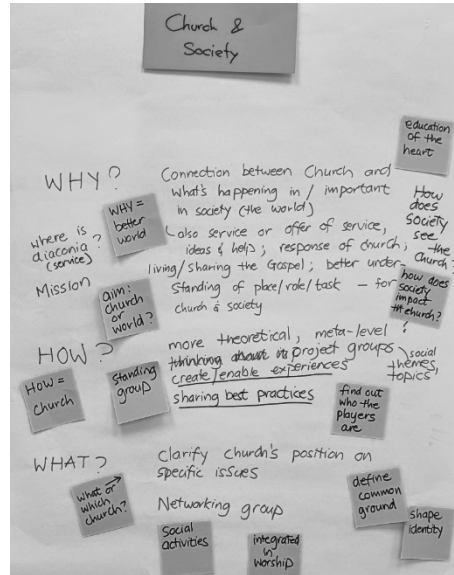
Bishop Stefan: We already addressed this question at the superintendents' meeting in January 2024. It actually seems helpful to me if we can make a connection here.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs: I'm not sure whether this is a good setting for this question, because we mainly talk about it with pastors. That's why we shouldn't be surprised if the result is that we need pastors like we are. We should definitely include other points of view in this discussion.

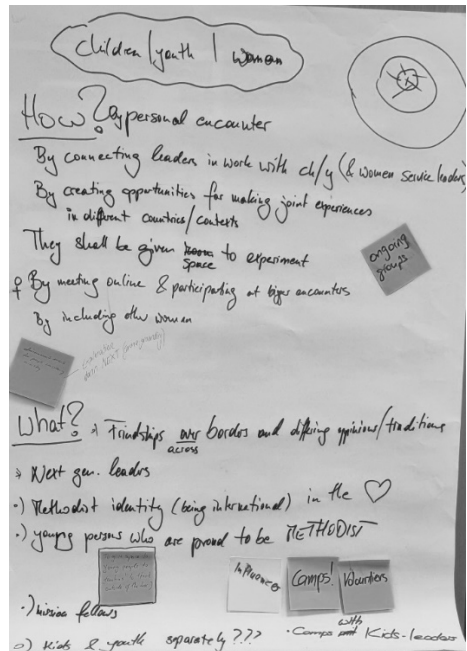
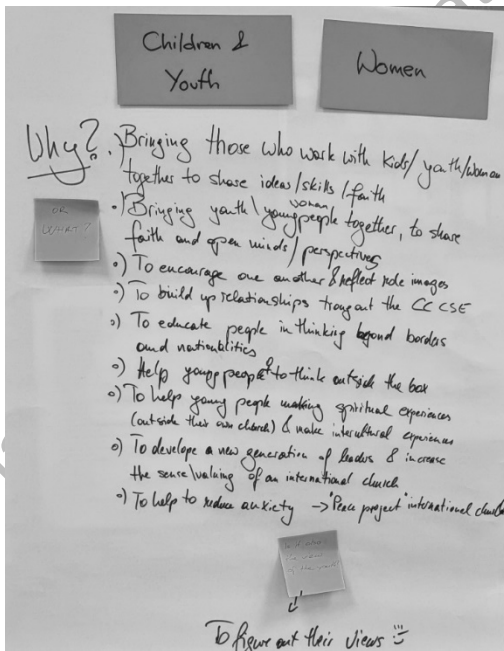


Wilfried Nausner: Pedagogically, we talk about two different types of instruction: character-building interventions and general education. We need the former.

Marietjie Odendaal presents the result for the Working Group Church and Society:

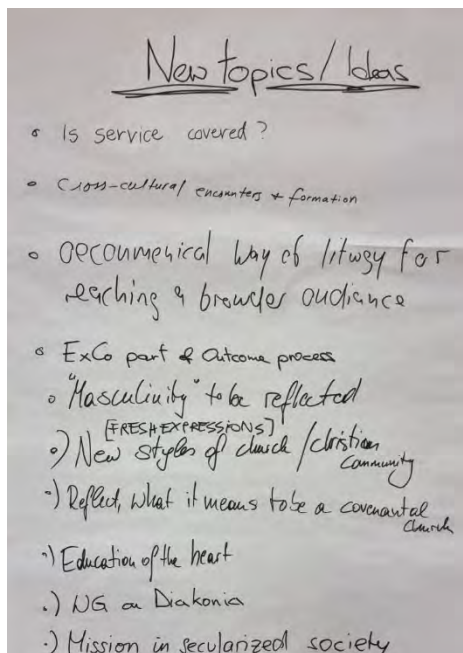


Barbara Bünger presents the results for the Working Groups Women's Work and Children and Youth.



Finally, *Ben Nausner* presents the new ideas and goals and asks the authors to say a few words about them.

*Bishop Stefan* thanks Ben Nausner very much for the helpful afternoon and his leadership.



Friday, March 15, 2024, 4:30 p.m.

**Plenary session in the EMK Vienna Fünfhaus, Sechshausstrasse 56**

*Stefan Schröckenfuchs*: We heard yesterday in the Bishop's Office Working Group that Bishop Stefan no longer gets to cycle as often as he did before his election as bishop. We would therefore like to present him with these bicycle bags so that he has the opportunity to cycle from his home to the bishop's office. This is our way of expressing our heartfelt thanks for his work in our Central Conference.

*Bishop Stefan*: Thank you very much. It's just under 20 km to the bishop's office. I really hope that I will be able to cycle more often again. Thank you very much.

*Urs Schweizer*: I would like to point out three more things. Firstly, we would like to take a photo of everyone present at the Executive Committee meeting tomorrow lunchtime. You will receive instructions on this tomorrow.

Secondly: We have been given the opportunity by the EMK in Copenhagen for two young people to spend a year working at the EMK in Copenhagen. If you are interested, please get in touch with me.

And thirdly: The World Methodist Council meeting will take place in Sweden this summer. There will be an opportunity there for us to present ourselves digitally as a central conference. Ben Nausner is ready to put something together. If we have photos or videos, we can upload them to a platform. We are now asking you to provide us with good photos and videos. The superintendents will be informed by e-mail, and we will also inform them of the final deadline for uploading.

*Bishop Stefan:* Serge Frutiger and Lea Hafner will write a report on the meeting for the Annual Conference Switzerland-France-North Africa. What should be included in this report?

*Lea Hafner:* We will write about getting fit for the future and we will also write about the theme day.

*Markus Bach:* I would also mention that the children and youth working group has been reorganized.

*Ben Nausner:* We've talked a lot about "working groups" today. However, not everyone will understand what a working group is. This needs to be explained and can also be an invitation to get involved with the work of the Central Conference.

*Bishop Stefan:* We could also point out the new way of reflecting.

*Bishop Stefan:* We will also send you this report. Please pass this information on to your annual conferences.

*Bishop Stefan:* We now come to the end and what we always want to do at the end in future. May I ask László Khaled to present the evaluation to us?

*László Khaled:* During the preparations, we talked about the fact that at the end of each conference we want to evaluate how we experienced the conference. To this end, we will ask you three questions that you have just received by email:

1. what was good and helpful about the conference?
2. what should we do differently next time?
3. what else would you like to tell us? Further thoughts, suggestions, messages to the preparation team.

*László Khaled:* Please send us your answers by e-mail.

*Bishop Stefan:* That concludes our business. Thank you very much for all your participation. And once again, many thanks to everyone who helped to plan and organize the conference.

*Friday, March 15, 2024, 6 p.m.*

***Reflection in the EMK Vienna Fünfhaus, Sechshausenstrasse 56***

*Erika Stalcup invites us to take a moment of reflection and peace and to take the "West" part (Austria, France, Switzerland) into our thoughts. After a prayer, we read and sing a French song "Notre père qui es aux cieux" (Our Father in Heaven). We read together words from Psalm 51, 1-2; 6-12. We look to the "West", where the sun sets, and think in our thoughts and prayers of the countries in question: Austria, France, Switzerland. Erika Stalcup speaks a prayer by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. We then sing a song by Urs Schweizer: "Schänk mir etzt Rueh" (Give me peace now). At the end, Erika Stalcup says a blessing.*

*Friday, March 15, 2024, 6:15 p.m.*

***Dinner at the EMK Vienna Fünfhaus, Sechshauserstrasse 56***

Unauthorized translation - original in German

## Minutes of the theme day on Saturday, March 16, 2024

*Saturday, March 16, 2024, 8:30 a.m.*

**Reflection in the EMK Vienna Fünfhaus, Sechshausenstrasse 56**

Martin Obermeir-Siegrist leads us through the morning reflection. We start with the song "God of peace" which we sing in Arabic and English. After a prayer, we listen to the Bible text from Mark 10: 13-16, followed by a reflection on the topic of peace by Martin Obermeir-Siegrist. The song "Oh Lord, hear my prayer" is followed by a shared prayer. We sing the song "Oh Lord, hear my prayer" again. The blessing is followed by the Hebrew song "Hevenu shalom aleichem".

*Saturday, March 16, 2024, 9.00 a.m.*

**Theme day at the EMK Vienna Fünfhaus, Sechshausenstrasse 56**

*Bishop Stefan* especially welcomes the youth workers responsible for the annual conferences who have joined us for today's event:

from Austria:	Martin Obermeir-Siegrist
from Albania:	Gjergj Lushka and Muço Shyqyri
from Switzerland:	Cedric Zanger
from Hungary:	Johanna Pásztor
from North Macedonia:	Simona Tancheva
from Poland:	Damian Szczepańczyk
from Romania:	Sarah Putman and Leah Harper
from Serbia:	Ivana Pastor

*Gjergj Lushka* invites you to a playful introduction to get to know each other.



Ivana Pastor invites us to get to know the work with children and young people in four different countries of our choice: Albania, Serbia, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania

Afterwards we take a break.

Saturday, March 16, 2024, 10:45 a.m.

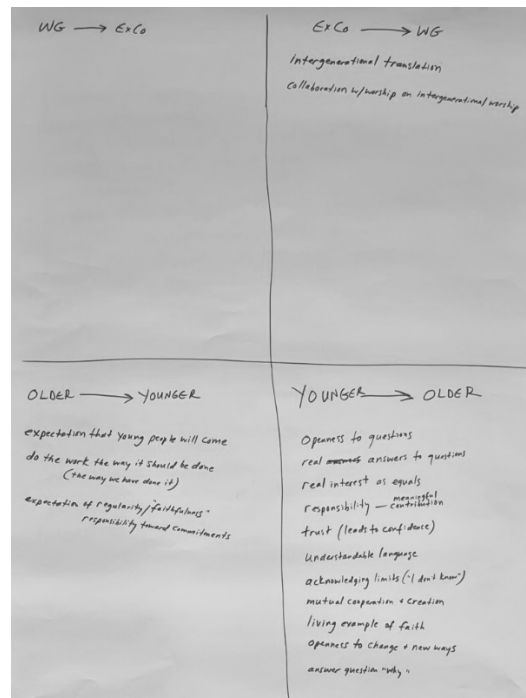
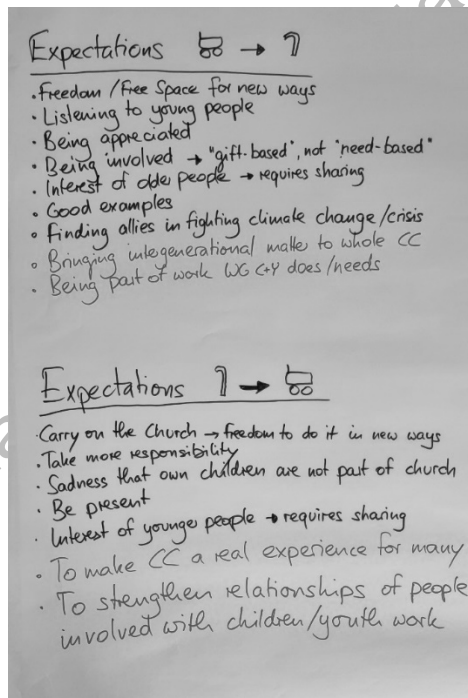
**Theme day at the EMK Vienna Fünfhaus, Sechshausstrasse 56**

Cedric Zangger invites us to discuss the following question in six small groups: What are the dreams, challenges and realities of young people in our respective countries?

Simona Tancheva reports in the plenary session on her survey of young people about their dreams, challenges and realities in North Macedonia.

We form new small groups and discuss the question "What expectations do the generations (young and old) have of each other with regard to the church?" What are the expectations of the Executive Committee of the CC MSE towards the WG Children and Youth - and vice versa?

Two examples from each small group are told in plenary.





# Expectations

### Old towards young

- to become followers of Christ
- to come to church
- take responsibility church
- bring in new initiatives/ ideas

### Young towards old

- leave me alone...
- need place where I can be myself (don't want to fit in exact way or form)
- looking for ~~mentors~~ <sup>mentors</sup>
- getting support

### ExCo

- network
- camp - experiences in Germany as church (regular)
- build-up lasting connection
- be inspiring for us as a CC & ExCo
- gather & spread best practice from CC
- inform young pastors

<h4>Expectations for EC:</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bringing the topic/issues of children and young people to the annual conferences</li> <li>excitement/willingness to help youth</li> </ul>	<h4>Expectations for youth:</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To speak up about issues they are facing</li> <li>For youth to freely discover how to make church their own / what being a follower of Jesus looks like / the treasures of Methodism</li> <li>For youth to use the tools they have in their contexts</li> </ul>
<h4>Expectations of older generations to younger:</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>desire for youth to be involved in the church</li> <li>young people to be acknowledged / involved in leadership</li> <li>desire for the energy young people bring</li> <li>recognition</li> </ul>	<h4>Expectations of younger generations to older:</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>take the younger generation seriously</li> <li>provide support</li> <li>provide encouragement AND guidance to young leaders</li> <li>focus discussion on relevant topics</li> <li>recognition</li> </ul>

## Expectations to WG only

- that they meet and listen to one another
- to help that older and younger generations understand one another better
- helps to provide "space" for the visions/wishes of the next generation in church
- provide trainings/education/exchange for new leaders in youth / children's work
- face realities of different generations:
  - ↳ Think and let think!
  - ↳ and connect the different perspectives
- to have a critical voice within church
- to have fun & do things together that encourages you!
- develop a culture for "try & error" and provide a "space" to risk even to make a mistake
- develop a culture of appreciation & thankfulness

## Expectations to the EXCO

- Listen to the WG + Appreciate
- Take concerns for serious
- Provide the funds needed
- Organize / Support international meetings/conferences
- Being ready to learn from the younger generations
- make sure that there are possibilities to hear the voices of young people directly (not only through the Working group)
- helps to understand what EXCO // Central Conference is & does
- Involving the working groups more regularly in the work of ExCo
- Remember church leaders to include young people at all levels of church.

Saturday, March 16, 2024, 12:30 p.m.  
**Lunch at the EMK Vienna Fünfhaus, Sechshausstrasse 56**

Saturday, March 16, 2024, 2 p.m.

Theme day at the EMK Vienna Fünfhaus, Sechshausstrasse 56

Gjergj Lushka welcomes you to the afternoon and invites you to a playful introduction.

Simona Tancheva invites you to further group discussions on the future work of the Children and Youth Working Group. Four topics are offered: Camps at CC CSE level, networking and support for work with children, networking and support for work with teenagers and training/empowerment of leaders.

You Me 2025 or 2027

- Mid July to Mid August
- 4 Nights (in a building + tent)
- 16+ (max. 20) age • ~ 50 participants?
- Bishop? Topic?
- English language (if Translation needed, bring it yourself)
- Hungary? Serbia?
  - ↳ venue/location, food
  - ↳ registration (or „Gemeindebuch“ CHZ)
- Program organized by WG C&Y
- Ideas
  - bring a song in your language
  - some snacks/steaks typical for your country

Children

- Giving Voice - Intergenerational aspect
  - ↳ "childist theology" - faith/worship from a child perspective
- Swap-Shop - Learning by swapping ideas & experiences on CC level (mentorship training)
- Two realities → Congregations with hardly any children → How to collaborate together?
  - ↳ Congregation with many children
- Connect children of CC with each other!
  - ↳ video to share
  - ↳ Element in Sunday Service or Sunday School!
  - ↳ Music - e.g. one song in many languages
  - ↳ idea of song with children contributing
- Appreciate what God is doing in ~~our~~ through children
  - ↳ Safe-guarding regulations on CC level? (or exchange on it)
  - ↳ talk about practices of kindness

Leaders Training

- 1) international accounts for leaders
  - ↳ WG-members + 12?
- 2) meeting of WG parallel to ~~Exco~~?  
training events?
- 3) profit from experiences / know how of other countries
  - ↳ e.g. Leadership Course of HU
  - ↳ Women network experiences of international meetings

Exco needs to provide the sufficient funds

Contents → social principles / theological topics

- 1) sharing experiences; being encouraged
- 2) how to deal with challenges / difficulties in leadership
- 3) how to lead a group to learn from Jesus' way of living
- 4) presentation of abuse, sexual guidelines / psychological health topics
- 5) how to identify & train new leaders and let them go
- 6) ~~we~~ to organize a new camp → clarify expectations
- 7) mentors/buddies for new leaders → relevant themes for youth to discuss

Teenagers

- How can we make international connections?
  - camps, online but numbers • offering things in English
  - exchange programs • provide a method of contact
    - ↳ ways to invite other countries → right now it's OK
    - ↳ should it change?
    - ↳ working groups?
    - ↳ some sort of forum?
- list of events by country
  - ↳ event calendar for the conference
  - ↳ who will finance exchange programs?
- Resources
  - Alpha courses
  - a place to share best practices
    - ↳ within the working group
    - ↳ bring other representatives
    - ↳ online (regular meetings?)
    - ↳ having subjects to discuss → safety
      - ↳ involving youth directly?
      - ↳ common issues, multiple countries face
      - ↳ talking through, connections in different areas (i.e. worship, university, etc.)
- Safety
  - safe secondary document that is approved by the central conference
- Parenting / involving parents
  - exchange programme

*Rares Calugar:* I am happy to invite the YouMe (camp for youth/young adults of CC CSE) to Cluj. If you agree, I will gladly block the period from Thursday, July 24 to Monday, July 28, 2025 in our hotel.

*Martin Obermeir-Siegrist* (after a brief question from the floor): We are very happy to accept that. We will work out the exact details together.

At the end, *Simona Tancheva* invites us to a time of intercession. She reads from John 15:5: "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing." She invites people to pray in the previous groups.

We split up for group prayer and then meet again in plenary.

*Bishop Stefan:* Many thanks to the children and youth working group for the valuable time and the good discussions we had together. It was a very enriching day for me and I think that we got to know each other in a valuable way and were able to benefit from each other.

*Bishop Stefan:* I would also like to thank you once again for the hospitality we have experienced here in Vienna. We felt very comfortable as guests and would like to thank all those who catered for our physical well-being and provided the rooms for us. Many thanks also to those who helped with the preparations for this conference. I wish everyone God's blessing and protection on their journey home.

*Saturday, March 16, 2024, 5 p.m.*

***Hike and meal at Restaurant Zwölf Apostelkeller, Sonnenfelsgasse 3, Vienna***

We set off on foot for a leisurely dinner in the Zwölf Apostelkeller restaurant next to St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna. On the way, Martin Obermeir-Siegrist points out a few historical sites along the way.

## Minutes of the Executive Committee of Sunday, March 17, 2024

*Sunday, March 17, 2024, 9.30 / 10.30 a.m.*

***Services at the EMK Vienna-Floridsdorf, EMK Vienna Fünfhaus and EMK Linz***

On Sunday, March 17, 2024, the following services will take place, with members and guests of the Executive Committee preaching and participating:

Vienna-Floridsdorf	9.30 a.m.	Service in German with Marjan Dimov
Linz	9.30 a.m.	Service in German with Markus Bach
Vienna Fünfhaus / ESUMC	10.30 a.m.	Service with communion in German and English with Bishop Stefan Zürcher

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These minutes of the 80<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Committee of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe held in Vienna from March 14-17, 2024 were examined and declared correct.

The examiner and the examiner of the protocol:  
*Lea Hafner and Jörg Niederer*

# III. Report of the Office

## 1. Presence and Journals

### 1.1 Meetings of the Office of the Central Conference

The Office of the Central Conference has met twice since the last meeting of the Executive Committee of the Central Conference: on October 25, 2023, and on January 17, 2024, in preparation for the meeting of the Executive Committee in Vienna.

### 1.2 Journals of the 78<sup>th</sup> and the 79<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Committee of the CC CSE

The journals of the 78th and the 79th session of the Executive Committee, held from June 29 to July 2, 2023, in Cluj-Napoca (Romania), and the online session held on November 23, 2023, have been published jointly. It is available for download on the website of the CC CSE (<https://www.umc-cse.org/en/downloads--links/documents-studies-and-lectures/minutes-cse.html>).

## 2. Planning for Executive Committee Meeting in Vienna

### 2.1 Meeting of the Executive Committee in Vienna

The 80th meeting of the Executive Committee will take place from March 14 to 17, 2024, at Vienna Fünfhaus UMC at Sechshauserstrasse 56 in Vienna (Austria). A theme day on ministries with children and young people is planned for Saturday. This will be prepared and organized by the Working Group Children and Youth. The content of the Executive Committee meeting will be organized by a preparatory group including Bishop Stefan, Bozena Daszuta, László Khaled, and Ben Nausner. In accordance with the decision of the Executive Committee in Cluj-Napoca, the working groups were asked to "describe – for the attention of the Executive Committee meeting in March 2024 – their current situation, formulate their needs and current challenges and describe what contribution they can make to the Central Conference."

### 2.2 Program of the Executive Committee from March 14 to 17, 2024

The rough program for the meetings in Vienna is as follows (for a detailed program, see Appendix 1):

Wednesday, March 13, 2024	from 14.00	Cabinet South
Thursday, March 14, 2024	morning	Cabinet South
	from 14.15	Executive Committee CC CSE
Friday, March 15, 2024	full day	Executive Committee CC CSE
Saturday, March 16, 2024	morning/aftern.	Theme Day
	from 17.00	Vienna Special
Sunday, March 17, 2024	morning	Worship services in Vienna Florisdorf, Vienna Fünfhaus/Vienna ESUMC (jointly) and Linz
	aftern./evening	Meeting of the 2024 General Conference delegates
Monday, March 18, 2024	morning	Meeting of the 2024 General Conference delegates

### 2.3 Assignments for the meeting

The Office of the Central Conference commissions the following individuals:

As assistant to the secretary: Urs Schweizer  
 As conference treasurer: Iris Bullinger  
 For the examination of the minutes: Lea Hafner and Jörg Niederer

## 2.4 Election to the Working Group Children and Youth

The EMYC has now been abolished as an independent body. It is now directly integrated into the EMC as the European Methodist Youth Forum (EMYF). We will see how this works in February 2024.

The Working Group Children and Youth of the Central Conference CSE has been reorganized. One member and one substitute member have been found for the from most countries of the Central Conference:

	<u>Member</u>	<u>Substitute member</u>
from Austria:	Martin Obermeir-Siegrist	Dorothee Bührma
from Albania:	Gjergj Lushka	Muço Shyqyri
from Switzerland:	Cedric Zangger (Co-Chairman)	Simon Zürcher
from Czechia:	vacant	vacant
from France:	Matthias Joseph	vacant
from Hungary:	Johanna Pásztor	Dániel Vadászi
from North Macedonia:	Simona Tancheva	Jennifer Moore
from Poland:	Damian Szczepańczyk	Adrian Myśliński
from Romania:	Sarah Putman	Leah Harper
from Serbia:	Ivana Pastor (Co-Chairwoman)	Martina Mandač

Cedric Zangger (Switzerland) and Ivana Pastor (Serbia) are willing to co-chair the Working Group Children and Youth. They are to be elected as members of the Executive Committee with voice but no vote. They will coordinate their participation in the meetings of the Executive Committee.

### Motion to the Executive Committee:

**Ivana Pastor and Cedric Zangger are elected as members of the Executive Committee of the CC CSE with voice but no vote, with only one person attending each meeting.**

## 2.5 Council on Finance and Administration

Already in spring 2023, Adrian Wenziker had expressed his wish to be replaced as chairperson of the Council on Finance and Administration, as member of the Pension Board and as auditor of the Central Conference accounts. Now that he has fallen very seriously ill, he has had to make all his posts available at short notice. We are grateful that Stefan Hafner, as a current member of the Council on Finance and Administration, is willing to take over the chairmanship of this council until the Central Conference 2025 and to act as auditor for the Central Conference accounts. With a view to Central Conference 2025, Daniel Burkhalter has also indicated that he wishes to step down from his service on behalf of the Council on Finance and Administration.

### Motions to the Executive Committee:

- 1. Stefan Hafner is elected interim Chairman of the Council on Finance and Administration.**
- 2. Stefan Hafner is elected as auditor of the Central Conference accounts.**

The Office of the Central Conference has determined that the need for the Council on Finance and Administration is unclear. All requests and tasks are small and were usually handled by the Chairman. In most cases, these were requests and tasks relating to the USA, which are completed with one signature. However, the members of the Council on Finance and Administration are automatically also on the Pension Board, which is why it seems sensible to retain the Council. In addition, the audit of the Central Conference accounts does not necessarily have to be carried out by the Chairman but could also be carried out by another member of the Council on Finance and Administration. The Office of the Central Conference has, therefore, asked for a new person to join this Council, who could, after having expressed the willingness to serve, be elected by the Executive Committee.

## **2.6 Vice-Chairperson of the Executive Committee**

The position of Vice- Chairperson has been vacant since the resignation of Helene Bindl in May 2021. The Office of the Central Conference and the General Assembly of the Association "Hilfe im Sprengel" have since then met and worked without a replacement, which was feasible. Unfortunately, it has not yet been possible to nominate and elect a person for the vice-chair of the Executive Committee. This is due to the fact that this person must be a full member of the Executive Committee and therefore already performs some tasks for the Central Conference. Further additional tasks often have to be rejected in view of the existing workload (also at AC level). On the other hand, the language of correspondence and meetings of the Office of the Central Conference and the General Assembly of the Association "Hilfe im Sprengel" is German. This clearly restricts the circle of potential persons. On the other hand, it would be desirable if the Office of the Central Conference were not only staffed by people from Switzerland. The Office is now used to meeting in hybrid form. However, a presence in Zurich is helpful for sensitive and difficult issues.

The Rules of Order of the Central Conference state this:

Par. 3.1: "Through nomination the Bishop can petition that a voting member of the Executive Committee be elected Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee." and

Par. 8.1: "The Office shall be composed of the Bishop, the Vice- Chairperson, the Secretary and the Treasurer. Chairperson shall be the Bishop."

The only task of the Vice-Chairman stated in the Rules of Order of the Central Conference is as follows:

Par. 7.5: "The Executive Committee shall meet at least once a year. The meetings shall be announced by the Bishop or, if he or she is prevented in doing this, by the Vice-Chairperson or the Secretary."

The Office of the Central Conference has determined that it is possible to work without a vice-chairperson. This corresponds to the "may" formulation in Par. 3.1. A vice-chairperson may be elected but does not have to be. The situation is different with the Secretary or Treasurer. However, it would be important for the Executive Committee to have a vice-chairperson in case the supervising Bishop is unable to chair a meeting. This position should therefore not remain vacant.

The Office of the Central Conference, therefore, proposes that the mandatory link between the position of Vice-Chairperson of the Executive Committee and the membership of the Office of the Central Conference be removed. This would also remove membership of the Association "Hilfe im Sprengel". All that would remain would be the task of deputy chairing

meetings in the event of the Bishop being unable to attend. According to Par. 8.2, the Vice-Chairperson could nevertheless be elected to the Office of the Central Conference: "The Office can through a motion of the Bishop include a fifth person, who is elected by the Executive Committee from among its members." The Office of the Central Conference, therefore, moves that the mention of the Vice-Chairperson in Par. 8.1 and 7.5 of the Rules of Order be deleted.

**Motion to the Executive Committee:**

**The Executive Committee proposes to the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe that the regulations of the Central Conference be amended as follows:**

**Paragraph 7.5: "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.~~"**

**Paragraph 8.1: "The Office shall be composed of the Bishop, the ~~Vice-Chairperson,~~ the Secretary and the Treasurer. Chairperson shall be the Bishop."**

**Paragraph 8.2: "The Office can through a motion of the Bishop include a ~~fifth~~-fourth person, who is elected by the Executive Committee from among its members."**

## **2.7 Further elections and vacancies**

Petr Procházka resigned from being a member of the Standing Committee of Central Conference Matters last summer. Bishop Stefan asked Andrzej Malicki to replace him in this committee, who is willing to serve in this capacity.

**Proposal to the Executive Committee:**

**The Executive Committee confirms the delegation of Andrzej Malicki to the Standing Committee of Central Conference Matters with effect after General Conference 2024.**

The list of offices of the Central Conference shows the following vacancies:

- Vice-Chairperson of the Executive Committee
- 1 layperson and 1 pastor on the Committee on Appeals
- 1 pastor and 1 layperson as substitute members of the Judicial Court (Jean-Philippe Waechter has resigned)

The Office of the Central Conference would like to point out that all persons in offices and functions of the Central Conference are elected until the 2025 Central Conference session. Any changes with regard to the time after this session shall be reported to the Bishop's Office by fall 2024. The Secretary will write to all persons on the list of offices in summer 2024 and ask whether they are willing to continue their respective service.

## **3. Financial matters and statistics**

### **3.1 Account 2023 of the Central Conference CSE**

Treasurer Iris Bullinger presents the 2023 annual financial statements to the Executive Committee (see Appendix 2). These close with a revenue surplus of CHF 10,213.96. The Office would like to thank Iris Bullinger most sincerely for her work.



The 2023 annual financial statements were audited by the substitute auditor Stefan Hafner. He recommends the annual financial statements for approval (see Appendix 3).

### **Motion to the Executive Committee**

**The Executive Committee approves the 2023 accounts based on the auditor's report, grants discharge to the Treasurer and expresses its sincere thanks to her for her services.**

### **3.2 Budget 2024**

The budget for 2024 was already approved at the Central Conference meeting in November 2022.

### **3.3 Contribution to the Fund for Mission in Europe (FMiE)**

At last year's meeting of the Fund for Mission in Europe, the question was raised as to what extent the individual countries of our Central Conference could include a fixed amount for the FMiE in their 2024 budget in order to create a certain degree of planning security for the fund. In consultation with the Office of the Central Conference, it was noted that breaking down the division into donor and recipient countries would be helpful for the Connexio of the church. All countries should be encouraged to give. However, this cannot be done as a decision of the Central Conference but should be decided in the individual countries. The office therefore recommends that the countries of our Central Conference include a fixed contribution to the Fund for Mission in Europe in their respective budgets.

### **3.4 Statistics**

The statistics based on the figures from the Annual Conferences 2023 are attached as Appendix 4.

## **4. Dates for the Executive Committee and Central Conference**

### **4.1 Online meeting of the Executive Committee on July 4, 2024**

At the 2024 General Conference, issues will be addressed that also affect or could affect us as a Central Conference (regionalization, extension of the "disaffiliation paragraph" 2553 beyond 2023, etc.). The Office of the Central Conference, therefore, considers it helpful to hold an online meeting after General Conference in order to make an overview and bring us as Executive Committee members up to the same level of information. With regard to such an online meeting, it would be helpful if all delegations to General Conference were to write a short report, which would then be sent out in advance. The online meeting of the Executive Committee will take place on July 4, 2024, in the evening.

### **4.2 Meeting of the Executive Committee from September 27 to 28, 2024**

The Office of the Central Conference has decided that, in addition to the online meeting of July 4, 2024 (see 4.1), a physical meeting of the Executive Committee should take place in autumn 2024 in order to discuss any implications of General Conference. The date has been set for September 27 and 28, 2024 (from noon to noon). If this meeting proves to be unnecessary, it can be canceled at short notice. A location has not yet been determined.

### **4.3 Meeting of the Central Conference CSE 2025**

The next General Conference meeting will take place from April 23 to May 3, 2024, in Charlotte (North Carolina/USA). A Central Conference is to be held within one year after General Conference. The Office of the Central Conference has set the date of March 13-16, 2025. The Central Conference will take place in Winterthur (Switzerland). As the upcoming General Conference is the postponed General Conference 2020, the elections made for the Central Conference 2021 will still apply to the 2025 Central Conference. Therefore, no elections for the Central Conference need to be held at the Annual Conferences 2024.

### **4.4 Next General and Central Conferences in 2027 and 2029**

The General Conference taking place this year is the postponed General Conference 2020. The Judicial Council decided that the actual General Conference 2024 does not have to be held later. However, the Council of Bishops decided last fall that there should probably be an extraordinary General Conference in 2026. This would mean that a further session of the Central Conference - for example in 2027 - would also have to be held between the regular Central Conferences in 2025 and 2029. The Office of the Central Conference is of the opinion that a physical meeting of the Central Conference cannot be held every two years, but that the 2027 session shall be held online whenever possible.

### **4.5 Overview of further dates**

An overview of the other dates for 2024 / 2025 can be found in Appendix 5.

## **5. Miscellaneous**

### **5.1 Central Conference Book of Discipline**

Bishop Patrick Streiff has revised the current Book of Discipline of the Central Conference CSE and compiled it into one document. This was printed in a small edition and published as a pdf on the homepage of the Central Conference: <https://www.umc-cse.org/de/downloads--links/documents-studies-and-lectures/cse-church-rules.html>

Unfortunately, it turned out that a resolution of the Central Conference 2022 was not included in the revision. This has been corrected in the online version. The printed Discipline will be destroyed and replaced by a reprint.

### **5.2 Deceased**

In the past year, the following people, who have been involved in the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe, have deceased:

- Vlastislav Maláč, deceased on May 10, 2023. He was a delegate to the Central Conferences of 1969, 1981, 1985 and 1989 and was a member of the Working Group Media and Communication from 1985 to 1993.
- Václav Svidenský, deceased on June 16, 2023, was a delegate to the Central Conferences of 1969, 1977, 1981, 1985 and 2001, a member of the Executive Committee from 1977-1989, and a member of the Working Group Church and Society from 1985-1997.

## 5.2 Bishop's Office

Bishop Stefan writes: One of my first thoughts after my election as bishop in November 2022 was: "The cooperation with and support of Urs and André in the Bishop's office make me confident that I will manage to get started in this great office." With André Töngi, the bookkeeping of the Association "Hilfe im Sprengel" and all associated tasks are in experienced hands. As far as the finances are concerned, he also handles all the transactions with GCFA. He answers my many questions competently and patiently, even if I ask the same thing two or three times. Urs Schweizer has an excellent network within the Central Conference and maintains many personal contacts, as well as with the wider Church and ecumenical organizations. In the Office of the Central Conference, he doesn't just write the minutes, but actively contributes his thoughts and experience. In addition to taking care of many administrative tasks, organizing my trips is a great relief.

I could go on and on with both of them. They are important contacts for me when it comes to minor or major issues. As the Board of the Association "Hilfe im Sprengel", it's all about preparing decisions together and, as far as it is in our authority, taking them. Their experience, their view of things, their ideas and considerations help us to make good decisions and to determine and implement the next steps.

In any case, the Bishop's Office with Urs and André is an indispensable support for my ministry and the work in our Central Conference, without which it would not be possible. We have to keep an eye on the workload - an old topic.

## 5.3 Thanks

Bishop Stefan writes: I am very grateful to André and Urs! First of all, thank you simply for being there. Even if it's not every day, I love coming to the office in Zurich where you are! Thank you for your work, your dedication and love for the people and for our church. Thank you for your patience with me, your support, your togetherness.

I would like to thank the members of the Office of the Central Conference; you, Markus Bach, for the many hours spent writing reports and minutes and preparing them for printing; you, Iris Bullinger, for the meticulous bookkeeping of the Central Conference.

I would like to thank the superintendents. The encounters with you over the past few months, the (Zoom) conversations, being out and about with you on my travels, the insight into your work were and are a great enrichment and support. Thank you for your trust and the experience of being welcome!

I would like to thank retired Bishop Patrick Streiff for the good introductory period in the first half of 2023 and the trips we took together. The months of handover were extremely valuable and helpful for me. Thank you for your time and patience, for your many good tips and for sharing your experiences.

I would like to thank all the members of the Executive Committee. We have the wonderful task of steering and sailing the Central Conference ship together. Thank you for your commitment! I would especially like to thank Bożena Daszuta, Ben Nausner and László Khaled (and of course to all people responsible for the logistics) for their help in preparing and organizing this meeting. It's a joy to with you!

And I thank God for you, who binds us together through his Shalom, equips and guides, encourages and protects us through his Holy Spirit.

*Markus Bach, Secretary*



Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche  
Zentralkonferenz von Mittel- und Südeuropa

*United Methodist Church  
Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe*

## Termine / Dates 2024-2025

### 2024

25.-28.2.	<b>North Africa Gathering</b>	<b>TN-Tunis</b>
13.-14.3.	<b>Cabinet South</b>	<b>AT-Vienna</b>
14.-17.3	<b>Executive Committee CC CSE</b>	<b>AT-Vienna</b>
17.-18.3.	<b>Meeting of the <u>CC CSE Delegates</u> to General Conference</b>	<b>AT-Vienna</b>
21.-24.3.	<b>Roma-Consultation</b>	<b>HU-Budapest</b>
25.3.	<b>Meeting of <u>European Delegates</u> to General Conference</b>	<b>ONLINE</b>
3.4.	<b>Fund for Mission in Europe</b>	<b>ONLINE</b>
9.4.	<b>European Methodist Council</b>	<b>ONLINE</b>
4.-7.4.	<b>Serbia-North Macedonia-Albania Provisional AC</b>	<b>MK-Monosпитovo</b>
11.-14.4.	<b>Hungary Provisional AC (with District Romania)</b>	<b>HU-Budapest</b>
15.-20.4.	<b>Council of Bishops</b>	<b>US-Charlotte</b>
19.-21.4.	<b>Central Conference Delegate Orientation</b>	<b>US-Charlotte</b>
23.4.-3.5.	<b>General Conference</b>	<b>US-Charlotte</b>
4.-6.5.	<b>Council of Bishops</b>	<b>US-Charlotte</b>
24.-26.5.	<b>Czech Republic AC</b>	<b>CZ-Prague</b>
30.5.-2.6.	<b>Austria Provisional AC</b>	<b>AT-Graz</b>
10.-11.6.	<b>Plateforme North Africa</b>	<b>CH-Rothrist</b>
12.-16.6.	<b>Switzerland-France-North Africa AC</b>	<b>CH-Rothrist</b>
13.-17.6.	<b>Women's Area Seminar</b>	<b>PT-Porto</b>
27.-30.6.	<b>Poland AC</b>	<b>PL-Ostroda</b>
4.7.	<b>Executive Committee CC CSE</b>	<b>ONLINE</b>
13.-14.8.	<b>World Methodist Council</b>	<b>SE-Gothenburg</b>
14.-17.8.	<b>World Methodist Conference</b>	<b>SE-Gothenburg</b>
18.8.	<b>World Methodist Council</b>	<b>SE-Gothenburg</b>
27.8.-2.9.	<b>CPCE General Assembly</b>	<b>RO-Sibiu</b>
27.-28.9.	<b>Executive Committee CC CSE</b>	<b>TBD</b>
3.-7.10.	<b>Fund for Mission in Europe / European Methodist Council</b>	<b>UK-Lisburn</b>

### 2025

13.-16.3.	<b>Central Conference CC CSE</b>	<b>CH-Winterthur</b>
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## IV. Reports of the Working Groups and other Groups

### Working Group Theology and Ordained Ministry

Members of the Working Group are: Jana Danečkova (CZ), David Field (CH), Zoltán Mihály Kovács (HU - chair), Michael Nausner (AT), Edward Puslecki (PL), Daniel Sjanta (SRB), Christof Voigt (D).

#### **Current Situation:**

Working group had some changes. Zoltán Kovács was elected as a chair and David Field as a member instead of Stefan Zürcher. The Working Group had an online meeting in 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Every member of the working group gave a brief report on personal and ecclesial theological matters.

#### **Plans:**

- We will have a meeting between 19-22. september 2024. in Miskolc, Hungary. We are planning to discuss the topic we have got from the Executive Committee (May, 2022.) about the connection between the Church Membership and Baptism.
- We will examine documents: "Theological and Ecclesial Topics Supplement: "Church membership" and "A theological essay on church membership".
- Beside the examination of these papers we will take a "mini-conference" during the meeting, where theologians or church leaders will be invited to talk about the meaning of church membership on the perspective of their own theologian heritage.
- The members of WG will make a short paper about "Church Membership" with references the practice of Baptism, Confirmation, etc. It will be a short summary that includes the main theological and/or practical questions in Annual Conferences concerning the topic. These papers will be helpful for all of us to be aware the special circumstances and contexts in our countries. These papers will be discussed in September.

*Zoltán Mihály Kovács (chair)*

## Working Group Liturgy

The Working Group Liturgy consists of only three members: Jana Křížová, Esther Handschin and Erika Stalcup. The group does not currently have a mandate from the Central Conference Executive Committee.

The Working Group has struggled to know how to best serve the Central Conference region, particularly in light of the current instability within the worldwide United Methodist Church. Many possibilities can be imagined, but it is difficult to know what would be perceived as useful and helpful by countries in our European region. Regardless of what challenges the denomination may be facing, we all continue to worship. We all continue to gather in our own ways and spaces to pray, to sing, to speak and to listen to God, to incarnate Christ's body in our particular local bodies.

Speaking personally, I want this Working Group to be a real resource for worship-related issues and situations that our countries are facing. The Working Group is often perceived as seeking to impose a particularly formal conception of worship. Furthermore, a previous focus on liturgical texts and pre-established worship forms (largely in German) has only reinforced this image. As I see it, the group exists not to establish worship standards to which others must conform, but to understand and respond to worship-related needs in the Central Conference. In order to carry out this work, it is essential to have good communication with representatives of each Annual Conference.

I can imagine several ways in which the Working Group could serve the Central Conference, and I will solicit reactions about these possibilities during the meeting:

### Addressing our needs

- Worship webinar series:  
Online events can be offered which respond to challenges common to many worshipping contexts, for example: worshipping across generations, equipping laity to lead congregational prayer (building confidence and exploring different ways of praying), intercultural worship (not just for visibly multicultural communities!), and other issues as proposed to the Working Group
- Consultation:  
Working Group members may be able to facilitate finding relevant resources and assistance in the event of specific questions or needs.

### Strengthening the connexion

The Central Conference Working Group could act as an umbrella group for Annual Conference worship groups, not in the sense of surveillance but in the sense of facilitating communication and the sharing of needs. This could be done by:

- Establishing a list of worship contacts in each Annual Conference
- Communicating any events or resources which may be relevant to worship leaders
- Creating a fellowship of worship leaders for the purpose of mutual support

## **Drawing on the richness of our diversity**

- Twining congregations from different countries:  
Communities of a similar size could be paired together with the goal of sharing their worship practices, learning from one another, exchanging about common challenges, and problem-solving together
- Panorama of our worshipping traditions  
A website or other online platform could be established to showcase worship cultures of each country (which will likely have multiple subcultures). For instance: examples of well-loved songs and hymns, video clips of worship services, descriptions of particular traditions, expectations of the service, role of youth, how the sacraments are celebrated, etc.

## **The Working Group requests from the Executive Committee:**

1. Feedback about how the Working Group can best serve the Central Conference
2. Nominations for additional members to the group

*Erika Stalcup, Chair*

## Working Group Discipline and Judicial Affairs

The Working Group Discipline and Judicial Affairs did not meet since the last meeting of the Executive Committee.

The church discipline of the Central Conference CSE adopted at the executive session in Cluj-Napoca with the changes approved by Central Conference were published and edited by Bishop Patrick Streiff i.R.

These texts need still to be coordinated and edited in cooperation with the Working Group Discipline of the Central Conference Germany. A meeting with the Working Group of the Central Conference Germany shall be scheduled next year.

The Executive Committee CSE was also tasked with submitting a draft resolution for a possible withdrawal of the UMC in the Czech Republic in accordance with Art. 572. Such a text is now available in the appendix.

The Working Group expects new assignments and tasks following the 2024 General Conference.

*For the Working Group  
Wilfried Nausner, Chair*

### Annex 1:

## **Process and decisions for the withdrawal of the UMC in Czech Republic**

The Working Group Discipline and Judicial Affairs was commissioned by the Executive Committee of the Central Conference at its last meeting to prepare a draft resolution in accordance with Art 572 on how the UMC in the Czech Republic can leave the UMC to form an autonomous Methodist Church.

The following process and decisions are provided for in Article 572:

1. The Annual Conference in the Czech Republic submits a motion justifying the withdrawal from the UMC and to form an autonomous church and takes a vote on it at a meeting of its Annual Conference (2/3 majority is required).
2. The motion decided at the Annual Conference is submitted to the Executive Committee of the Central Conference CSE. The Executive Committee deals with the application and in turn prepares an application for the meeting of the Central Conference CSE to make a decision. The vote at the Central Conference requires a 2/3 majority.
3. The Annual Conferences, which together form the Central Conference CSE, vote at the Annual Conference session or their authorized boards on the decision of the Central Conference CSE.
4. The Standing Committee for Central Conference Matters of the General Conference of the UMC will be informed in the meantime. The Standing Committee for Central Conference Matters will prepare a proposal for General Conference according to Article 572 BOD.

*For the Working Group Discipline and Judicial Affairs  
February 2024, Wilfried Nausner, Chair*



# Working Group Church and Society

## Current situation

Members of the Working Group: David Chlupáček (Czech Republic), Dorothee Bührma (Austria), Marietjie Odendaal (Switzerland)

We are from different countries and Annual Conferences. We meet online. We have worked together on one common project. Otherwise, we form a rather new constellation, meeting as we do since 2022.

We aren't quite clear on what the Executive Committee expects of us.

## Challenges

- How representative of the Central Conference are we?
- Finding time for our work together
- Technology (online meeting space and irregularly functioning email)

## Contribution to the Central Conference:

Make a survey for all the Annual Conferences to find common topics. These could be, we expect concerns such as:

- The impact Christians have on society
- How people are dealing with the church's loss of relevance
- War and peace
- the political spectrum, especially the extremes
- Poverty
- Social polarization and fragmenting: How the church contributes to realising the promise of our faith in Christ: unity across factions.

Stimulate conversation on relevant topics

Accept assignments from the Executive Committee or the Central Conference

*Marietjie Odendaal*

## Annex 1:

### **Reworking of the general guidelines**

The Working Group Church and Society was tasked with reworking the general guidelines. We have done so. As we offer the result of our work for your consideration, we also share with you our thoughts and considerations for the changes we have made.

- We wanted to make clear how relevant Wesley's guidelines are to our lives and times.
- We sought for understandable language, as free as possible from church jargon.
- We contracted the list of practical applications, grouping together what seem to be mutually implied. A long list, especially of "don'ts" seem quite daunting to us.

- We formulated the guidelines as positive statements of what should be done, avoiding using "not" as a matter of communication principle.
- We matched things to avoid and things to strive at, making the two lists equally short.

Since we submitted our reworking of the general guidelines, we discovered a recent German version of the same. We now submit a translation of this document from 2016 along with our proposal.

We are grateful for your reading of our proposal and eagerly await your response. We especially wish for an evaluation comparing the two versions.

In case the executive Committee wants to refer our proposal back, please do so with concrete suggestions how the text can be improved.

Peace,

*David Chlupáček (Czech Republic), Dorothee Bührma (Austria)  
and Marietjie Odendaal (Switzerland)*

## **Guidelines for a responsible way of life**

(Following John Wesley's General Rules)

We affirm the Gospel of Jesus Christ, respect the creeds and statements of our Christian faith tradition and we believe that faith grows, when it is mirrored by our lifestyle.

Since John Wesley's General Rules offer an orientation for people starting out on their faith journey and a mirror for those already progressed along the way, we need to make them accessible to the church.

These guidelines invite us into conversation and an ongoing evaluation of our lifestyles in the light of challenges we face in the world we live in.

### **1 Avoiding evil and doing no harm**

I therefore pledge myself in particular:

- To take responsibility for my actions and choices by carefully considering their consequences.
- To change the ways in which my lifestyle harms God's Creation, which includes nature and other forms of life as well as the relationships among the people of this world.
- To resist the pressure of modern idols, such as wealth, influence, fame and social expectations, and instead offer my life and talents for God's use. This includes resting regularly and allowing other people and the earth rest.
- To put off ignorance by which I can be manipulated in order to act freely, responsibly and joyfully in the interests of peace.
- To unlearn habits of addiction and to support people who want to overcome their addictions.
- To treat all people with dignity and in a hospitable manner, to avoid abusing people in speaking or action and to resist the misuse of power.

**2 Doing good**

I therefore pledge myself in particular:

- To investigate and discover the wonders and beauty of God's gifts in creation and, following Jesus Christ, become a faithful steward, accountable to God. This includes actively campaigning against systems that endanger life.
- To let myself be informed, even uncomfortably, and to try new ways of seeing, acting and thinking in order to be part of God's future.
- To discover freedom for me and for other people, including the freedom of discipline and simplicity.
- To do good to all people, as I am able, helping them, being welcoming to all, and living considerately, also when I speak to and about people.
- To learn and implement alternatives to force and violence, recognising the power I have and using it courageously.
- To be faithful and hopeful in all things.

**3 Attending to all God's ordinances**

I pledge myself to accept and faithfully use everything which helps me recognise God's present accompaniment and respond to God's loyal love. Examples of these are:

- Church services and celebrations, Holy Communion, individual and joint prayer.
- Studying the Bible and learning with and from other Christians.
- Practices which encourage freedom, such as food, media or shopping fasting.

By signing this declaration, I commit myself to the above pledges. I know that I am completely dependent on God's grace and help. If by my Christian way of life I should inspire others to experience God's grace, I will thank only God for this.

Place, date .....

Signature .....

**4 Conflicts**

I recognise areas in the above-stated pledges that I cannot enter into fully, or at present cannot enter into fully. I explicitly wish to name them here:

.....

.....

.....

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.....

## Working Group Children and Youth

There has not been an active Working Group Children and Youth for several years. At the initiative of Bishop Stefan Zürcher, youth leaders from all countries of the Central Conference met for the first time on Zoom in June 2023. The aim was to get to know each other and to hear about each other's work with children and young people. In September, there was a meeting in Budapest with two representatives from each country of the Central Conference.

We heard from each other what is going on in the countries, what successes can be celebrated and what challenges need to be overcome. We discussed the content of the starting Working Group Children and Youth. It should be a platform for exchange and information. We want to hear from each other, invite each other to regional meetings, share experiences and knowledge about children and youth work and organize a Central Conference-wide meeting. We also want to bring the concerns of young people to the Central Conference. After Budapest, each country decided which people should be in the Working Group Children and Youth, which will be Co-chaired by Ivana Pastor from Serbia and Cedric Zangger from Switzerland. A first youth meeting at Central Conference level is planned to take place in 2025.

The current challenges are to ensure that the group is well constituted, that relationships can be maintained and the information can be shared. In addition, the ideas that were considered in Budapest should be realized. We are glad, if we can count with the support of the Executive Committee, especially for meetings and Central Conference-wide youth meetings, if necessary.

We are delighted to meet again in Vienna.

For the Working Group Children and Youth  
*Cedric Zangger*

### Annex 1:

## **Report on the initial meeting of the EMYCF – European Methodist Youth and Children's Forum**

From February 16 to 18, 2024, delegates from several countries met for the first gathering of EMYCF in Hamburg (Germany) to form a new forum for Methodist work with children, youth, and young adults in Europe.

Delegates from the Methodist Churches in Ireland, Great Britain, and Portugal, from the three Central Conferences of The United Methodist Church (Nordic + Baltic Area, Germany, Central and Southern Europe) and from United Churches such as the Union of Methodist and Waldensian Churches in Italy, the Spanish Evangelical Church as well as Eumenia (the youth organization of the Swedish "Eumeniakyrkan").

After the meeting, the following key points should be established:

- As the successor organization to the European Methodist Youth and Children's Council (EMYC), EMYCF connects people who bear responsibility in the various Churches in the area of children, youth and young adults.

- EMYCF is coordinated, financed, and administratively supported by the European Methodist Council (EMC). EMYCF reports to EMC.
- The various Churches and central conferences send up to two delegates to EMYCF. This ensures a good balance between The United Methodist Church and the other Churches. Above all, however, it is very easy to work in this manageable group of delegates. Ecological considerations also played a role in the decision to keep the forum rather small.
- EMYCF takes place annually and lasts one weekend from Friday evening to Sunday lunchtime.

Two convenors are elected from the forum. Every year one convenor leaves the team, and another is elected for a two-year term. Due to the overlap, there is always a joint leadership of one new person and one person who has already worked in the previous year. This model is also recommended to the Churches for sending delegates.

Some details still need to be clarified, such as ways of working together and sharing resources or materials via the internet, as well as the relationship between EMYCF and the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe (EYCE) - EMYC was a member of EYCE.

In terms of content, the exchange mainly revolved around the questions: "How do children, young people, and young adults live in Europe today? What are the similarities and differences in the various countries? How can EMYCF support the Churches' ministry to and with young people?" Initial ideas on the last question have already been spun – subsequent EMYCF meetings will follow up on these initial ideas.

It was good to see that EMYCF right from the start has been made up of extremely competent people who are inspired by Christian service to young people.

*Martin Obermeir-Siegrist (Austria) and  
Gjergj Lushka (Albania)*

# Working Group Women's Work

## Contribution to the Central Conference (CC CSE):

WE WANT...

- that women share their faith in God with each other.
- that women discover and develop their gifts.
- that women take their role and their life situation seriously, that they support each other when they seek and break new ground.
- that women are courageous and involved at various levels, including in leadership roles.
- that women use their knowledge and experience in church, society and state.

We try to implement this by supporting national women's seminars and organizing or participating in international women's seminars.

We are convinced that these shared experiences will deepen our understanding of each other and strengthen our togetherness and identity as the United Methodist Church in CC CSE. In this way, we want to be co-workers in the kingdom of God.

With this in mind, here is a brief review and outlook:

## Review

### 1. Working Group (WG) Women's Work

Currently, the Working Group Women's Service consists of the following members: Monika Zuber (Poland, Chairleader), Maria Durovka Petras (Serbia), Murielle Rietschi Wilhelm (Switzerland), Barbara Büniger (Switzerland, Coordinator). Gabriela Kopas (Slovak Republic) resigned as a member of the WG Women's Work.

### 2. Leadership development

Events or activities financially supported by the AG took place in North Macedonia, Serbia, Romania, Hungary, Poland and France.

### 3. Language Courses

Language courses were funded for a woman from Hungary and a woman from North Macedonia.

### 4. Consultation from 24. – 26.07.2022 in Vienna

The theme of the consultation, "Time for Community," emphasized "togetherness" and also addressed the pain of the "split». What will our path as women of the Central Committee look like in the future when individual Annual Conferences or local congregations leave the United Methodist Church? The suffering from these situations was palpable. Also fear of what it will entail specifically for the respective women's organizations of our church. Women from Bulgaria and the Slovak Republic were present for the last time as members of our Central Committee. We very much hope that they can and want to be present as guests at further meetings. "Communicating non-violently", listening to someone, not commenting, but asking encouraging questions about how something was for the other person, is intended to support togetherness and was therefore designed as thematic input and also practiced. This attitude should shape our togetherness.

We want to share our stories, deepen friendships, support each other in prayer. We are grateful to God for this "Time for Community".

## **Outlook**

**1. Area Seminar from 13.06. – 17.06.2024 in Porto/Portugal:** We want to emphasize the importance of the European and worldwide meetings. Therefore, we will not organize our own CC seminar for the benefit of this seminar, but we will take time to exchange our CC-Women's Work affairs within the framework of this seminar.

## **2. CC Seminar and Consultation**

A CC seminar is planned for 2025.

## **Current Challenges and Needs**

It is important to us to be careful with our financial resources. There should be a balance between the financial contribution of each individual woman, the national women's work, the women's work of the CC and the possibilities (such as inflation, which has an impact on income and expenditure) and solidarity.

A shared history also depends on the people involved. And so we are always faced with the question of how we can "continue" our history even if there are changes in the people involved. This concerns the composition of the national women's service teams and also the WG Women's Work of our CC.

## **Thanks**

Shared experiences continue our common history. This shared history shapes us.

We would like to thank everyone who contributes to this in any way. In particular, we would like to mention the members of the WG Women's Work and the FrauenNETZwerk in Switzerland, who support this work with and for women in many ways.

*February 2024*

*Monika Zuber, Barbara Büniger*

## Working Group Episcopacy

The following persons of the Executive Committee are members of the Working Group Episcopacy:

Stefan Schröckenfuchs (AT)  
Jörg Niederer, Chair (CH-FR-NA)  
Ivana Procházková (CZ)  
László Khaled (HU-RO)  
Bozena Daszuta (PL)  
Daniel Sjanta (RS-NMK-AL)

The members of the Working Group will start their work on the evening of Thursday, March 14, 2024.

The Committee will concentrate upon the following points:

1. Review of the bishop's election
2. Description of the current situation of the Working group Episcopacy, its needs and current challenges, as well as its services for the Central Conference.
3. To prepare the meeting and conversation with the bishop
4. The conversation with the bishop
  - o setting the priorities of the Bishop
  - o longer-term issues in the Central Committee
  - o personal and professional conditions
  - o Planning of further support for the bishop by the Working group Episcopacy.

*Jörg Niederer*  
*February 2024*

### Annex 1:

## **Working Group Episcopacy -Meeting on March 14, 2024 in Vienna**

**Present:** Stefan Schröckenfuchs (AT), Jörg Niederer, Vorsitz / Chair (CH-FR-NA), Ivana Procházková (CZ), László Khaled (HU-RO),  
partly: Bishop Stefan Zürcher

**Excused:** Bozena Daszuta (PL), Daniel Sjanta (RS-NMK-AL)

### **1. Review of the bishop's election**

The nomination process was canceled at very short before the election. Nevertheless, there were well-prepared candidates.

### **2. Description of the current situation of the Working group Episcopacy, its needs and current challenges, as well as its services for the Central Conference.**

**Description:** Current the WG Episcopacy consists of six permanent members. They represent all Annual Conferences of the Central Conference. All members have been in the WG for more than



two years. The WG meets once at each of the executive meetings and the Central Conference meeting. At these meetings, a discussion is held with the acting bishop and, if applicable, with his wife. The chairman also meets with the bishop and his wife once or twice a year to discuss current concerns and observations.

**Needs:** We need the opportunity to meet once a year. In addition, online meetings can also be organised if necessary.

Current challenges: The constructive support of the new bishop in his tasks.

**Services for the Central Conference:** Supporting the bishop and his family through guidance and counselling. Helping to create an appreciative climate in the various Annual Conferences. If necessary, mediation between the bishop and the annual conferences. Before episcopal elections or re-election: Preparation and updating of the necessary documents. Support for retired bishops. Select a gift on behalf of the Executive Committee or the Central Conference and present it to the bishop with gratitude.

### **3. To prepare the meeting and conversation with the bishop**

#### **4. The conversation with the bishop**

The conversation with Bishop Stefan was characterized by mutual appreciation and made it clear in a positive way that the entry into ministry and tasks was successful.

*Jörg Niederer*

*Wien, 14. März 2024*

# Judicial Court of the CC CSE

## 1. Composition

According to Para. 12(1) of the "Rules of Order of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe - CC CSE", the Judicial Court is composed of five members and four reserve persons. At present, there are two vacancies at the level of the reserve persons.

## 2. Activities

According to the "Rules of Order of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe - CC CSE", the Judicial Court has the following tasks:

- a) According to Para. 12(4), the Judicial Court "shall make all judicial decisions in accordance with the constitution, excluding the jurisdiction of the Judicial Court of the General Conference." This concerns legal questions that arise in the application of the rules and by-laws as well as in the application changes made thereto by the Central Conference.

In the reporting period, the Judicial Court has not been applied to.

- b) According to Para. 12(5), the Central Conference shall be entitled to assign further tasks to the Judicial Court.

In the reporting period, no such tasks have been assigned to the Judicial Court.

## 3. Current situation, needs and challenges

The Executive Committee has instructed the working groups to describe their current situation, formulate their needs and current challenges and describe what contribution they can make to the Central Conference for the attention of the Executive Committee meeting in March 2024.

### *Response:*

a) In accordance with its legal basis, the Judicial Council working group will take action when it is formally called upon. This has happened very rarely in recent years. Legal disputes should not be wished for; in this respect, it cannot be the aim of the working group to have to become increasingly active.

b) In recent years, the Bishops' Office in particular has occasionally approached the chairperson of the Judicial Council with informal questions (e.g. in connection with the election of bishops, which the chairperson then also attended). Such inquiries are still possible. Where appropriate, they can also be submitted to the entire Judicial Council.

*Zurich, February 5, 2024*

*Prof. Dr. Christa Tobler, LL.M. (President of the Judicial Court CC CSE)*

## European Methodist Council, Oslo, Norway

This year's in-person meeting of the European Methodist Council (EMC) was held in Oslo, Norway, and focused on reflecting on the gifts that Methodist / Wesleyan / Uniting Churches in Europe bring and the roles and opportunities that exist as part of the calling. The council members therefore spent the majority of their time together in conferencing, conversation and prayer better to understand the uniqueness of Methodism in Europe.

EMC is still committed to support church projects financially all across Europe, from Portugal to Russia through the FMiE. 223,000 Euros were distributed, also a great amount of this money will support various projects in our Central Conference (CC of CSE).

The council's new support officer, Stefanie Gabuyo, reported on a World Methodist Council (WMC) consultation on migration she had attended on behalf of the council. She spoke about how half of migrants are women and gave examples of women who had migrated to Arab countries and been exploited there and North Korean women who had gone to China. Delegates from the Pacific had also shared stories at the consultation about migration caused by climate change.

Key-points from our discussions:

- Being connected (connexio) is a gift, it is in methodist DNA, EMC helps us to live it out, but it does not come automatically. Isolation and non-connection is tragic. Disconnection is a sign of no trust any more. A question to ponder: „Is my christianity stronger than my passport?“
- We have discussed methodist heritage and the characteristics of a methodist church in Europe today. The „Catholic Spirit“ should be alive among us which can be applied in every aspects: interfaith and ecumenical discussions, but also inside our own denomination.
- Christian conferencing is a means of grace

EMC members have been asked: „What is the significant experience, insight, learning, gift you are bringing from your context into the EMC?“ We shared ideas in different groups:

1. *“Fresh Expressions of Church — New Church Starts”* from across Europe and various views emerged, including that lay people need to be free to pioneer, ordained pastors can be reluctant to let go, existing structures can be difficult, building relationships takes time and new starts based on worship and church activity do not usually last but those based on small group communities can be sustainable long term.
2. *Social Justice and Advocacy*: It was observed that to be an advocate of the poor and weak has been part of Methodists' DNA since Wesley's time. It was pointed out that “it is easier to sing a song or pray a prayer than speak to a situation” but that, in addition, people tend to talk about the Church's prophetic voice. “What would be the Church's prophetic actions?”
3. *Leadership Development and Theology*: members shared about their experiences in their contexts, including how, when theologies differed, intentionally building trust and relationships was so important.
4. *Diaconal Ministry*: A variety of stories of challenges and opportunities were shared. Flexibility and the importance of partnerships were stressed as important factors.

5. *Church Development*: How a review of Church structures can facilitate mission was highlighted and also the importance of pastoral support for those in leadership.

I was thankful and inspired to see such colorful and diverse yet still connected methodists. Looking forward to our next EMC Autumn Meeting: 4th – 7th Oct 2024 Lisburn, UK, and hope for more representatives from the CC CSE.

*Lilla Kardosné Lakatos (Hungary UMC)*

## Commission on theological education in Central Conferences (CCTEF)

The Commission met from 19-22 February 2024 in Johannesburg, South Africa. After the annual meetings had been held online in previous years, the wish was to meet in person one last time in this extra-long "quadrennium" (2017-2024). I myself was only connected online. In the following, I will limit my comments to the meeting of 2024. I can provide a summary of the entire prolonged quadrennium (2017-2024) at the next regular Central Conference.

As apportionments in the USA have been declining since 2019, the money for this fund has also decreased. However, the feared massive slump did not occur last year after around 20-25% of local churches and members in the USA left the UMC. But over the years since 2019, there has been a decline of around 25%!

The contributions for 2023 enabled to support projects totalling \$ 1.5 million for 2024. As in previous years, each episcopal area in Europe has an amount of around \$ 50,000 for projects from its own area. The Commission is invited to contribute 10% of the project funds to the Endowment Fund for Theological Education in Central Conferences in order to build up long-term support.

Only a few CC CSE countries have submitted applications for 2023 and again for 2024. This may also be due to the fact that many CC CSE countries have few or no candidates for pastoral ministries. The following disbursement are planned for 2024 (subject to written confirmation by GBHEM):

Poland	4,500
Hungary	24,000
Endowment fund	21,500

It will also be important to note for future years that support for theological education in the CC CSE will be channelled exclusively through CCTEF and no longer through Connexio or other sources that the Bishop's Office would arrange. Submission of projects for 2025 will be possible from around November 2024. Superintendents will receive a reminder email from the bishop's office.

We heard at the end of the meeting that the level of planned apportionments in the new quadrennium will only be around half the current amount, i.e. will fall back to the level it was in the quadrennium 2013-2016.

*Bishop Patrick Streiff*

# General Board of Global Ministries 2022-2023

## Missional Priorities

Since its founding in 1819, Global Ministries' key goals for mission have remained steadfastly consistent:

- Make disciples of Jesus Christ;
- Strengthen, develop, and renew Christian congregations and communities;
- Alleviate human suffering;
- Seek justice, freedom, and peace.

These goals are informed and guided by the agency's theology of mission: "The church exists to engage in God's mission of bestowing grace, love, justice, holiness, healing, and reconciliation through Jesus Christ. Called to servanthood, Global Ministries joins in partnership with people of all ages, races, genders, cultures, languages, and nationalities to listen for God's voice and bear witness to God's activity in the world. Together, we await the Spirit leading us in mission in new ways."

Complementing the agency's historical mission goals, the board of directors of Global Ministries in October 2022 affirmed an updated Strategic Plan, for the period 2022-2024, in which four missional priorities were named and within which the agency has organized its mission programs:

- Missionaries
- Evangelism and Church Revitalization
- Global Health
- Humanitarian Relief and Recovery

## Vision for Global Ministries

From the strategic plan: Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church aspires to be the partner of choice for conferences, congregations and others worldwide who wish to participate in God's mission. The vision depends on Global Ministries' accessibility, adaptability, and cultural versatility; faith and trust of its constituents; rigor, integrity and transparency of its financial stewardship; diverse technical expertise of its global staff; and collaboration with others in the same mission fields.

## Achievements 2022-2023

Since the postponed General Conference of 2020, The United Methodist Church at all levels has been working to map its future. During this time, Global Ministries has remained steadfast in its commitment to mission. Even in this time of introspection about the church, Global Ministries not only has envisioned a strong future in mission for the church but also has actively prepared for this future.

For example, Global Ministries has invested focused efforts to strengthen connection to and relationship with churches and conferences across the denomination. To help advance this work, in 2023, the agency created a Mission Engagement Unit. Its formation

marks a significant achievement, as well as a promising challenge. The Unit is charged with supporting the agency's connection to the church at all levels. Global Ministries has always been guided by a commitment to "connecting the church in mission," but this commitment will be more fully realized by the work of the Mission Engagement Unit. It will help ensure and strengthen how the agency remains visible and proactive within The United Methodist Church and across Pan-Methodist, ecumenical, and other global partners.

## **Overview of Missional Priorities, 2022-2023**

### **Missionaries**

Training, commissioning, assigning, and supporting missionaries around the world remain at the heart of Global Ministries' mission, alongside training and connecting volunteers to serve in mission.

As previously reported, almost all activities related to missionaries, including commissioning new missionaries, were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in the period 2022-2023 the agency renewed its work commissioning new missionaries, including young adult Global Mission Fellows. In 2022 and 2023, mission personnel who were onboarded during the COVID-19 pandemic were commissioned in various places globally such as in Cambodia and Mozambique. A previous sharp drop in Global Mission Fellow applicants, driven by the pandemic, seemed to turn around in 2023. GMF applications totaled 121 in 2022 but had increased to 235 in 2023. Altogether, Global Ministries has 350 missionaries serving in places of assignment in 65 countries globally.

Of special importance for the future of missionary service and recognizing a rapidly changing church and world, Global Ministries hosted in 2023 a world gathering at Candler School of Theology, with a focus on Guiding Principles of Missionary Service. Incorporating input from missionaries across the globe, this was the first such reassessment of United Methodist missionary principles in eleven years.

### **Evangelism and Church Revitalization**

Founding and nurturing new faith communities and supporting existing congregations, which seek to increase membership and expand ministries into local communities, continue to be important foci for Global Ministries. This work, part of the agency's mission since its founding, incorporates personal, local church, connectional, and ecumenical expressions of faith. Partnership is a key concept.

Acknowledging the importance of partnership—especially listening—the agency held mission consultations with various regional partners. These listening sessions produced goals for expanding joint mission activities and programs. For example, in 2022, Global Ministries hosted a mission consultation with the Korean Methodist Church (KMC), followed in 2023 by a consultation in Seoul hosted by the KMC. (The 2023 consultation was held in conjunction with a meeting of the Roundtable for Peace on the Korean Peninsula, with leadership from the KMC, UMC, and the World Methodist Council.) Global

Ministries and the KMC jointly committed to exploring expanded mission cooperation in Vietnam and Mongolia, especially leadership development and training; engaging young adults in missionary service; and further promoting peace on the Korean Peninsula and globally.

An Africa Mission Partners Consultation was held in 2023 in Maputo, Mozambique. Topics included evangelism, health, agriculture, humanitarian relief, and missionary service. Representatives from Africa underscored the importance of developing new and stronger partnerships that can recognize and utilize African assets, build capacity, and develop leadership within African conferences.

Later in 2023, further affecting the future of mission in Africa, Global Ministries announced the reestablishment of formal relations with the East Africa Episcopal Area, after more than a decade-long pause resulting from auditing issues. The announcement was followed by an East Africa Mission Consultation in Nairobi, Kenya, in January 2024. Training, capacity development, infrastructure, missionary placements, and disaster assistance, were named as urgent needs by conference leadership. Agriculture and global health support were also named as vital for the church.

Also in 2023, Global Ministries hosted a consultation in Atlanta with US mission partners. The Atlanta consultation focused on discerning ways to reimagine, reinvent, and reignite mission in the US.

## **Global Health**

John Wesley was a strong proponent of the church's attention to health. In the 19th Century, Methodist missionaries increasingly attended to health care, especially in underserved communities.

In 2022-2023, through partnerships primarily with United Methodist health boards in sub-Saharan Africa, Global Ministries' Global Health Unit worked to further strengthen the denomination's health networks at facility and community levels through grants, accompaniment, and capacity building. The principal beneficiaries continued to be the most vulnerable populations, including mothers, newborns, and children who often live farthest away from services. [Funds granted by Global Ministries aided beneficiaries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the US and its territories.](#)

Each of the Global Health Unit's programs reported substantive impact resulting from their work. The Health Systems Strengthening program funded the ongoing renovation of facilities and the procurement of equipment, furniture, and medications not already provided by government and other partners. Consequently, more facilities added wells and latrines, and, in partnership with Global Ministries' Environmental Sustainability program, more facilities added crucial solar power.

The Imagine No Malaria program continued to work toward reducing the incidence of malaria in sub-Saharan Africa, which accounts for more than 90% of cases worldwide. This work is a longstanding United Methodist commitment. The Water, Sanitation and Hygiene program worked toward community access to clean water and toilets through grant and capacity building. The Maternal, Newborn and Child Health program supported prenatal, obstetric, and postnatal care for mothers and primary health care for



children until the age of five. This health work focused on UMC health facilities experiencing high morbidity and mortality rates because of isolation, poverty and limited services.

Recognizing the value of in-person collaboration, Global Health Unit team members began visiting partners again in 2022-2023, since the COVID-19 pandemic by then was subsiding in many global regions. Site visits to the DRC, Burundi, Sierra Leone, and Mozambique emphasized the importance of listening, understanding context, the value of face-to-face dialogue, and mutuality in mission.

### **Humanitarian Relief and Recovery**

In the area of Humanitarian Relief and Recovery, Global Ministries provides support for disaster response for affected communities, from immediate relief through recovery stages, via the agency's non-sectarian United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). Working with United Methodist, Methodist/Wesleyan, faith-based, and NGO partners, UMCOR focuses on reducing the severity and intensity of harm to communities caused by storms, flooding, fires, civil unrest, and other events.

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, UMCOR and the agency's program for Global Migration have provided services to the displaced and suffering inside the country and in adjoining countries. More recently, since October 2023, in response to war in Israel and Gaza, UMCOR has awarded emergency grants to local partners who are using the funds for relocation support, food, and hygiene kits for internally displaced people, psychosocial treatment and trauma counseling to women and children, and telemedicine services for disabled children with safe access to a clinic.

In 2022-2023, UMCOR also responded to:

- Earthquake in Afghanistan (2023)
- Flooding in Libya (2023)
- Earthquake in Morocco (2023)
- Flooding in Haiti (2023)
- Super Typhoon Mawar in Guam (2023)
- Cyclone Mocha in Myanmar and Bangladesh (2023)
- Flooding in Congo (2023)
- Conflict in Sudan and South Sudan (2023)
- Tornado in Côte d'Ivoire (2023)
- Earthquakes in Turkey and Syria (2023)
- Cyclone Freddy in southeastern Africa (2023)
- Tropical Storm Nalgae in the Philippines (2022)
- Super Typhoon Noru/Karding in the Philippines (2022)
- Flooding in Pakistan (2022)
- Earthquake in the Philippines (2022)
- Earthquake in Afghanistan (2022)
- War in Ukraine (2022)
- Tsunami in Tonga (2022)

Among other programs, a key milestone was reached in the fall of 2022 when the Yambasu Agriculture Initiative (YAI) held a major regional training event at the Songhai Center in Benin for representative farmers and church leaders conducting YAI projects. Many participants immediately began to make changes in their agriculture practices

once they returned home. The fruits of this training continue to grow. To support the Yambasu Agriculture Initiative, Global Ministries has added Regional Missionaries to the YAI team and has placed new agricultural missionaries in Africa.

## Challenges

In 2024 and beyond, despite how the recent UMC disaffiliations have produced forecasts of significant budget reductions in the next Quadrennium, Global Ministries will seek to grow its mission impact.

For its missional priority focused on Missionaries, Global Ministries will seek to sustain with strength its many missionaries and Global Mission Fellows. With commitment to missionaries "from everywhere to everywhere," Global Ministries will renew efforts to overcome visa challenges where they are impeding missionary placement and travel. The agency also anticipates increasing peace and justice ministries globally and in the US and will broaden its missional attention to climate and the environment. Additionally, the agency plans to further strengthen its Mission Engagement Unit, making it even more proactive with the Church and its partners, including ecumenical partners.

Among other efforts, Global Ministries will:

- Review the Guiding Principles for Missionary Service, responding to input received in the 2023 gathering at Candler School of Theology, with an aim of enhancing the effectiveness of this critical function of Global Ministries within the overall life of The United Methodist Church;
- Follow up on all the key conversations from the mission consultations held in Maputo, Nairobi, Seoul, and Atlanta;
- Implement strategic plans for the agency's six Mission Initiatives, incorporating voices of local leadership, alongside the bishops overseeing the Initiatives and the annual conferences that support them;
- Incorporate within Global Health, especially with partners in Africa, the findings specific to health programming gleaned from the 2023 Africa Mission Consultation, as well as health evaluations completed in 2023;
- Expand the Yambasu Agriculture Initiative as it promotes agriculture and agribusiness, as well as evangelism, in support of Africa's UMC of tomorrow; and
- Strengthen the Global Migration program by adding Regional Migration Specialists and expanding support for local churches and their migration ministries.

Global Ministries and all United Methodists will achieve their mission goals if, in the words of the Book of Hebrews, we "hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for God who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds." (Hebrews 10:23-24 NIV).

*February 2024*  
*Andreas Staempfli*

## The Methodist Conference in Britain (Juni 22-29, 2023)

A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down – sings Mary Poppins in the musical version when the kids don't feel like they are ready for tidying up in their rooms. Mary Poppins offers them a funny and easy way to do it. Well, British Methodists did a bit something similar as they have added that „sweet taste“ to our time spent together during the conference in Birmingham (22 to 29 June 2023). Not just because they have offered delicious sweet desserts during meals but in all kind of small actions, and by providing a wonderful and rich program between and beside the usual business. They have showed us, that even a financial report can be presented with gentle humour, in a way that you appreciate the work behind such a report, and also enjoy listening to it. I want to say, if you think that British people doesn't have a good sense of humor, you need to meet some of my Methodist sisters and brothers, and you will change your mind. „How is conference for you?“ – I have been asked many times. I have to say: The conference was inspiring, very disciplined, solemn, full of lively worship and thoughtful moments. A time for decision making and fellowship. It couldn't be more Methodist, maybe if we have had it outside in open-air. I have really enjoyed the fact that everyone who wants to speak is allowed to speak, and first-time speakers are even more welcome. This shows me that the Conference is open for dialogue, discussion, and new ideas. This is one of the most important things I have learned and want to emphasize: **engage yourself in conversation**. If you stay in conversation with the ones like-minded, is good. But if you remain open for different people and different opinions, well, you will have space for growth.

The Bible verse for the next year in the Methodist Church in Britain: Isaiah 45.3 (NRSVA) "I will give you the treasures of darkness and riches hidden in secret places, so that you may know that it is I, the LORD, the God of Israel, who call you by your name."

We have been reminded both by the new President, the Revd Gill Newton, and the Vice-President, Deacon Kerry Scarlett that there are many hidden treasures around us, in us and within us. God hides treasures not *from* us but *for* us. Kerry said in her opening address: „We need, as the Methodist Church in Britain, to rediscover our treasures, both old and new. (...) We need to find out the glimmers of where God is, in the unexpected people and places where transformation is taking place.“ Yes, because the prophecy says: „treasures in darkness“. It might sound strange, but it is a great message that has been unfolded during the whole conference by many.

### Preconference

All overseas guests are invited to participate at a so-called Preconference before we meet the big group. We have walked in the footsteps of Mr. Wesley. The Wesley Chapel in City Road, London turned out to be a perfect place to discover old and new treasures of Methodist heritage.

It has been a real privilege and a great opportunity to meet church leaders, ministers, lay-missionaries from the Caribbean and the Americas, from Venezuela, Argentina, Hong Kong, Ghana, but also Indonesia and New-Zealand, just to mention those countries far far away. The Global Relationships team had the courage to ask the question: „How should the MCB fruitfully listen to our global partners, challenge injustice, and not repeat colonial attitudes in our actions?“ In response global representatives suggested to be a prophetic voice in our own countries, do not be afraid to criticise our own countries' government, if needed. Important is not just speaking about justice in church, but we need to live it out, embrace it wholeheartedly. Some responded: act together globally as Methodist fellow sisters and brothers. Church is intercultural, but it is a

challenge to do good to each other, without hurting each other. The methodist movement is still alive, we were invited to listen to its heartbeats worldwide.

## Justice seeking church

The *Walking with Micah* project (referring to Micah 6,8) has been a core-project for the whole church and will move forward under the above mentioned motto. Don't think it is just a motto, but know that the members of the church are really committed to seek justice. Not just in the church but also outside the walls. The ADAVU project has received our donations during Opening Service. Deacon Kerry Scarlett, from now on Vice-President of The Methodist Church in Britain, was co-founder of Adavu. Adavu means first step. It is a safe place for women and men, who have been victims of modern slavery. Learn more about it here: <https://www.adavu.org.uk/>

How you put in action those key-values of early methodism? The british church has several methods for it. Very creative methods. One of these is a small booklet we were given, that looks like a map for London underground. Conference members were invited to go through a small game to find out their own way as if they were traveled the underground. Each station on the way represents a different spiritual practice we might do. A different way we can encounter God. The program is called **a Methodist Way of Life**.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQ2SHyS9nCM&t=4s>

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/a-methodist-way-of-life/a-methodist-way-of-life-resources/>

## EDI

It is simply another method for methodists to engage as a justice seeking church. Equality, Diversity, Inclusivity. They all sound good, but this is sometimes like walking on water. You feel insecure, you doubt, you loose control. But in the same time, this is a great journey toward others and toward a more peaceful world. The EDI training program is an invitation the go deeper and discover the gifts of being rooted in Christ and being connected to all, as we have been reminded of this many times. The people called methodists are committed, yet struggling with true inclusivity. The meaningful part is the commitment, and that is clear. Those who dare the journey, report that it is worthwhile. There is an invitation for extending our hearts and minds.

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/the-inclusive-methodist-church/training-for-justice-dignity-and-solidarity/edi-toolkit-equality-diversity-and-inclusion/>

Of course, not just methods, but there are transformed people standing firm, and rooted in God's love. Throughout the conference we have heard many moving testimonies of people being faithful to the call. Many are serving among farmers, some work in rural areas or among children and youth on the street. This is the very well-known christian aid: **Action for Children**, which has always been supported by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. She was patron for nearly 50 years. In recognition of its commitment to developing young people across the organisation, Action for Children in Scotland has been awarded the Investing in Young People (IIYP) Platinum Award, the highest accreditation level available to an organisation in Scotland. Even a young man, who has been a beneficent of the AFC has traveled to Birmingham to speak to the Conference and share his testimony.

## **Fringe events**

Wonderful side-events have been offered to the conference members to ponder, to reflect and to learn from those on the margins or in hidden places. One of the most valuable input in my view was shared by Rabbi Nava Hefetz (Educational Director, Rabbis for Human Rights) under the title: Human Rights in the light of Jewish Tradition. Rabbi Nava is a most remarkable ambassador of peace, let's say the right word: "a woman of shalom". She is truly committed to work for reconciliation and justice from a point of view which is: Do all the good you can, to all the people you can. And these people may be not your race or tribe. What an important voice in the midst of divisions, disaffiliations and growing violence! She has very surprisingly said that standing in Jewish tradition the expression "holy land" does not apply correctly. Holy is the human being, as image of God, and time is holy, so therefore shabbat is a precious way to be connected to God. But the land belongs to God, and we shall not call it holy. She urged us (and those involved in war and conflict) to learn from Abraham, how he had dealt with lands with Lot in the Old Testament - not in a violent way, but with generosity, acceptance and peace. For some these may be astonishing words, but she said, we need to work together: Israelis and Palestinians, yes, together. Respect each other as images of God.

Other interesting fringe events were from Global Relationships team, where Kristi Wilson Sinurat (Bishop from the Indonesian Methodist Church, Medan, North Sumatra) and myself have been interviewed. There was the very interesting lecture of Paula Gooder about the hidden women figures in the Bible. And I would love to tell you that the thoughts of Nick Mayhew-Smith were also like a fresh air in a room. He is a dedicated spiritual seeker, travel writer, pilgrim. He pointed out that it is worth to discover some secret and holy places in Great-Britain and to reconnect to our original tradition of outdoor preaching. He encouraged us to return to our roots through saints like St. Columban or Francis of Assisi who were not disconnected from nature and the earth, as we are nowadays.

## **Prophetic voice**

How can we be a justice seeking church? What hinders us to do it? The prophets are always people who say uncomfortable and challenging things. Is the Methodist church or any other church ready to be a prophetic voice in Europe and the whole world?

*Lilla Kardosné Lakatos*



Delegates from Sheffield District with President Gill Newton and Lilla



Fringe event GR interviews Lilla, Bishop Kristi Wilson Sinurat with Andy Dye



Wesley's Chapel Preconference, London

## **Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters (StCCCM)**

The pandemic and the postponements of General Conference almost brought the work of the Standing Committee for Central Conference Matters (StCCCM) to a temporary standstill. Once it was decided that General Conference would meet in 2024, the work got back on track.

The Executive Committee met in Zurich in October 2022 and held a Zoom meeting with the entire committee from there. In February 2024, the members of the committee also met, this time in Germany (Braunfels).

### **Regionalization of the church**

The topic that has taken up the most space recently has been regionalization. Various groups already submitted proposals on this topic for GC 2020. The StCCCM supports the idea and has therefore sought cooperation with the authors of the most important regionalization proposals, i.e. the Connectional Table and the "Christmas Covenant" team.

This collaboration resulted in a proposal called "Worldwide Regionalization". It contains the essential elements of the Christmas Covenant, including the proposal to make the USA a regional conference. This change originally came from the Connectional Table, the authors of the Christmas Covenant had already integrated it into their text.

"Worldwide Regionalization" defines the rights of the regions (currently central conferences and "Jurisdictional Conferences" in the US), but also specifies which parts of the Book of Discipline remain valid for all and may only be changed by General Conference. It is a proposal that is intended to transform the current US-centric structure into an organizational form appropriate to a worldwide church, while at the same time preserving unity in the essentials of Methodist theology and identity.

What would change for us as a Central Conference apart from the name?

- The proposed texts define very clearly what the regional conferences may change or decide themselves. The current legislation on the right to adapt by Central Conferences is quite vague and has therefore repeatedly been disputed.
- If the proposal is accepted, future General Conferences will be lighter and nimbler, as issues that only affect the church in the US will no longer be dealt with at General conference. This should provide space to discuss issues that affect everyone.

A reminder: As "Worldwide Regionalization" involves changes in the constitution, the proposal requires a two-thirds majority at General Conference and also in the subsequent votes in the Annual Conferences.

### **Review of previous proposals**

In addition to this major topic, the StCCCM had to take another look at its proposals submitted for 2020. After everything that has happened since then, not all proposals are still relevant or appropriate.

Among other things, the "Africa Task Force", a working group of the StCCCM, has once again addressed the issue of new bishops in Africa. Following the many disaffiliations from the UMC, particularly in the US, the UMC as a whole has much less money at its disposal. In the US, the number of bishops is falling sharply. The working group's new proposal, which the StCCCM still has to approve, is therefore as follows: Although the need for five additional bishops is undisputed, two new bishops are to be appointed in Africa in 2024. Subsequent GCs should then decide whether and at what rate the increase decided by the 2016 GC can be implemented. The request to postpone further decisions also has to do with the fact that it is currently completely open whether and to what extent there will also be disaffiliations from the UMC in Africa.

### **Disaffiliation of the Eurasia region**

After the Annual Conferences of the Eurasia Region decided to leave the UMC, it was up to the StCCCM to accompany the process as defined in the Book of Discipline (§ 572). Members of the StCCCM (including Bishop Patrick Streiff and Christine Schneider) worked with Bishop Khegay in particular on drafting the documents to be submitted to the General Conference. The StCCCM requests General Conference to approve the disaffiliation of Eurasia.

### **Membership in the StCCCM from our Central Conference**

- Bishop Patrick Streiff
- Bishop Stefan Zürcher
- Stefan Schröckenfuchs, replacing Petr Prochazka\*
- Christine Schneider

*\* After the JK Czech Republic decided to leave the UMC in 2023, Petr Prochazka resigned from the StCCCM. Stefan Schröckenfuchs replaces him until the end of the current term of office, i.e. up to the end of General Conference 2024.*

*Christine Schneider  
March 2024*



# V. Minutes

## of the 81<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Executive Committee of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

Unauthorized translation – Original in German

### Minutes Executive Committee Thursday, July 4, 2024

Thursday, July 4, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

**Online meeting**

*Bishop Stefan* welcomes those present. It's great that so many people were able to make today's appointment. Thank you very much for that. I have planned to close the meeting at 9.00 pm.

The following people are taking part in today's online meeting:

as members with voting rights:

**Bishop**

Presiding Bishop	Bishop	Stefan Zürcher	present
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**Office**

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

**Executive Committee**

Serbia-North Macedonia-Albania	Sup.	Daniel Sjanta	present
	Layperson	Emil Zaev	present
Austria	Sup.	Stefan Schröckenfuchs	present
	Layperson	Ben 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	excused
	Layperson	Martina Chlupáčková	present
Hungary-Rumania	Sup.	László Khaled	present
	Layperson	Dávid Csernák	excused
<b>Chair WG Episcopacy</b>	Pastor	Jörg Niederer	present

as advisory members:

<b>Retired bishops</b>	Bishop	Patrick Streiff	present
	Bishop	Heinrich Bolleter	excused

### **Additional superintendents**

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

### **Chairpersons of the Working Groups**

WG Theology and Ord. Ministries	Pastor	Zoltán Kovács	excused
WG Liturgy	Pastor	Erika Stalcup	present
WG Discipline and Legal Affairs	Sup.	Wilfried Nausner	present
WG Children and Youth	Layperson	Ivana Pastor	present
WG Church and Society	Pastor	Marietjie Odendaal	excused
WG Women's Service	Pastor	Monika Zuber	present
Coordinator	Layperson	Barbara Büniger	excused

### are present as guests:

Members of the General Conference		Bence Vigh	present
	Pastor	Petr Procházka	present
	Layperson	Thomas Fux	present
		Lenka Procházková	excused
	Pastor	Vladimir Fazekaš	excused
Assistant to the Bishop		Urs Schweizer	present
Responsible Finances+Admin.		André Töngi	present

**Total attendance: 27**

*Bishop Stefan* begins with thoughts on the Herrnhut Watchwords for today. They come from Psalm 41:2: "Blessed is he who takes care of the weak! The Lord will deliver him in the time of evil" and from Hebrews 13:16: "Do good and share with others; for such sacrifices please God." He emphasizes that God has placed a special focus on the weak and that we should therefore do the same. This is a strong sign. By looking out for the weak, the kingdom of God begins. This can be experienced in many ways.

*Bishop Stefan* says a prayer.

*Bishop Stefan:* Urs Schweizer has sent us a short agenda. We will first discuss the effects of the resolutions of the last General Conference in the various countries, and at the end we will share some more information with you.

### **Country reports on the impact of the resolutions of the last General Conference**

*Bishop Stefan:* Please share with us your experiences since the last General Conference. Are there particular joys and sorrows, hopeful and stressful experiences? Are there certain developments in the UMC and beyond that have been caused by this? Have you taken concrete measures? We will go through our countries alphabetically.

*Albania* does not have much to report. They had already decided to stay in the UMC beforehand. There are no big discussions about homosexuality, even if there are questions about how to deal with different attitudes and opinions.

*Austria*: There were no major discussions about the results of the General Conference. They were more interested in the mood at the General Conference. The members of the church were happy that this year was different than before. It is important that we look more for our church in Europe. We don't carry much weight with our votes at the General Conference. But it is important that we also reach out to each other within Europe (and not just within the UMC) and talk to each other. We need to strengthen this network.

*Czech Republic*: We are on the way to separating from the UMC. We expected the decisions of the General Conference and therefore accept them. There was no reason to change our position as a result.

*France*: There have been no major discussions since the Annual Conference. We have two congregations in Paris that are mainly made up of people from Côte d'Ivoire. After the UMC in this country decided to leave the UMC, this caused uncertainty in the two congregations. They did not know what this meant for them. We reminded them that they are part of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe and that there will therefore be no automatic exclusion. The other congregations in France that have remained with us have signed a paper stating that they want to remain with the UMC as traditional congregations.

*Hungary*: We were unable to submit a report on the General Conference to the Annual Conference because the latter did not take place until later. However, we had a pastors' meeting later, and during this meeting the Hungarian pastors formulated a statement. I will not read it out. It contains the regret that the General Conference decided this way. We regret that the decisions lead to divisions. At the end of the statement, we call for our biblical understanding to be made clear to our members and the people. We will continue to remain in the UMC on the basis of the 2016 discipline.

*North Macedonia*: The members of our churches were confused. They had hoped that the General Conference would make a more positive decision for us. The question of how we can work together with homosexual people has not been clarified for us.

*Poland*: We are glad we had the Round Table, as a result of which we can go our own way as a traditional church within the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe. We concluded the Annual Conference last Sunday. You know that the majority of us support the traditional way, but we respect all others and our doors are open to all. We want to continue on this common path of mutual respect.

*Romania*: The response in Romania to the General Conference was not great. We are traditional and saying that is enough for us. We are not forced to make a decision. There were reactions in certain online forums, but they didn't bother us much. There is a pastor who has switched to the Global Methodist Church and moved to America.

*Serbia*: Not surprisingly, we have had various meetings since the General Conference ended. The broad opinion is that we are disappointed with what was decided at the General

Conference. We have not yet issued a statement, but we intend to do so. So far there is nothing official. Should we do something, we will confirm the traditional way.

*Switzerland:* The decisions of the General Conference are in line with what we decided two years ago in our Annual Conference with the Kaleidoscope. This was reported in the media. While state television carried a balanced report and also the bishop's opinion, some social media communicated one-sidedly negatively and we were labeled a progressive church.

*Bishop Stefan:* I have heard that various churches adopted a statement last year or this year. It is hopefully helpful that such statements have been formulated. I have also heard that the decisions of the General Conference led to disappointment, but also that there was joy. These decisions were picked up in various media and interpreted in different ways.

*Wilfried Nausner:* It is a social problem and not simply a church problem. It is important that we know about it. A homosexual wedding was performed in Albania. It was widely reported in the media and a connection was made with the UMC in Albania because of the British pastor. It was therefore claimed in society that these were Albanian Methodists, and the topic was featured on all the talk shows for two weeks. All our pastors were also invited to comment on this. We then said that this is not our church. That makes it clear that it is a social problem and not a church problem.

*Bishop Stefan:* What is helpful for your situation? How can I, or how can we as a church, help and support you? Is there a need for this?

*Marjan Dimov:* It would be helpful if the bishop came to North Macedonia. That would give him greater authority. It would also be good if talks could be sought with other churches.

*Lea Hafner:* The decisions have now been made. I would advise that we leave this issue behind us and move on to other more important topics. We do not want to and must not put pressure on anyone. That's why I think we should now simply move forward.

*Monika Zuber:* I agree with Marjan that we need helpful discussions. But it's difficult because traditional people aren't really open to different opinions. It could be helpful if someone from outside could come in and guide us peacefully and helpfully. Our statements are very emotional. It's very tiring to always hear how bad we are. For me, it would be helpful if someone came from outside who was able to help us deal with different opinions.

*Stefan Schröckenfuchs:* In the last two meetings of the Executive Committee, I was of the opinion that we could finally talk about other things. After the General Conference decisions, we are back to the old conflict. I very much hope that we can turn our attention to other issues again as soon as possible. We have so many other important issues such as Ukraine, climate change and selfishness. We can only offer solutions if we work together. As a church, we have one faith, and on that basis we can love each other, even if we disagree. God is at the center, and our fellow human being is just as important as I am. We should leave this issue behind us, it affects so few in our church. We are needed in other places.

*Jörg Niederer:* In the German-speaking regions, we are interested in returning to normal operations. However, it is important that the traditional countries are also given time to

address their new situation and come to terms with it. It is also important in the Central Conference that all opinions have their place and their time.

*Bishop Stefan:* I hear that discussions could be helpful in various places. And it also seems important to me to give ourselves time to talk about these issues.

*Daniel Sjanta:* We will be able to discuss this in the South Cabinet in September.

*Bishop Stefan:* Contact me if you think it would be helpful if I came to you. I will do what I can.

*Bishop Stefan:* It is important that we, as responsible persons in the countries, provide correct information about what exactly was decided at the General Conference. It will also be important to provide information about what happens next. I have also sent you the documents for this purpose. At the level of the Central Conference, the Church Order Working Group will draw up a proposal on how the Church Order should be adapted based on the decisions made in 2022. We will also join forces with the Central Conference Germany so that we have as much in common as possible in the Church Order. At our meeting in September 2024, we will then have a timetable in front of us for the next steps. Wilfried Nausner is ready to do this.

There are many decisions by the General Conference that do not affect us. On the other hand, we still have to wait for the final ratification of the decisions regarding regionalization. I assume that there will initially only be very few changes for us in the Church Order.

*Wilfried Nausner:* The changes to the Church Order also include the new Social Principles. We will translate these together with the Central Conference Germany. I have listened carefully to what Monika and Marjan have said. There needs to be a discussion about what the General Conference decisions mean for us as a Central Conference. There are many misinterpretations. We need to explain again and again what we have really decided.

## **Information's**

*Bishop's Office*

### **Meeting of the Executive Committee from September 27-28, 2024 in Budapest**

*Urs Schweizer:* You have heard that the meeting will take place in Budapest (Hungary) from September 27-28, 2024. Before that, the Southern Cabinet will meet. As the Executive Committee, we will start at midday and finish at midday. It will be important that we can attend in full the whole time. Please keep this in mind when booking your trip. You will receive the invitation and further information in August this year. The meeting will take place at the Lions Garden Hotel, as before.

### **Election of Jean-Paul Dietrich as a member of the Board of Directors of GBGM**

*Bishop Stefan:* Andreas Stämpfli's term of office as a member of the Board of Directors of the General Board of Global Ministries expires this year. As the office of the Central Conference, we are proposing Jean-Paul Dietrich as a new member. He is a member of the Connexio Board.

**Decision: The Executive Committee unanimously elects Jean-Paul Dietrich as a member of the Board of Directors of the General Board of Global Ministries.**

### **Elections at the 2025 Central Conference meeting**

*Markus Bach:* At the Central Conference meeting from March 13 to 16, 2025, we will hold the elections for the 2025-2029 term of office. I will write to all current office holders by email in the summer and ask whether they are willing to continue in office for the new term. At the meeting in September 2024, we will then see which gaps still need to be filled. I would be grateful if you could motivate your people to respond quickly.

*Bishop Stefan:* We already have one vacancy: Cedric Zangger was elected as co-head of the children and youth working group in March. He has since stepped down because he has resigned from his work in the church. We very much regret this. In the Central Services in Zurich, we are now looking to find a successor for him. I am grateful to Ivana Pastor for being able to join us today. If you need help, please contact Urs Schweizer.

*Bishop Stefan* closes the online session at 8.30 pm with a prayer by László Khaled.

*For the minutes:*

*Markus Bach, Secretary ZK MSE*

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The present minutes of the 81<sup>st</sup> session of the Executive Committee of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe of July 4, 2024, were examined and declared correct.

The examiner and the examiner of the protocol:

*Lea Hafner and Jörg Niederer*

# VI. Minutes

## of the 82<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Executive Committee of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

Unauthorized translation – Original in German

### Minutes Executive Committee Friday, September 27, 2024

Friday, September 27, 2024, 14.00 h

**Plenary session at the Lion's Garden Hotel, Budapest**

*Bishop Stefan* welcomes all those present and wishes them a good meeting. He says a prayer. He brings warm greetings from North Macedonia, Albania and Serbia, which he has recently visited.

The following persons are present:

as members with voting rights:

#### **Bishop**

Presiding Bishop	Bishop	Stefan Zürcher	present
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#### **Office**

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

#### **Executive Committee**

Serbia-North Macedonia-Albania	Sup.	Daniel Sjanta	excused
	Layperson	Emil Zaev	present
Austria	Sup.	Stefan Schröckenfuchs	present
	Layperson	Ben Nausner	excused
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	excused
	Layperson	Martina Chlupáčková	excused
Hungary	Sup.	László Khaled	present
	Layperson	Dávid Csernák	excused
<b>Chair WG Episcopacy</b>	Pastor	Jörg Niederer	present

as advisory members:

<b>Retired bishop</b>	Bishop	Patrick Streiff	excused
	Bishop	Heinrich Bolleter	excused

### **Additional superintendents**

France and Belgium	Sup.	Grégoire Chahinian	excused
Romania	Sup.	Rares Calugar	present
Algeria and Tunisia	Pastor	Freddy Nzambe	excused
North Macedonia	Sup.	Marjan Dimov	present

### **Chairmen of the Working Groups**

WG Theology and Ord. Ministries	Pastor	Zoltán Kovács	partially present
WG Liturgy	Pastor	Erika Stalcup	present
WG Church Order and Legal Affairs	Sup.	Wilfried Nausner	present
WG Children and Youth	Layperson	Ivana Pastor	excused
WG Church and Society	Pastor	Marietjie Odendaal	present
WG Womens Work	Pastor	Monika Zuber	excused
Coordinator	Layperson	Barbara Büniger	excused

Assistant of the Bishop		Urs Schweizer	present
as guest (Saturday morning)		Thomas Fux	partially present

**Total attendance: 19**

*Bishop Stefan* asks for brief reports from the countries of our Central Conference affected by the recent storms. *Andrzej Malicki* reports from the southwest of Poland. *Stefan Schröckenfuchs* reports from Austria. *Rares Calugar* reports from Romania, which was not so badly affected. *Urs Schweizer* reports from the Czech Republic.

*Bishop Stefan* reports that the Cabinet South met yesterday and today.

*Bishop Stefan* reads from Acts 2:14: "Then Peter stood up with the eleven, raised his voice and spoke to them: You Jews, and all you who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, hear my words!" It is amazing what happened to the disciples after Pentecost. First they hid, then they showed themselves. Peter preached to countless people. They experienced miracles and thousands came to believe. Fearful people became courageous fighters for Christ. This happens through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Quote: "You become what you see." What we perceive with all our senses shapes us. Experiencing vastness makes us wide. Experienced happiness infects us. And conversely, experienced fear makes us anxious, etc. It is the same with faith. 2Co 3:18: "But we all, with unveiled faces, reflect the glory of the Lord, and we are being transformed into his image from glory to glory by the Lord, who is the Spirit." God's Spirit gives us the nature of God so that we want to be like him. Let us therefore look at what Christ makes possible for us. It is helpful if we reach out for Christ in order to become more and more like what Christ makes possible.

*Bishop Stefan* invites us to discuss a few questions about the devotion in pairs. He then invites us to pray together.

*Bishop Stefan* refers to "Our joint agreement for fruitful and respectful meetings of the Executive Committee", which we adopted last time.



## Report of the Office

represented by Markus Bach, Secretary

The Office's report was sent out in advance and has been uploaded to the Central Conference dropbox.

### Re 3. travel report by Bishop Stefan

*Andrzej Malicki:* The report on your visit to Poland should say that *more* than 300 people were present at the "Renewal Days".

### Re 4 Revision of the Church Order of the Central Conference CSE

*Bishop Stefan* asks Wilfried Nausner to give us more information and to show us where we currently stand with regard to the revision of the Church Order.

*Wilfried Nausner:* We have not yet had a meeting of the working group. We also don't yet have a proposal on how we can revise our current church constitution, but we are in talks with the Central Conference Germany so that we at least have similar texts. We will have to translate the social principles from the American context into our own. That is why we will not be able to simply translate linguistically but will have to work on it well and adapt it if necessary. This consideration is not just mine but is being discussed intensively in Germany.

*Bishop Stefan:* We decided on footnotes in November 2022 and now, following the General Conference resolutions, we have to incorporate these into the text and possibly include other footnotes.

*Wilfried Nausner:* I also wanted to point that out. We will have to consider how we formulate the Social Principles in particular. This has to do not only with the issue of homosexuality, but also with statements on war, racism or anti-Semitism.

*Jörg Niederer:* I am convinced that the Social Principles cannot be adapted.

*Bishop Stefan:* It is indeed the case that the right of adaptation does not apply to them. Nevertheless, we will have to find a way to formulate them in our context.

*Jörg Niederer:* We would have to go through the General Conference and submit our alternative proposals for the wording there.

*Lea Hafner:* How long do we have for the translation and adaptation?

*Wilfried Nausner:* We have as much time as we want to take. The important thing is that we talk to each other. That is much more important than ultimately having a text in front of us. We must first have clarity about how we want to deal with these issues, and only then can we turn to a formulation.

*Jörg Niederer:* One advantage of the Social Principles is that they are not canon law.

*László Khaled:* Do we have to vote on all the amendments made by the General Conference?

*Bishop Stefan:* We assume that we only want to translate a minimum now and submit it for approval. There will be more changes to come in the next few years. We don't necessarily have to do double the work. However, we will have to vote on the constitutional amendments adopted by the General Conference at next year's annual conferences.

*Lea Hafner:* Was our previous Church Order accepted by the General Conference?

*Bishop Stefan:* The Church Order itself allows us to make adaptations and transfer the Book of Discipline into our context. We also have a German Church Order, so not everything can always be compared immediately by everyone.

*Wilfried Nausner:* My question is how we would like to proceed. Should we first look for a joint text with the Central Conference Germany or discuss it with the Church and Society working group first?

*Markus Bach:* Up to now, we have wanted to adopt the same German text as the Central Conference Germany as far as possible. I think it makes sense to stick to this. I would first work out a joint text with the representative of the German Central Conference, and then we can still discuss what we want to change or keep based on our specific situation. It is important that we have a really good translation.

*Wilfried Nausner:* There are already German translations, better and less good ones. But we have to agree on what we want to adapt. Christoph Klaiber is the contact person in Germany.

*Bishop Stefan:* Based on our debate, I would ask the Church Order and Legal Issues working group to first work out a joint translation with the Central Conference Germany. I will then ask the Church Order and Church and Society working groups to find a way of working together for use in our Central Conference. Do you agree with this?

The Executive Committee agrees to this procedure.

#### Re 5. next steps on the way to autonomy for the EMK Czech Republic

*Wilfried Nausner:* We have a proposal from Bishop Streiff on how we should proceed. We may have to deviate slightly from this. However, it will also be important to me that we shed light on the historical background of our coming together. This has not been made clear enough so far. It is important for me to point out that we were always able to have contact during the difficult times of the past during the Iron Curtain. Ivana Procházková is ready to take this up.

*Wilfried Nausner:* Another difficulty is that there will be no General Conference in 2026 after all, so the separation will only be possible at the 2029 Central Conference.

*Bishop Stefan:* In terms of the voting process, we have to agree to the separation in the Central Conference in order to start the voting part. Each Annual Conference will then vote on it, and we need a two-thirds majority of all votes cast for the separation to be completed.

*Andrzej Malicki:* What is the Church's vision of its future in the Czech Republic? Where will they stand within European Methodism?

*Wilfried Nausner:* You have communicated that you want to become an autonomous Methodist Church.

*Bishop Stefan:* So, they could also become members of the European Methodist Council.

*Wilfried Nausner:* It's never good to break off relationships. This destroys much more than if we "just" break up.

*Stefan Schröckenfuchs:* It is my impression that we need to strengthen the Methodist community throughout Europe. However, I am not sure whether this can be done through the General Conference. Majorities are always decided there and Europe has no chance. But it will only ever weaken us if we proceed in this way. We have to find a way to live together, to learn from each other. This is where we should invest our work and energy and not necessarily in the General Conference.

*Andrzej Malicki:* We have a lot of Methodist churches in Europe. That is a great challenge. We need time to find and appreciate each other.

*Bishop Stefan:* It is important to emphasize that the UMC in the Czech Republic will remain a fully-fledged part of our Central Conference until 2029.

*Andrzej Malicki:* The annual conferences between the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland were a fruitful collaboration. Unfortunately, this is no longer possible due to the recent turbulence.

*Emil Zaev:* I have heard from the Czech Republic that the reason for the separation is the different understanding of homosexuality. That's why they are separating from us. But they would still like to remain in a relationship with us. It is difficult to maintain these two positions together.

*Bishop Stefan:* We need to know that there are people who want to leave the UMC, but there is also a not insignificant minority who are not happy about this decision and who want to keep in touch. There is therefore no reason on our part to break off relations.

*Rares Calugar:* It is important that we realize that there are Methodists all over the world with very different attitudes and ways of being. I experienced this for the first time at the recent World Methodist Conference when I spoke to someone from Uruguay, for example.

We are different, and yet we are Methodist churches together. We need to learn that we can have a global connection and be together, even if we are very different.

*Wilfried Nausner:* We are part of a covenant through our promises and through our conversations with each other. As soon as we assume that it is church law that binds us together, we have lost. That may possibly work in the Roman Catholic Church. But we have to be in conversation with each other, that is what unites us. In terms of this common conversation and mutual solidarity, we have a leak throughout Europe. We should not go down the path of regulations, but of conversation and covenant. We must learn to see "difference" as a positive term for diversity.

#### Re 6. preparation for the 2025 Central Conference in Winterthur (CH)

*Urs Schweizer:* We have shortened the Central Conference meeting somewhat and will only start on Thursday. However, the conference will last until Sunday, when we will take part in various church services in the Winterthur region. I would ask you very much to maintain your presence until Sunday and not to leave on Saturday afternoon. Please also make this clear to your delegates. Your presence in our communities is valuable.

#### On elections and appointments to the Central Conference CSE 2025

The Secretary, *Markus Bach*, draws attention to the resignations mentioned in the report, and there are also vacancies. He is grateful that so many people have agreed to continue to carry out their duties. The office will have to consider a number of nominations and contact people accordingly. However, the working groups themselves can also look for people they would like to work with.

*Erika Stalcup:* Is there a fixed number of members a Working Group can have?

*Markus Bach:* With the exception of the Working Group Theology and Ordained Ministries and Working Group Episcopacy, which have members from every Annual Conference, we had once decided that all Working Groups should have three members from different Annual Conferences. However, this was due to financial reasons so that travel expenses would not be too high. Almost all Working Groups now work online or partially online. It therefore seems more important to me, that we can find good people for the Working Groups. If there are more than three, that is also possible.

*Stefan Schröckenfuchs:* I am surprised that we still assume that we have to have such Working Groups. I would like to suggest that we rethink the whole thing.

*Erika Stalcup:* Didn't we already talk about this in Vienna and stick to the current Working Groups and their tasks?

*Bishop Stefan:* Take a look at the lists of the Working Groups that we drew up at the time.

*Markus Bach:* I sent it to you in the run-up to the conference.

*Bishop Stefan:* We have left it open as to whether we are talking about project groups or permanent Working Groups. However, we don't have enough time now to discuss this in depth. But we can of course take it up again at future meetings.

*Stefan Schröckenfuchs:* I have the impression that we have not yet made any further progress on how we want to deal with the Working Groups than we were before the meeting in the spring of this year.

*Bishop Stefan:* I don't think we can talk about this in principle now but will have to take it up when we have restarted.

#### Re 8 Revision of the Statutes of the European Methodist Council

Markus Bach: You have received a revised constitution of the European Methodist Council and new additional rules of procedure, which the Council has adopted and is now submitting to us for ratification. We in the office have considered whether we want to do this through the Central Conference 2025 so that the EMC receives some attention. In the last few days, however, we have received a request to decide on this as quickly as possible so that the Council can continue its work. The office is therefore asking the Executive Committee for a decision. We have the authority to do so.

**The Executive Committee of the Central Conference CSE unanimously approves the revised Constitution of the European Methodist Council as presented with the amendments adopted by the Council.**

We took a break.

*Friday, September 27, 2024, 16:15 h*

***Plenary session at the Lion's Garden Hotel, Budapest***

#### **Oral reports from the Working Groups**

represented by the chairs of the working groups

#### **Working Group Church and Society**

*Bishop Stefan:* We have received the revised guidelines from the Working Group Church and Society. I would ask Marietjie Odendaal to introduce us to this document.

*Marietjie Odendaal* introduces the text and points out that different churches deal with John Wesley's "General Rules" in different ways. They assumed that pastors, leaders and even bishops need guidance on how they can enter into conversation with them. They therefore made a new introduction in the working group. This resulted in a new paper that looks very different from the one that was available in the spring.

*Bishop Stefan*: I will now give you 15 minutes to read the paper and discuss it in small groups. You will then be asked to comment on it and give your feedback.

*Rares Calugar*: I have a problem with the third sentence in the 1st section (do no harm). Wealth, influence and fame are portrayed quite negatively here. Nevertheless, one should put one's gifts at the service of God. What if the very things mentioned are individual gifts? That somehow doesn't make sense.

*László Khaled*: The third point in the 2nd section (do good) should be a bit more precise and profound.

*Stefan Schröckenfuchs*: I think it's helpful that we are thinking about these rules. I have some comments that I will be happy to send to Marietjie. I am concerned about something more fundamental: John Wesley did not formulate these General Rules so that we would know what we have to do to be Christians. He wanted people to have hope by following the rules. He wrote them for those who want to "escape the future wrath of God". These General Rules are intended to convey hope and provide an answer to the question: What gives my life hope?

I like the fact that in the first section "Do no harm" is translated as "keinen Schaden anrichten". It is helpful to think about what causes harm today. The second section, "Do good", must first be about the good in relationships. In the third section, however, I am not so happy with the wording. I read in Wesley that it's about bringing everything we have and ourselves into the presence of God's grace. Doing no harm and doing what is good requires that we continually consciously give God the opportunity to make a difference in us. The bottom line is that God can change me. Doing no harm and doing good can only succeed if we live out of this experience of the means of grace. Wesley brought this together in a good way. It is precisely this connection between the means of grace and our actions that I am missing here.

*Lea Hafner*: I see many good points in the suggestions made so far. For me, without a theological background, the chosen formulations are right. For me, these are helpful guidelines, especially as discussion aids in home groups and small groups. The question for me is therefore how much time and energy we want to invest in them.

*Jörg Niederer*: When we published these guidelines in Switzerland many years ago, it happened in a relatively short space of time. The Central Conference then adopted this revision as its "Guidelines for a Responsible Lifestyle". The aim was to find out what John Wesley wanted with this text. I also consider the text now available to be something that is helpful to me.

*Urs Schweizer:* Everything is written in positive terms - I think that's valuable. The question for me now is what we want to achieve with it. Is it a basis for discussion or could it also be an instrument to strengthen the Methodist identity? If a strengthening of Methodist identity were the main focus, it might be worth another round of revision.

*Bishop Stefan:* Thank you very much for all your feedback. I would now like to give the floor to Marietjie Odendaal. What did you hear?

*Marietjie Odendaal:* Thank you very much for the feedback I have heard. We can revise the document again. I can take on board the things that have been said. I have received some suggestions for changes and we need to see how we can incorporate them. We can then present the revised document again for approval at the next meeting.

*Bishop Stefan:* I don't think we will have time in March of next year to discuss a revised document in the necessary depth. I suggest that the working group revises the text based on our feedback today and approves it definitively.

*Markus Bach:* But I still don't know how we will deal with this approved text. Will it simply become a document in our folders? I wonder how this text will actually be used as a basis for discussion in our small groups and home groups. Would the text then also have to be translated into other languages of the Central Conference?

*Stefan Schröckenfuchs:* Wesley formulated these General Rules to give hope to hopeless people. When we ask what we want to do with this document, it is important to me that we also reach people outside the church with this message and enter into a conversation with them so that they can have hope.

*Marjan Dimov:* I am glad that we have this paper so that we can talk to people who want to become professing members of our church about their faith.

*Erika Stalcup:* I don't see the text as a kind of to-do list. The three rules are so simple that even children can talk about them.

*Bishop Stefan:* I hear that the Working Group can also revise some things. Should they now revise this on their own, or do we want to see the document again and approve it?

*Marietjie Odendaal:* I would be happy if the text were approved by the Central Conference.

*Jörg Niederer:* I would find it helpful if the text were available at the Central Conference.

*Bishop Stefan:* When we present the text to the Central Conference, there will probably be a lot of feedback. Will that be helpful?

*Wilfried Nausner:* Do you want to circulate the revised text so that we can react to it?

*Stefan Schröckenfuchs:* I believe that we should make it as simple as possible, and I therefore advocate that the Working Group should make it its document and adopt it itself.

*Urs Schweizer:* It could also be an idea to have the revised text discussed in an online forum.

*Jörg Niederer:* Would it be helpful for you if you could get specific text suggestions from us?

*Marietjie Odendaal:* Yes, that would be helpful.

*Bishop Stefan:* Then I suggest that you revise the text and make it available to us. It is then up to you to decide how you want to proceed with it.

*Emil Zaev:* Couldn't we do the revision overnight today? Then we could look at it again tomorrow in ten minutes and decide.

*Bishop Stefan:* We can try that...

### **Working Group Liturgy**

*Erika Stalcup:* It is still difficult to figure out what we have to do. Also because we will have to continue our work in a new personnel composition.

### **Working Group Episcopacy**

*Jörg Niederer:* We didn't have time to meet with the bishop at the last meeting. I met with him alone. At the Central Conference, we will meet with the bishop as Working Group. I hope that all members of the Working Group will be able to attend.

### **Working Group Children and Youth**

*Urs Schweizer:* We are currently lacking a co-chair. I know from Ivana Pastor that she is committed to next year's youth meeting. She will be holding an online meeting with all those responsible for working with young people. This will take place in October or November 2024. I would like to encourage you to put the date for the youth meeting (July 24 to 28, 2025 in Cluj-Napoca) firmly in your annual calendar and make young people aware of it.

*Marietjie Odendaal:* From what age can you take part?

*Urs Schweizer:* We are planning a range from 16 years and at least up to 25 years. It could also be higher.



## Working Group Church Order and Legal Affairs

*Wilfried Nausner* has no additions.

## Working Group Theology and Ordained Ministries

*Bishop Stefan*: The Working Group met last week. But I have not yet received any information from the meeting. When Zoltán Kovacs arrives, we will give him the opportunity to report on the work.

### Topic of the Central Conference CSE 2025

*Bishop Stefan*: We are submitting two ideas for the theme of the Central Conference 2025 to the Executive Committee for discussion and decision:

- A Geschaffen. Für gute Werke / Created. For good works»
- B Schalom mit euch! / Shalom with you!

I invite you to discuss this in groups of four and make a recommendation.

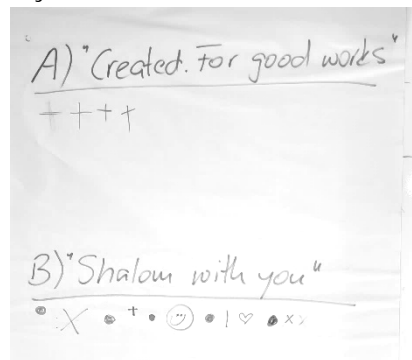
We then discuss the group work. Most of the groups are in favor of topic B. One group makes the suggestion that we could link topic B with the guidelines and also have the Bible studies done on this.

*Bishop Stefan* then invites us to visualize our priorities using a points system (see graphic). We agree on theme B "Shalom with you! / Shalom with you!"

There is a discussion about whether we should use the word "Shalom" or the word "Peace" and we agree on the term "Schalom/Shalom".

The theme of the Central Conference 2025 in Winterthur is therefore:

«Schalom mit euch!» / «Shalom with you!»



*Friday, September 27, 2024, 18:30 h*

**Dinner at the Lion's Garden Hotel, Budapest**

*Friday, September 27, 2024, 19:30 h*

***Evening of fellowship at the Lion's Garden Hotel, Budapest***

We tell each other "stories of hope" and sing Taizé songs together.

*Friday, September 27, 2024, 21:00 h*

***Evening prayer at the Lion's Garden Hotel, Budapest***

*Erika Stalcup* leads the evening prayer.

Unauthorized translation - original in German

## Minutes of the Executive Committee, September 28, 2024

Saturday, September 28, 2024, 08:30 h

### **Morning service at the Lion's Garden Hotel, Budapest**

*Bishop Stefan* welcomes everyone present. He welcomes Zoltán Kovács, who can now also be with us. He also welcomes Thomas Fux, who has arrived for today's program.

*Erika Stalcup* holds the morning devotion on Ecclesiastes 3, 9-15.

Saturday, September 28, 2024, 09:00 h

### **Plenary session at the Lion's Garden Hotel, Budapest**

*Bishop Stefan* introduces this morning's program. He introduces the considerations as to why the office has chosen this topic "Question and Answers": After our online meeting in July 2024, Thomas Fux wrote to me and told me about what they had worked out as a Q&A in Diakonie. We heard about this in the CC office and thought that we could also work in this direction. We have therefore invited Thomas Fux to join us today and he will present to us what is behind it. We are confronted with a wide range of questions: What are the Methodists? What do they believe? What distinguishes them from other churches? These are not just questions that have occupied the General Conference. As a Central Conference we also have questions before us: What unites us? What is the goal of the Central Conference? etc. It should be helpful that we have a Q&A that helps us within the church, but can also pass on information to people outside the church. We will work in groups and exchange ideas. At the end, we will decide together how we want to deal with this possibility. Now I would like Thomas to tell us about his experiences in the Diakonie with this tool.

*Thomas Fux* briefly introduces himself. He is on the board of Diakonie in Austria, and they have had good experiences with this tool, which they call "Argumentarium".

*Thomas Fux*: After our online meeting in July, I thought a lot about the challenge we face these days when we argue on social media, in discussions in our church or in conversations with friends. We live in times when people - and I don't want to exclude myself from this - are losing their sense of security and sometimes their confidence in the future. And, to be honest, I think that this experience, which is new to me, has long been part of everyday life in other parts of the world.

Times of uncertainty are good times for so-called "simple answers". We are confronted with these kinds of "easy answers" on social media or in discussions. I say this from the perspective of Diakonie in Austria. It has around 10,000 employees. We work with young people, old people, people living in poverty, people with mental illness, people with disabilities, refugees and many more.

As you can see from this list, we work with a lot of people who are often pitted against each other. This is a big challenge for managers and employees as they are often confronted with questions or "easy answers" from their "customers". The challenge for us is therefore to be and remain able to talk about different topics.

This is why Diakonie, or more precisely the Director of Diakonie in collaboration with the Institute for Public Theology and Ethics of Diakonie (IöThE), regularly publishes papers on various topics. With the publication series "Argumentarium", the IöThE takes up socially virulent ethical issues, presents discourses and arguments and comments on them from a Protestant perspective. The Argumentarium is intended to provide orientation and encourage personal ethical opinion-forming. Each "Argumentarium" takes up an ethical topic that is currently virulent in the social debate.

Beyond the current debate, the "Argumentarium" sheds light on the background by asking:

- What is it about? And by working out the fundamental ethical questions and problems.
- Who says what? And by presenting different ethical positions and arguments.
- What do the Protestant churches say? And by presenting answers from the perspective of Protestant theological ethics.

Topics on which an "Argumentarium" has been published to date are:

- Ethical conflicts in times of Corona
- Euthanasia
- Responsibility for creation
- Human rights and social work
- Flight and asylum
- Justice

The latest paper deals with elections and democracy. It does not contain an election recommendation, but describes Christian principles that help to classify the statements and proposals of political parties. After all, there are always values and attitudes behind political debates, programs and measures. A comparison with Christian attitudes and values can help when making an election decision.

There are therefore sections with arguments on the following topics:

- How political are the church and diaconia?
- What is our attitude towards political parties?
- Understanding of charity
- Attitude towards:
  - Human dignity
  - Human rights
  - People on the margins of society
  - Strangers
  - Social security and the welfare state
  - Performance and responsibility
  - Democracy
  - Freedom
  - Climate issues
  - Religious freedom

These publications help me a lot to find my position and, above all, they help me not to fall silent when I am confronted with "simple answers". These papers are not rules and do not give ready-made answers. These papers lead to discussions.

This is the point at which I think of our church. Anyone who has ever been to a General Conference knows the procedure very well. There is only the opportunity to speak for or against something - discourse, exchange and therefore also the development of relationships are made more difficult. I think we should be able to talk about topics and questions that polarize our church and work on uniform answers - in the sense of a FAQ collection. This can also answer questions about how it can be that completely different opinions exist in a common church in different countries and that very different topics are virulent.

Knowing this, my suggestion would be that we collect questions about our church that are received by our leaders (not just in relation to sexual orientation and the understanding of marriage). We could develop an interactive paper with answers and consistent wording, knowing that it should be about discourse and not a set of rules, and that areas of tension will always exist. No one needs to justify processes in other countries.

Sample questions:

- What is the relationship between church and state?
- How is ecumenism practiced?
- How does the church finance itself?
- How does the church deal with differences of opinion?
- How are decisions made in the church council?
- In which areas is there autonomy?
- How do you become a pastor in the church?
- How do I become a member of the church?
- How much is the church contribution?
- Is there a confirmation in the church?
- What differences are there in the church in different countries?
- How are church and diaconia connected?
- Why are there different Methodist churches?
- How do the various Methodist churches work together?
- What does a typical Methodist church service look like?
- What is the mission of the UMC?
- What are the basic statements of the EMK?
- What holidays does the UMC celebrate?
- What does baptism mean in the UMC?
- The UMC's understanding of the Lord's Supper
- Why is social engagement so important for Methodists?
- Are lay people allowed to preach in the UMC?

*Bishop Stefan:* Thank you very much, Thomas, for your comments and for sharing your experiences. Do you have any questions for Thomas?

*Urs Schweizer:* How does the "Argumentarium" get to the people?

*Thomas Fux:* If there is a new "Argumentarium", we will send it out in the newsletter. All previous arguments can also be found on the homepage of Diakonie in Austria. (See: <https://www.diakonie.at/mediathek/diakonieoesterreich/argumentarium>)

*Bozena Daszuta:* Are these arguments also published in the church?

*Thomas Fux:* These are arguments from Diakonie Austria. They are not automatically published in the church. But we can discuss how and where this should happen.

*Bozena Daszuta:* I think that the answers will vary greatly from country to country.

*Bishop Stefan:* It will be very important and crucial for us to discover how different our answers are.

*Serge Frutiger:* Are these long texts?

*Thomas Fux:* It varies. The length is between 9 and 15 pages. They are easy to read and well researched.

*Stefan Schröckenfuchs:* It is important to precisely define the target group we want to address. We need to be clear about who we want to address - is it leaders or all professing members of the church? I tend to address the leaders.

*Thomas Fux:* If we only address the managers, we have to do this very carefully, because otherwise it could be seen as a kind of secret document that is only accessible to an exclusive circle. But we have to talk about who exactly we want to address.

*Bishop Stefan:* We are now making four groups and discussing the strengths and opportunities as well as the weaknesses and dangers associated with such a tool. We also need to be clear about who we want to address. Also think about how we should talk about it and how we should publicize it. We will take half an hour and then summarize the results of our group work here.

Then we take a break.

*Saturday, September 28, 2024, 10:10 h*

***Plenary session at the Lion's Garden Hotel, Budapest***

*Bishop Stefan:* I hope you had good discussions in the groups and were able to talk about the potential of such a tool. Please report back from the groups what you discussed. Urs Schweizer will write down some keywords.

*Marietjie Odendaal:* We were a group of Swiss people. At the beginning, we were enthusiastic about the fact that we could also show what values we have in common and not just what divides us. But then we also realized that there was already a lot of material (longer and shorter texts). At the Annual Conference Switzerland-France-North Africa a few years

ago, we drew up a profile of our church. There are also the Social Principles, which provide information on ethical issues. However, differences will certainly also become apparent there. But we have also asked ourselves whether we can and should muster the strength and energy it will take to develop such a "set of arguments". There is also a danger that what we have developed will end up gathering dust in a drawer.

*Stefan Schröckenfuchs:* We asked ourselves who we wanted to address. As a result, we had the impression that we needed to address the leaders - both pastoral and lay people. They need good arguments for their commitment. The differences in the countries are there, and yet there are certainly also commonalities that we could make visible. We need to work on what positive things we can say about ourselves rather than getting into a defensive posture.

*Andrzej Malicki:* We have to make visible what we have in common. We need help from each other.

*Stefan Schröckenfuchs:* We also talked about the fact that we need someone to guide us in the development of such "arguments".

*László Khaled:* One of our questions in the group was how many people pay attention to our homepage and whether we can reach people in this way. We then realized that our people look for information in different places, perhaps also because they can't find anything on our website. That would be a good argument for making such a "set of arguments" available on the Internet.

*Bożena Daszuta:* Explosive topics lead to our different opinions becoming visible. We would probably answer many questions differently. We also asked ourselves who should and can do this work. Wouldn't that be too much for us? Should we set up a project group to help us with this?

*Markus Bach:* In our group, we also talked about a conscious Methodist identity. There is a wide range of people who are in our congregations, but who have little or no Methodist identity. They come to the church for other reasons. But there are always some members who belong to the congregation because it is a Methodist church. And then there are even fewer who establish a link to the Annual Conference and even fewer who have an awareness of the Central Conference or General Conference level. We need to bear this in mind when we are looking for a target group for the "Argumentarium".

*Erika Stalcup:* I would be delighted to have an "Argumentarium" in German. Here I discover that the topics are always very well researched. But the word "Argumentarium" only fits in German.

*Wilfried Nausner:* Another challenge would actually be the language. I have the impression that people usually only pay attention to what is available in their mother tongue. Many pastors in the Balkans read more evangelical texts than Methodist texts. In Albania, for example, many texts are published in Albanian, which are not only helpful. But if there are

no Methodist texts, we should not be surprised. Of course, we would have to ask ourselves which texts we want to translate so that people recognize what is Methodist.

*Marietjie Odendaal:* I hear that it would be important for you to have such texts.

*Serge Frutiger:* It's not yet clear to me which people we want to address. Who are we doing this for?

*Bishop Stefan:* It would certainly be helpful and important if we could talk about this now.

*Stefan Schröckenfuchs:* We need to be clear about who we are creating such an "Argumentarium" for. Should it be directed outwards? I think it would be more important for us to address the leaders in our church. I'm not talking about a PR campaign, but about strengthening the Methodist identity.

*Serge Frutiger:* I understand the term "FAQ" or "Q&A" to mean a kind of computer program with questions and answers. But now it seems to me that we're talking about something else.

*Stefan Schröckenfuchs:* In my opinion, it needs to be more about Methodist identity. And be a set of arguments for what we understand by Methodist. It is important that we can say what we understand by Methodism - and that this "argumentation" comes from a trustworthy source.

*Bishop Stefan:* Would it be helpful if we had some kind of wording that helps in discussions?

*Urs Schweizer:* It is helpful when we, as the Central Conference, speak out on issues. We can do this. One difficulty, however, is that we do not assume that everyone perceives us as a trustworthy source.

*Bishop Stefan:* Can we agree on the target audience? Is there any contradiction if we target the leadership level of the church as such?

*Emil Zaev:* I have a problem because I don't know exactly what is meant. Is what we are doing a "Questions and Answers" on the Internet? Then the target audience would be much broader and include everyone, at least if they have a PC.

*Bishop Stefan:* If we say that we primarily want to publish something on the Internet, then it would indeed be for the general public. But if we are of the opinion that we primarily want to address the leadership level of the church, then we will proceed differently than simply making a "set of arguments" available for download on the Internet. I don't hear any objections - do you agree that we want to address the leadership level?

*Emil Zaev:* I'm a bit surprised now, and wonder if we have a problem with our pastors if we want to approach them specifically to clarify what a "Methodist" is.

*Wilfried Nausner:* Of course, there is also a problem among the pastors with the sometimes lack of identification with the UMC. We are also aware of this problem in North Macedonia.



If we ask what the most important ministry for Methodists is, I don't know what we will get as an answer. We will also get very different answers when we ask what Methodists think about migration.

*Markus Bach:* If I consider the leadership level of our church as the target audience, then this includes not only the pastoral members, but also the laity. I think that we should actually talk about the leadership level.

*Bishop Stefan:* I wouldn't start with hundreds of questions, but with two or three.

*Erika Stalcup:* It would also be important to me that after the decisions of the General Conference we ask ourselves how we now understand ourselves as the UMC, also in the diversity of our thinking about the decisions. There is disinformation in many places that we need to counter in a targeted way.

*Bishop Stefan:* In my view, it is about a process and not a finalized text that clarifies once and for all what Methodists in Europe are. We must emphasize that we are in constant conversation. That is more important than having a finalized text.

*Bishop Stefan:* We are faced with the fundamental question of whether we want to continue working on this topic. I have heard positive feedback from you so far, but also the concern that we need to keep an eye on the workload.

*Serge Frutiger:* I could imagine that we start with a single question (for example, migration) and see if and how that works. We could see what comes of it. If it strengthens the Methodist identity, I'm happy. We continue with what is helpful. We will drop others. But we shouldn't overburden ourselves. I don't want to create a great work. But we must also not create something that is then ignored.

*Markus Bach:* There could be an interesting link to the Central Conference 2025 on the topic of migration. We are considering organizing a public discussion evening on the topic of migration. It should be interesting to talk to people from countries where there is emigration and people from countries where there is a high level of immigration. This would also make it clear that it's about the conversation and not just a text.

*Thomas Fux:* I think it would be a good starting point if we did something about migration. The challenges in our countries are very different. This could result in a position paper that makes visible what attitude we as the UMC have towards people who emigrate or immigrate. But it can also make visible what is happening in the many places of our church. We need to make visible what is happening. That would be a good starting point.

*Bishop Stefan:* Can you support such an approach?

*Emil Zaev:* I hear that we are moving away from a "questions and answers" model and have ended up with an "Argumentarium". I find that helpful. The fact that this morning was entitled "Q&A" initially confused me.

*Thomas Fux:* It's important that you draw attention to this. We used this title "Q&A" because that's how it's traditionally used, even if it's not always questions and answers. Even the AI program used this title. But we've now worked out that we're talking about something else.

*Emil Zaev:* For me, however, the question remains as to who will draw up the "set of arguments" for us. It has to be well formulated.

*Thomas Fux:* We have experts in the relevant specialist area who do this. For example, we also have experts in the area of migration. I am convinced that we can find people in our church who can help us realize this.

*Wilfried Nausner:* We need to be able to have an open discussion about migration. Things are different in Poland than in North Macedonia. We need to be able to present this - and how we are facing up to the challenges. This could then also motivate us to support each other. We need a basis that helps us to talk to each other.

*Erika Stalcup:* We also have experts on the subject of migration in our communities - for example in Geneva.

*Rares Calugar:* I'm just thinking about the Roma consultation. This took place and it was helpful for the participants, but I didn't hear anything from there about what they worked on and what we could learn from it. We need to have something that we can actually use.

*Bishop Stefan:* I hear that we are starting from a "set of arguments" on a topic and not from "questions and answers". I hear that a first topic for this could be "migration". And I hear that we would like to share our experiences with it at a later date in order to decide how we want to proceed with such a tool. That is a helpful result from our discussion. Thank you very much for your participation.

*Bishop Stefan:* One last question still needs to be clarified: Who will take the lead for this first "argumentarium"? Will this be done by the CC office or by a separate project group, which we would then still have to elect?

*Serge Frutiger:* I would find it helpful if Thomas Fux could help, and possibly Ben Nausner, who has experience with this.

*Bishop Stefan:* We won't be able to do the work in the office. But we can look out for people who can support us.

We interrupt the meeting for a group photo.



## Miscellaneous

*Bishop Stefan:* We now have a few more things under Miscellaneous. First, Erika Stalcup informs us about the Methodist E-Academy.

### **Methodist E-Academy**

*Erika Stalcup:* The most important thing is that the Methodist E-Academy continues to exist. But we have changed a lot. Since the Methodist E-Academy was founded in 2008, e-learning in educational institutions has changed a lot, not least thanks to Covid. There are new developments that we now need to catch up on. We have restructured the training concept. Students now take one course each over a period of two years, either in English or German. The English-language courses are run by Cliff College (UK). German-language courses are run by Reutlingen Adventist University (Germany) and the Methodist E-Academy. During the two years, students from both language groups meet once a year for a face-to-face and online seminar. The English-language courses are accredited by the University of Manchester. Students receive a Postgraduate Diploma in Theology and Mission at the end of their Methodist-E-Academy studies. Students who wish to continue their studies can enroll at Cliff College at a reduced rate, write a thesis and take an exam to receive a Master's in Theology and Mission. The next English-speaking cohort will start in 2025, the German-speaking cohort will start in 2026.

*Bishop Stefan:* Thank you very much for the information. Zoltán Kovács will now report to us from the meeting of the Theology and Ordained Ministries Working Group.

### **Working Group Theology and Ordained Ministries**

*Zoltán Kovács:* I would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to meet. I invited the working group to Hungary. Most of the members were able to be present. Others dialed in online. David Field took the minutes and will keep us informed.

We talked about the following topics: Membership in the church with the associated topics of baptism and confirmation. A second topic was the revision of the Charta Oecumenica, on which we provided feedback. We also discussed what had been formulated as input to the working group by the Executive Committee in March 2024 - in particular the fact that the "Ordained Ministries" part of our working group name had only been mentioned in passing in the past.

*Andrzej Malicki:* I'd like to take up the Charta Oecumenica. We also worked on it in the Ecumenical Council in Poland. Should we now forward our statement to you or do we submit our statement separately?

*Bishop Stefan:* The UMC in Switzerland has also been working on this and is passing on its thoughts to the working group.

*Andrzej Malicki:* Should we send them to you as well?

*Bishop Stefan:* Both ways are possible. You can decide for yourself how you want to do it. But it might also be helpful if you also send your work to Zoltan. The important thing is simply that a response must be sent by the end of 2024!

*Bishop Stefan:* Marietjie Odendaal worked on the guidelines overnight and sent us a new version. We are taking up this topic again.

### **Working Group Church and Society**

*Marietjie Odendaal:* You have received the revised version. All changes are visible in the English version, but not in the German version. I am now asking for feedback

A few minor comments are made, including on the language used. However, the text is generally approved.

*Bishop Stefan:* I would now ask the working group to draw up the final text and send it to us as version 3. We will then have the opportunity to give the working group final feedback. The working group can then create the final version of the text and present it at the Central Conference.

### **Feedback on the Executive Committee meeting**

*Bishop Stefan:* We will next meet as an Executive Committee for half a day in Winterthur in the run-up to the Central Conference - for the last time in the current composition. What will we do after that? Will we continue to meet physically twice a year in spring and fall? If so, how long should the meetings last? Or should we meet online after all?

*Andrzej Malicki:* One online meeting a year is okay for me. That way we can also save time and money. However, I am in favor of us meeting once a year for a longer meeting than we have now in Budapest.

*Bozena Daszuta:* For me, it is a scheduling challenge if we meet in person. That's why I'm also in favor of an online meeting.

*Erika Stalcup:* A meeting for just one day is too short - that makes it difficult. I would like to have more time, but 24 hours is too short for the amount of work involved in traveling. I really appreciate the fact that we can meet each other. I prefer that to doing it online.

*Jörg Niederer:* One day is too short for me too, especially if we take travel time into account. I would prefer it if we could meet twice a year for at least two days.

*Emil Zaev:* Every day that we can be together strengthens our community. Zoom meetings help us to get brief information or make decisions. I'm happy to spend the time so that we can meet more often. But one day is too short. The second meeting should be longer.

*Stefan Schröckenfuchs:* I support two face-to-face meetings. Online meetings don't help us to strengthen the community among us - and they only make sense where there is only one topic to deal with.

*Marietjie Odendaal:* I also agree with what I have heard so far.

*Markus Bach:* If we are planning a second meeting in the autumn, it could be helpful in terms of organization if we always hold it at the same location, for example here in Budapest. We wouldn't have to invent how to organize this meeting every time. Everyone would already know where it is and how it works.

*Marjan Dimov:* It's not so easy for me to find the time for two face-to-face meetings. But online meetings are not an alternative for me.

*Erika Stalcup:* I could also imagine us meeting regularly in Cluj-Napoca - with the question in mind: Where can we make a difference in our church by choosing the venue?

*Bishop Stefan:* We have received an invitation from Poland that we could meet in Warsaw in the fall of 2025. Holding the next Executive Committee meeting in spring 2026 is too far away for me.

*Andrzej Malicki:* But that would have to be at least two or three nights so that we can also experience something touristy or cultural in Warsaw.

*Bishop Stefan:* Do you agree that we should meet in Poland in the fall of next year?

*Serge Frutiger:* With regard to the duration of the meeting, it would probably be helpful to ask those who were unable to attend here in Budapest, especially the laypeople.

**Decision: The Executive Committee accepts the invitation to the meeting in Warsaw in fall 2025 with heartfelt thanks.**

*Bishop Stefan:* We at the Central Conference office will plan and discuss the meeting with those responsible in Poland.

*Saturday, September 28, 2024, 11:30 h*

**Broadcast / Blessing at the Lion's Garden Hotel, Budapest**

*Bishop Stefan* closes the 82<sup>nd</sup> session of the Executive Committee with a blessing.

*Saturday, September 28, 2024, 12.00 h*

**Lunch at the Lion's Garden Hotel, Budapest**

*For the minutes:*

*Markus Bach, Secretary ZK CSE*

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These minutes of the 82<sup>nd</sup> session of the Executive Committee of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe held in Budapest (Hungary) on September 27-28, 2024 were examined and declared correct.

The examiner and the examiner of the protocol:

*Lea Hafner and Jörg Niederer*

# VII. Report of the Office

## 1. Presence and Minutes

### 1.1 Meetings of the office

The CC Office has met twice since the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Central Conference in Vienna: on May 16, 2024, and on August 23, 2024. The focus was always on preparations for further meetings of the Executive Committee and the Central Conference.

### 1.2 Minutes of the 80<sup>th</sup>, 81<sup>st</sup> and 82<sup>nd</sup> sessions of the Executive Committee CC CSE

The minutes of the 80<sup>th</sup>, 81<sup>st</sup> and 82<sup>nd</sup> meetings of the Executive Committee from March 14 to 17, 2024, in Vienna (Austria), the online meeting from July 4, 2024, and the meeting from September 27 to 28, 2024, in Budapest (Hungary) were published together. The minutes of the previous meetings were sent to the members of the Executive Committee by the CC Secretary and uploaded to the CC Dropbox.

## 2. Planning for the Executive Committee meeting in Budapest

### 2.1 Meeting of the Executive Committee in Budapest

The 82<sup>nd</sup> session of the Executive Committee will take place from September 27 to 28, 2024, (noon to noon) at the Lion's Garden Hotel in Budapest (Hungary). The Cabinet South meeting will take place one day earlier at the same location.

### 2.2 Program of the Executive Committee from 27-28 September 2024

#### Friday, September 27, 2024

12.00 h	Lunch
14.00 h	Opening reflection (Bishop Stefan Zürcher) Plenary 1 (Office report / Church constitution / AC CZ / Working Groups)
16.00 h	Coffee break
16.30 h	Plenary 2 (continuation of plenary 1)
17.30 h	Discussion on proposed topics for the CC 2025
18.30 h	Dinner
20.00 h	Evening of fellowship
21.30 h	Evening prayer (Erika Stalcup)

#### Saturday, September 28, 2024

08.30 h	Morning service (Erika Stalcup)
09.00 h	Q&A
11.30 h	Miscellaneous
11.50 h	Sending forth / Blessing (Bishop Stefan Zürcher)

### 2.3 Assignments for the conference

The CC Office issues the following assignments:

As assistant to the secretary:	Urs Schweizer
As meeting treasurer:	Iris Bullinger
For the examination of the minutes:	Lea Hafner and Jörg Niederer

### **3. Travel report by Bishop Stefan**

An essential and beautiful part of the episcopal ministry is traveling and meeting people in the countries of our Central Conference. The Executive Committee meeting in Budapest is the last stop on my twelve-day trip to North Macedonia, Albania, and Serbia, on which I was accompanied by my wife Valérie. The program included clergy meetings, church visits, discussions with the superintendents and, as a highlight, the ordination of Florian Çela and Gjergj Lushka in Pogradec (Albania), which was attended by pastors from the entire annual conference. - I would be happy to tell you a little more orally.

At the beginning of August, we attended the Renewal Days in Poland. Almost 300 people of all ages took part and were encouraged, among others, by the presentations of Adam Hamilton, pastor of the Church of the Resurrection in Kansas City, USA. I'm planning to attend clergy meetings in Czechia and Hungary in the fall, as well as a trip to southern Poland with the Connexio board. At the beginning of this year, I was in France, Tunisia, and Poland for clergy meetings, in Hungary for church visits and the leaders' conference and a little later for the Roma consultation. The superintendents' meeting in January, the Executive Committee meeting in Vienna in March, and the six annual conferences offered further opportunities to meet people, to talk to them, to celebrate together and to preach. There was also a large number of online meetings with leaders.

For me, such encounters are an indispensable and valuable part of my ministry – in the first few years of my ministry anyway. On the one hand, because I want to get to know the pastors and leaders, our Church in the different countries and the local churches better, but also to understand the cultural, social, political, historical, and, of course, religious circumstances. At the same time, people can also get to know me. On the other hand, the encounters are important because I see my office as a bridge-building office. With regard to very different topics - those that were discussed at the General Conference are just some of them - uncertainty, fears, frustration or discouragement can be felt here and there. Through encounters, a good exchange of information and experiences, through spiritual impulses, I want to help deepen our relationships and trust and thus build a sustainable network, strengthen our hope and thus encourage and empower us to participate confidently, calmly and joyfully in God's mission to accompany people on their journey to follow Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

### **4. Revision of the Book of Discipline of the Central Conference CSE**

The General Conference adopted several changes of the Book of Discipline during its recent meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina, but not all of them will take effect at the same time. In the United States, the paragraphs adopted by the General Conference will take effect on January 1 of the year following the General Conference, i.e. January 1, 2025.

The Central Conferences adopt their regulations somewhat later. Discipline Art. 543.17 states: "In a central conference or provisional central conference using a language other than English, legislation passed by a General Conference shall not take effect until twelve months after the close of that General Conference in order to afford the necessary time to make adaptations and to publish a translation of the legislation that has been enacted."



Amendments to the constitution of The United Methodist Church must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the General Conference and then ratified by a "two-thirds majority of the members of each Annual Conference present and voting." The following resolutions have been adopted by the General Conference and are awaiting ratification, which is expected in the spring of 2026:

- *Worldwide Regionalization* - Includes amendments to 28 paragraphs of the constitution
- *Racial Justice* (§15) Article V - "The United Methodist Church commits to confronting and eliminating all forms of racism, racial inequity, colonialism, white privilege, and white supremacy, in every facet of its life and in society at large."
- *Include 'gender' and 'ability'* (§14) - "All persons without regard to race, gender, ability, color, national origin, status, or economic condition, shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection."
- *Edit of the educational requirements for voting rights to elect clergy delegates to General Conference* (§135)

The CC office has asked the Working Group Discipline and Legal Affairs to take care of the translation into German in cooperation with the Central Conference Germany. At the present time, we assume that only the minium will be revised until there is clarity about the constitutional changes, especially the worldwide regionalization.

In 2025, all Annual Conferences will have to vote on the above-mentioned constitutional amendments as part of the ratification process mentioned above. The exact documents for this will be sent to the secretaries of the Annual Conferences in January 2025. We will have to vote on the original English-language text of the Book of Discipline. We have asked the Chair of the Working Group Discipline and Legal Affairs to prepare a standardized German translation so that we can all speak and decide on the same thing. It is helpful if translations into the conference language are also available. The vote must be taken in writing and all yes and no votes as well as abstentions must be counted and recorded.

## **5. Next steps on the way to the autonomy of the UMC in the Czech Republic**

On behalf of the Central Conference, Wilfried Nausner is working on the next steps towards the autonomy of the UMC in the Czech Republic. For its part, the Czech Republic Annual Conference is also at work and in discussion with Bishop Rückert and thus with the Standing Committee of Central Conference Matters (StCCCM). A first draft of a set of rules was presented at the 2024 Annual Conference, which is essentially an adoption of the status quo and contains very little that has been newly developed. We will provide information on the current status at the Executive Committee meeting.

## 6. Preparation for the 2025 Central Conference in Winterthur (CH)

The Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe 2025 will take place at Winterthur UMC (Switzerland). A host committee has been formed, which is responsible for the organization in consultation with the Bishop's Office.

The delegates who were originally elected for the 2021 Central Conference will be invited to the 2025 Central Conference. The Secretary of the Central Conference will send a "Save the date" to all elected delegates in October 2024. Registrations will be sent out towards the end of the year.

Bishop Ruby-Nell M. Estrella from the Philippines will be present as a representative of the Council of Bishops to the Central Conference MSE, as well as the active and newly elected bishops of the UMC in Europe. The bishop will invite other guests from the ecumenical world and our Church. It is planned that the guests from Europe and overseas will take part in a panel discussion (e.g. on the topic of migration). Erika Stalcup and the Working Group Liturgy have agreed to take the lead for the spiritual parts, whereby the bishops present will be asked for the Bible studies.

The following dates are planned in detail:

- Wed. March 12, 2025:                   Members of the WG Episcopacy arrive by noon  
(meeting in the afternoon)  
Members of the Executive Committee arrive by  
the evening
- Thu., March 13, 2025:               Morning meeting of **old** Executive Committee CC CSE  
(CC delegates arrive)  
approx. 14.00: Opening of the Central Conference
- Fri. March 14, 2025:               Meeting of the Central Conference
- Sat. March 15, 2025:               Morning: Meeting Central Conference  
Afternoon: meeting of **new** Executive Committee  
Evening: still open
- Sun. March 16, 2025:               Worship services in the region

### Topic of the Central Conference CSE 2025

We are submitting two ideas for the theme of CC 2025 to the Executive Committee for discussion and decision. The following thoughts outline these ideas:

- A) "Created! For good works."** on Ephesians 2:10 ("For we are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.")

It is a great relief that God goes before us and has already prepared the good that we are to do. We are invited to be attentive, open, receptive and awake in order to recognize it and then to walk in it (not to "do" it!). We are allowed to participate in what God is doing, to take part in his mission in this world. How can we support each other in discovering and walking in it? What do we recognize in our respective contexts that God has prepared and is doing?

**B) “Shalom with you!”** This is how Jesus greeted his disciples after Easter (John 20:19). He then sent them into the world as his bearers and messengers of peace. Shalom encompasses a wide range of meanings. In its basic meaning, *šlm* means “to have enough”. This is associated with the meanings of well-being, prosperity, happiness, but also security, integrity and wholeness, with regard to the individual, the human community and the whole of creation. Shalom describes an order that enables life in contrast to chaotic disorder (Genesis 1). Shalom encompasses the relationship to God (spiritual dimension), to oneself (personal dimension), to one’s fellow human beings (social, political, economic dimension) and to creation (ecological dimension).

We ask the Executive Committee to discuss at the meeting in September 2024 which theme should be chosen for the 2025 Central Conference meeting. The allocation of Bible studies and worship services will then be handled by the CC Office.

## **Elections and assignments of the Central Conference CSE 2025**

In the summer, the CC Secretary wrote to all those previously elected and appointed to the Central Conference CSE to ask whether they would be willing to continue in their role for the next term of office from 2025 to 2029. It is gratifying that most of them are willing to do so. Nevertheless, there are some who will be stepping down from their role:

- Lea Hafner - Lay member of the Executive Committee of AC CH-FR-NA
- Jörg Niederer - Chair and representative of AC CH-FR-NA in the Working Group Episcopacy
- Stefan Hafner - Vice-Chair of the Council on Finance and Administration (he remains as member)
- Daniel Burkhalter - Member of the Council on Finance and Administration
- Hanna Wilhelm - Member and convenor of the Committee on Investigation (AC CH-FR-NA)
- Theo Rickenbacher - Substitute member of the Committee on Appeals (AC CH-FR-NA)
- Michael Nausner - Member of the Working Group Theology and Ordained Ministries (AC AT)
- David Chlupáček - Member of the Working Group Church and Society
- Esther Handschin - Member of the Working Group Liturgy
- Lilla Kardosné-Lakatos - Lay member of the EMC, Joint Commission Europe CSE, representative in FMIE

In addition, the following offices and appointments are vacant:

- Vice-Chair of the Central Conference
- Chair of the Council on Finance and Administration and member of the Pension Board
- Local pastor as a member of the Committee on Appeals (not from CH)
- Local pastor as substitute member of the Committee on Appeals (not from CH)
- 2 substitute members Judicial Court
- Member of the CPCE Regional Group South-East Europe

The overview of appointments and elections can be found in Attachment 1, which also contains information on who is responsible for nominations.

## **7. Leadership Gathering instead of special session General Conference 2026**

The Council of Bishops announced a Leadership Gathering for 2026 to prepare for the 2028 General Conference, among other things. Consequently, there will be no extraordinary General Conference, as previously announced. The Leadership Gathering will take place in April or May 2026 and last five days. The exact dates and venue will be announced at a later date. Participants in the Leadership Gathering will include all active bishops and the representatives of the Council of Bishops, three other leaders from each episcopal area, the General Secretaries and other leaders from the global level of our Church.

## **8. Revision of the Constitution of the European Methodist Council**

The current constitution not only supplies the foundation for the European Methodist Council (EMC) but also regulates its work in some detail. The process to amend the constitution is long and complex as it includes the ratification of all member churches. In order to create some flexibility in giving more detailed guidelines for our work, the EMC has added 4 appendixes. This approach has served us well for some years, however, the Executive Committee of the EMC now feels that a more thorough revision is needed. They are proposing a simplified and succinct constitution where amendments still will require ratification by all member churches and in addition a set of bylaws that can be amended by a two-third majority vote of the EMC. All details regulating the work of the EMC are moved to bylaws together with the four appendixes (see Attachment 3)

Attachment 2 shows the changes:

~~Strike through text~~ is what has been moved to the bylaws or in a few cases deleted as it was considered redundant/unnecessary.

Underlined text is new text.

The most significant additions being,

- requiring all new members to sign the community agreement,
- the possibility of removing a Church from membership and
- a dissolution paragraph.

### **Proposal to the Executive Committee of the CC CSE:**

**The Executive Committee of the CC CSE approves the revised Constitution of the European Methodist Council as presented with the amendments adopted by the Council.**

*Markus Bach, Secretary*

**Wahlen 2025-2029 ZK MSE - Elections 2025-2029 CC CSE****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 - <i>Bishop, chair</i>	Stefan Zürcher	
Stv. Vorsitz - <i>Vice-chair</i>		<i>vakant - vacant</i>
Sekretär - <i>Secretary</i>	Markus Bach (CH)	
Kassierin - <i>Treasurer</i>	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 from 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 - <i>Bishop, chair</i>	Stefan Zürcher	
Stv. Vorsitz - <i>Vice-chair</i>		<i>vakant - vacant</i>
Sekretär - <i>Secretary</i>	Markus Bach	
Kassierin - <i>Treasurer</i>	Iris Bullinger	
JK Österreich	Sup. Stefan Schröckenfuchs	Ben Nausner
JK Schweiz-Frankreich-Nordafrika	Sup. Serge Frutiger	<del>Lea Hafner</del>
JK Tschechien	Sup. Ivana Procházková	Martina
Chlupáčková		
JK Ungarn-Rumänien	Sup. László Khaled	Dávid Csernák
JK Polen Sup. Andrzej Malicki	Bozena Daszuta	
JK Serbien-Nordmazedonien-Albanien	Sup. Daniel Sjanta	Emil Zaev
Vorsitz AG Bischofsamt	<del>Jörg Niederer</del>	

**Mit beratender Stimme – members with voice, but not vote:**

Bischöfe im Ruhestand - *retired bishops*

Bischof / Bishop Heinrich Bolleter

Bischof / Bishop 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	
Algerien und Tunesien	Sup. Freddy Nzambe	
Albanien	Sup. Wilfried Nausner	
Rumänien	Sup. Rares Calugar	
Nordmazedonien	Sup. Marjan Dimov	
Koordinatorin des Frauendienstes		Barbara Büniger

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 (Stv. Vorsitz / <i>Vice Chairman</i> )	<del>Stefan Hafner (CH)</del>
Rechtsrat	Christa Tobler (CH)
AG Theologie u. Ordinierte Dienste	Zoltán Kovács (HU)
AG Kinder und Jugend (Co-Vorsitzende / Co-Chairs)	Ivana Pastor (RS) vakant - <i>vacant</i>
AG Kirche und Gesellschaft	Marietjie Odendaal (CH)
AG Frauendienst	Monika Zuber (PL)
AG Liturgie	Erika Stalcup (CH)
AG Kirchenordnung u. Rechtsfragen	Wilfried Nausner (AL)
	Barbara Büniger (CH)

### **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>	vakant - <i>vacant</i> Stefan Hafner (CH) <del>Daniel Burkhalter (CH)</del>
Revisor der Kasse Zentralkonferenz - <i>Auditor of the CC accounts</i>	Stefan Hafner (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 person with knowledge in pension elected by the executive committee.*

Vorsitz - <i>Chair</i>	amtsführender Bischof / active Bishop Stefan Hafner (CH) <del>Daniel Burkhalter (CH)</del>
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	<del>Hanna Wilhelm (Einberuferin – <i>convener</i>)</del>	
JK Tschechien	Petr Procházka	
JK Ungarn-Rumänien	László Khaled	Grethe Jenei
JK Polen	Sławomir Rodaszyński	
JK Serbien-Nordmazedonien-Albanien	Ana Palik-Kunčak vakant - <i>vacant</i>	

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-Rumänien	Zoltán Kovács
JK Polen	Olgierd Benedyktowicz
JK Serbien-Nordmazedonien-Albanien	Marjan Dimov

### **Berufungsausschuss - Committee on Appeals**

4 pastorale Mitglieder in voller Verbindung; 1 vollzeitlicher Lokalpfarrer; 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 Weissenbrunner
JK Schweiz-Frankreich-Nordafrika	Etienne Rudolph	
JK Tschechien	Pavel Hradský	
JK Ungarn-Rumänien		Henrik Schauerermann
JK Polen	Józef Bartos	
JK Serbien-Nordmazedonien-Albanien		Maria Parnicki
Lokalpfarrer - Local pastor	Ruedi Stähli (CH)	

Ersatzmitglieder: 4 pastorale Mitglieder in voller Verbindung; 1 vollzeitlicher Lokalpfarrer; 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	<del>Theo Rickenbacher (bis 2024)</del>	Marc Berger
JK Tschechien		Josef Thal
JK Ungarn-Rumänien	Márton Hecker	
JK Polen		Bozena Daszuta
JK Serbien-Nordmazedonien-Albanien	Lila Balovski (RS)	
Lokalpfarrer	Christine Moll (CH)	

### **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.*

Milen Stefanov (MK)	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	Markus Bach (CH)
Ersatz	Stefan Schröckenfuchs (AT)
	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 has 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	<del>Jörg Niederer (Vorsitz)</del>
JK Tschechien	Ivana Procházková
JK Ungarn-Rumänien	László Khaled
JK Polen	Bozena Daszuta
JK Serbien-Nordmazedonien-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 Ministries (ENGLISH)**

Zoltán Kovács (HU), Vorsitzender - *chair*

David Field (CH)

~~Michael Nausner (AT)~~

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), Vorsitzende – *chair*

~~David Chlupáček (CZ)~~

Dorothee Bührma (AT)

### **Arbeitsgruppe Kinder und Jugend – Working Group Children and Youth**

Ivana Pastor (RS), Co-Vorsitzende - *co-chair*

vakant - *vacant*, Co-Vorsitzender - *co-chair*

und die Delegierten aller Länder – *and the delegates of all countries*

### **Arbeitsgruppe Frauendienst – Working Group Women's Work (ENGLISH)**

Monika Zuber (PL), Vorsitzende - *chair*

Maria Đurovka-Petraš (RS)

Murielle Rietschi Wilhelm (CH)

Zentralkonferenz-Koordinatorin – *Central Conference Coordinator*: Barbara Büniger (CH)

### **Arbeitsgruppe Liturgie – Working Group Liturgy (ENGLISH)**

Erika Stalcup (CH), Vorsitzende - *chair*

~~Esther Handschin (AT)~~

Jana Křížova (CZ)



## **Arbeitsgruppe Kirchenordnung und Rechtsfragen –**

### ***Working Group Discipline and Legal Affairs (GERMAN + ENGLISH)***

Wilfried Nausner (AL), Vorsitzender - *chair*

Petr Procházka (CZ)

Serge Frutiger (CH)

László Khaled (HU)

## **Vertretungen über Zentralkonferenz hinaus –**

### **Representatives beyond the Central conference (pro memoria)**

#### **European Level:**

*Soweit keine anderen Wahlbestimmungen bestehen: Wahl durch das Exekutivkomitee auf Vorschlag des Büros.*

*Unless other rules prevail: election by the executive committee after nomination by the office.*

#### **European Methodist Council (EMC) and Joint Commission of UMC in Europe**

Bischof / *Bishop*

Stefan Zürcher

Adrian Myslinski (PL)

~~Lilla Kardosné Lakatos (HU)~~

Vladimir Fazekaš (RS)

Anna Shammass (CH)

#### **European Commission on Mission (ECOM)**

Connexio Co-Vorsitzender – *Co-President*

Daniel Hänni (CH)

Connexio Geschäftsleiter – *General Secretary*

Ulrich Bachmann (CH)

#### **Fund for Mission in Europe (FMIE)**

Bischof / *Bishop*

Stefan Zürcher

~~Lilla Kardosné Lakatos (HU)~~

Geschäftsführer, beratend - *Manager, with voice but not vote:*

Andreas Stämpfli (CH)

#### **Europäisches Laienseminar – *European Lay Seminar***

Christa Wichers (CH)

#### **Methodist e-Academy (Governing Board)**

Bischof / *Bishop*

Patrick Streiff, Vorsitz - *Chair*

Zoltán Kovács (HU)

Christoph Schlupe (CH)

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#### **Gemeinschaft Evangelischer Kirchen in Europa - GEKE (Regionalgruppe Süd-Ost-Europa) –**

***Community of Protestant Churches in Europe - CPCE (South-East Europe regional group)***

*vakant - vacant*

Wilfried Nausner (AL)

## **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

Andrzej Malicki (PL)

Thomas Fux (AT)

### **Connectional Table**

Zentralkonferenz MSE: 1 Person - *Central conference CSE: 1 person*

Stefan Schröckenfuchs (AT)

### **GBGM – General Board of Global Ministries**

Von der ZK MSE zu wählen - *To be elected by CC CSE*

Jean-Paul Dietrich (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

Jana Křížova (CZ)

JK Ungarn-Rumänien

Rares Calugar (RO)

Laura Tordaj-Szuhánski (HU)

JK Polen

Adrian Myslinski (PL)

JK Serbien-Nord-Mazedonien-Albanien Maria Đurovka-Petraš (RS) Jennifer Moore (MK)

Mitglied im Koordinationsteam – *member of Coordinating Committee* Urs Schweizer

### **United Methodist Publishing House**

Ueli Frei (CH)

## **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)

## Motion for action by the European Methodist Council

The current constitution not only supplies the foundation for the European Methodist Council but also regulates our work in some detail. The process to amend the constitution is long and complex as it includes the ratification of all member churches. In order to create some flexibility in giving more detailed guidelines for our work, the council has added 4 appendixes. This approach has served us well for some years however, the executive committee now feels that a more thorough revision is needed. We are proposing a simplified and succinct constitution where amendments still will require ratification by all member churches and in addition a set of bylaws that can be amended by a two-third majority vote of the council.

All details regulating the work of the council are moved to bylaws together with the four appendixes. Strike through text is has been moved to the bylaws or in a few cases deleted as they are considered superfluous.

Underlined text is new text. The most significant additions being, requiring all new members to sign the community agreement, the possibility of removing a church from membership and a dissolution paragraph.

Motion: To approve the revised Constitution as presented with the amendments the council decides to make.

### THE CONSTITUTION OF THE EUROPEAN METHODIST COUNCIL

#### 1. PREAMBLE

1.1. The relationship between the Methodist Churches in Britain and Ireland and the Methodist-Episcopal Church, as it was then known in Continental Europe, has a long history. Contacts in the earlier years of the twentieth century led immediately after the Second World War to the founding of the "Consultative Conference of European Methodist Churches". The Consultative Conference involved all Methodist Churches in Europe and made it possible for representatives to meet regularly and to share information on a European level.

1.2 In 1966 the "Council of the Central Conferences in Europe" of the Methodist Church, soon to become the United Methodist Church, was founded. The goal was to enable close co-operation and co-ordination of the work of the Central Conferences of the Methodist Church. The union of the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church in 1968 brought into existence the United Methodist Church. The Council was enlarged and adopted the title "European Council of the United Methodist Church". From the beginning of its work the Council invited the Methodist Church in Britain to send an observer to the Council's meeting.

1.3 The great changes which took place in Europe in the 1990s, particularly the development of the European Union and the breakdown of the Communist systems in eastern Europe, increased the necessity for the Methodist Churches in Europe to co-operate and exchange information. In 1993, the "European Methodist Council" was founded with the aim to include all the Methodist Churches in Europe. While the European Council of the United Methodist Church handed over its work to the new Council, the three Central Conferences continued to consult together in matters of common concern through the Joint Commission of the United Methodist Church in Europe. Membership of the European Methodist Council is intended to complement all existing relationships.

Last amendments 2015. Ratified by all member churches 2016

- 1.4 The founding member churches of the European Methodist Council were:
- The European Central Conferences of the United Methodist Church, namely Central and Southern Europe Central Conference, Germany Central Conference and Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference
  - The Methodist Church of Great Britain
  - The Methodist Church in Ireland
  - The Methodist Church in Portugal (Igreja Evangélica Metodista Portuguesa)
  - The Opera for the Evangelical Methodist Churches in Italy (Opera per le Chiese Evangeliche Metodiste in Italia, OPCEMI)
  - The Spanish Evangelical Church (Iglesia Evangélica Española)

1.5 The member churches are connected through the agreement "Community of Methodist and Wesleyan Churches in Europe" which was initially joined and signed in September 2016 in Wesley Chapel, London, and subsequently signed by new members of the council.

## 2. PURPOSE

2.1 The European Methodist Council exists:

- to enable member churches to consult together on matters of common concern;
- to enable a stronger Methodist witness in Europe;
- to enable member churches to share resources with one another, as need may arise;
- to enable member churches to be more adequately represented in ecumenical and secular bodies;
- to enable member churches to share with other ecumenical partners in Christian mission in Europe;
- to co-ordinate existing co-operative Methodist, Wesleyan and United / Uniting Church work in Europe;
- to offer advice to member churches.

~~2.2 In order to fulfil its purpose, the Council shall give consideration to its responsibility in the following areas:~~

- ~~Theology~~
- ~~Church and Society~~
- ~~Evangelism and Church Development~~
- ~~Ecumenism~~
- ~~Sharing and networking~~

Last amendments 2015. Ratified by all member churches 2016

~~Other areas that the Council from time to time deems appropriate.~~

~~2.32~~ The Council is consultative only, and its decisions shall not be binding on member churches.

### 3. MEMBER CHURCHES

~~3.1~~ Membership shall be open to all churches of a Methodist or Wesleyan tradition in Europe, and united or uniting churches in Europe that have inherited the Methodist or Wesleyan tradition. *(moved to 10)*

~~3.21~~ The present member churches of the Council are listed in the bylaws appendix 1 to the Constitution.

### 4. THE COUNCIL

4.1 The Council shall normally meet at least once a year.

4.2 The Council is composed of member churches as regulated by the bylaws. Constituted as follows:

~~The Germany, the Central and Southern Europe Central Conferences of the United Methodist Church and the Methodist Church of Great Britain: five members each (including the Bishop, President, or some other senior church leader and at least two lay representatives).~~

~~The Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference: Six members (including two bishops and at least two lay representatives)~~

~~The Methodist Church in Ireland: three members (including the Secretary of Conference and at least one lay representative).~~

~~Other churches: two members each (including a senior church leader).~~

~~4.3~~ The Council shall have power to vary the representation of member bodies.

~~4.4~~ Each member Church shall be free to determine the length of service of its representatives, in order to secure both continuity and change in the membership of the Council.

~~4.5~~ Related organisations (See section 9) and observer churches (See section 10) may participate in the Council.

### 5. OFFICERS

5.1 The Officers of the Council shall be: two Co-Chairpersons, a Secretary, a Treasurer, all elected by the Council. It is recommended that they come from different member churches and conferences.

5.2 The Co-Chairpersons shall normally serve for a ~~four~~ six-year period, with one being elected every ~~two~~ three years. The Co-Chairpersons shall represent different Methodist traditions.

Last amendments 2015. Ratified by all member churches 2016

## 56. WORK AND VOICE OF THE COUNCIL

~~56.1~~ The Council, between its annual meetings, works through its officers and ~~Executive~~ Executive committee and committees.

~~5.2~~ The ~~Executive and the committees can publish statements and documents adopted by the council.~~

~~5.3~~ Officers, other members of the Executive, representatives of the committees can, within their area of responsibility, speak to and promote statements and documents adopted by the Council

~~56.2~~ Officers ~~The co-chairs~~ can speak to European Methodists on behalf of the executive ~~Executive committee~~ on timely matters ~~not yet addressed by the council.~~

## 7. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

7.1 There shall be an Executive executive committee, consisting of the Officers and ~~no more than four other persons elected~~ the number of members decided by the Council. It is recommended that they come from different member churches and conferences. Members shall normally serve for a ~~four~~ six-year period.

7.2 The Executive committee shall lead the work of the Council between the council meetings. ~~normally meets once between the council meetings and may hold its meetings by electronic means.~~

## 8. COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

Committees and working groups may be established by the Council as needs arise.

~~8.1~~ The Fund for Mission in Europe (FMiE) is a standing committee of the council

~~— The responsibility of FMiE is to raise and distribute funds for those churches and conferences in Europe who need help in their mission and social work.~~

~~— The chairperson of FMiE and up to ten other persons and the manager are elected by the Council, normally for a four-year period.~~

~~— FMiE reports and is accountable to the Council.~~

~~— The meeting costs of FMiE are included in the budget of the Council.~~

~~8.2~~ Ad hoc committees and project groups may be established by the Council as needs arise. They report and are accountable to the Council.

## 9. RELATED ORGANISATIONS

The relationships to other organizations are regulated in the bylaws.

Last amendments 2015. Ratified by all member churches 2016

~~9.1 Related organisations work in consultation with the Council.~~

~~9.2 Related organisations are invited to give a report to the Council.~~

~~9.3 Related organisations are listed in Appendix 2 of the Constitution. The list includes further provisions if the Council decides to take care of specific expenses linked to the collaboration with related organisations.~~

## 10. OBSERVER STATUS OF CHURCHES BECOMING A MEMBER CHURCH

10.1 Membership shall be open to all churches of a Methodist or Wesleyan tradition in Europe, and united / uniting churches in Europe that have inherited the Methodist or Wesleyan tradition.

10.2 Upon application and with the recommendation of the executive committee a church may become a member through a two-third majority vote of the council.

### 10.3 New member churches are required to join and sign the Community Agreement

10.4 As a transitional step towards membership, an eligible church (See 3.2) may be granted observer status for a maximum period of three years.

10.25 Observers may participate in the Council with one representative with a voice but no vote.

10.36 Observers do not pay membership fees but pay both travel and accommodation costs for its representative.

10.7 Membership can be terminated by written request to the executive committee.

10.8 Upon recommendation of the executive committee a member church may be removed from membership through a two-third majority vote of the council.

## 11. ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS

~~11.1 While ~~the Council does not hold membership in Ecumenical bodies, it seeks to co-ordinate~~ the Methodist, Wesleyan and United/Uniting Church representation and voice on Ecumenical bodies in Europe and in the world. In the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE).~~

11.2 The Council can initiate or facilitate ecumenical dialogues.

## 12. FINANCE

12.1 There shall be a common fund for the expenses of the Council to which all member churches contribute on a basis agreed by the Council.

12.2 The budget of the Council shall include costs for:

Last amendments 2015. Ratified by all member churches 2016

- council meetings,
- executive committee meetings,
- ~~— standing committee meetings,~~
- ~~— meetings of ad hoc committees and project groups approved by the Council,~~
- other causes decided by the Council.

12.3 Observers and related organisations pay both travel and accommodation costs, if not otherwise decided by the Council.

12.4 The Council shall elect an auditor who annually gives an auditor's report.

### 13 AMENDMENT

13.1 The Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting at a meeting of the Council, provided that it is subsequently ratified by the member churches.

13.2 This Constitution was first adopted 7-8.9.1993, and amended on 16.9.1997 and 16.9.2008. Minor editorial changes were adopted on 15.9.2009. The present constitution was adopted in 2015

### 14 DISSOLUTION

14.1 The European Methodist Council may be dissolved upon a motion from the executive committee and by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting at a regular meeting of the Council, provided that it is subsequently ratified by the member churches. A motion to dissolve the Council must be sent to the member churches and the council members at least six months prior to the meeting.

14.2 Upon dissolution all assets of the council will be distributed to member churches as decided by the council.

#### Appendix 1: List of member churches

The Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe, of the United Methodist Church

The Central Conference of Germany, of the United Methodist Church

The Central Conference of Northern Europe and Eurasia, of the United Methodist Church.

The Methodist Church of Great Britain;

The Methodist Church in Ireland;

The Methodist Church in Portugal; (Igreja Evangélica Metodista Portuguesa)

The Opera for the Evangelical Methodist Churches in Italy (Opera per le Chiese Evangeliche Metodiste in Italia, OPCEMI)

The Spanish Evangelical Church (Iglesia Evangélica Española);

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The Church of the Nazarene;

The European District of the Korean Methodist Church;

Ekumeniakyrkan (Uniting Church in Sweden)

The Wesleyan Church in Europe

#### **Guidelines for the composition of the executive**

Not counting the secretary in the balance, the executive shall be composed of at least one member each from the Methodist Church of Great Britain, from the Methodist Church in Ireland, from each of the three central conferences of the United Methodist Church, and from one of the autonomous Methodist or Wesleyan member church.

## Appendix 2: List of related organizations

### European Methodist Youth and Children (EMYC):

EMYC and the Council report to each other, and send a representative to each other's meeting. The sending council pays the travel costs and the hosting council the accommodation costs of the representative. The executives of EMYC and EMC may meet to discuss issues of common interest and coordinate project proposals and other common matters.

### European Commission on Mission (ECOM):

If not otherwise represented in the Council, ECOM is welcome to send its chairperson to council meetings with expenses paid by the Council.

### European Lay Seminar:

General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church (GBGM), primarily through its Europe Secretary.

### Joint Commission of the United Methodist Central Conferences in Europe:

The United Methodist members of the Council may meet in a separate session to deal with matters of common interest.

### The Methodist Ecumenical Office Rome (MEOR)

### Methodist related Theological Schools in Europe (MTSE)

World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women (Europe Continental) and World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women (Britain and Ireland).

World Methodist Council (WMC), primarily through its Geneva Secretary.

World Methodist Historical Society – European Section.

## Appendix 3: Role of Officers and Members of the Executive Committee

### The Executive as a whole is expected to:

- Take ownership of the work of the Council throughout the year, meeting as an executive around 4 times a year. At least one of these meetings is normally a face-to-face meeting.
- Keep oversight of the resolutions of the Council so that work is carried out as agreed.
- Engage with requests from the Officers of the Executive.
- Act and speak on behalf of the Council in between the meetings of the Council.
- Play a leading role in the development of the Council working with the aims as agreed by the Council.
- Attend third party meetings on behalf of the Council where required.

Last amendments 2015. Ratified by all member churches 2016

#### Officer and members of the Executive Committee do this by:

- Attending Executive meetings (online and in person) and being prepared to make considered contribution to the items discussed as part of the Agenda.
- Playing a key part in the organising/leading of the Council meeting and related activities.
- Being willing to offer resources (time or otherwise) to the work of the Council throughout the year.
- Engaging in an annual reflection with the other Executive Committee members on the effectiveness of the work carried out by the Executive on behalf of EMC, in order to constantly improve the function of the Executive and to ensure that an appropriate balance of skills is reflected in Executive Committee membership.
- Keeping the work of the Council in mind as they engage in their own denominations and ensure synergy of direction where possible.

#### The role of the Co-Chairs (in addition to the expectations on the whole Executive)

- Chairing the meetings of the Council and the Executive
- Keeping the strategic work of the Council under review
- Co-ordination of the work of the Council and the Executive in between meetings of both
- Lead the Executive by enabling and empowering their participation in the work of the Council
- Oversight and management of the Support Officer (EMC)
- Meeting regularly to plan and develop the work of the Executive and Council

#### The role of the Treasurer

- Oversight and management of the financial affairs of the Council
- Regular reporting to the Executive on expenditure and income
- Management of the applications for support funding for engaging around the continent
- Bringing to the Executive an annual budget
- Ensuring the annual audit of the accounts and presentation of these to the Council

EMC 2020

#### Appendix 4: Process for Nomination of New Members to the EMC Executive Committee

The EMC Executive Committee will invite nominations to the Executive Committee from member churches when a vacancy arises, such as when a member completes their four-year term or a seat becomes vacant for other reasons.

Nominations will normally be requested from member churches following the face-to-face meeting of the EMC Executive Committee in the Spring. All member churches are invited to bring forward one name for nomination to the Executive Committee. Member churches with two or more seats on the Council may bring forward two names. (In this case, names for nomination should be proposed based on mutual agreement between members from the same Conference).

Member churches may bring forward names of any EMC member, regardless of length of service, from their own member church or from any other member church as listed in Appendix 1 to the Constitution.

Names should normally be received by the Executive Committee prior to its final online meeting preceding the annual EMC Meeting\*.

The Executive will examine the nominations and propose no more than 3 per seat to be brought forward for the election to be held at the annual EMC meeting. In proposing these names the Executive will seek to balance gender, geography, member church, expertise and status.

EMC 2020

Last amendments 2015. Ratified by all member churches 2016

## Motion for action by the European Methodist Council

These proposed bylaws are directed by the constitution of the European Methodist Council. Significant parts have been moved from the former constitution and the appendixes to the former constitution to the bylaws, this text is not marked. Underlined text is new text. Strike through text is deleted.

Motion: To approve the bylaws as presented with the amendments the council decides to make.

## BYLAWS OF THE EUROPEAN METHODIST COUNCIL

### 1. THE BYLAWS

The Bylaws of the European Methodist Council are directed by the constitution of the European Methodist Council

### 2. MEMBER CHURCHES

The Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe, of the United Methodist Church

The Central Conference of Germany, of the United Methodist Church

The Central Conference of Northern Europe and Eurasia; of the United Methodist Church.

The Methodist Church of Great Britain;

The Methodist Church in Ireland;

The Methodist Church in Portugal; (Igreja Evangélica Metodista Portuguesa)

The Opera for the Evangelical Methodist Churches in Italy (Opera per le Chiese Evangeliche Metodiste in Italia, OPCEMI)

The Spanish Evangelical Church (Iglesia Evangélica Española);

The Church of the Nazarene;

The European District of the Korean Methodist Church;

Ekumeniakyrkan (Uniting Church in Sweden)

~~The Wesleyan Church in Europe~~

### 3. THE COUNCIL

- a. the Council shall normally meet at least once a year. Additional meeting may be called by the executive committee with at least a 20 days notice. Half of the members present constitutes a quorum.

b. The Council is constituted as follows:

~~The Germany, the Northern Europe and Eurasia, and the Central and Southern Europe Central Conferences of the United Methodist Church and the Methodist Church of Great Britain: five members each (including the Bishop, President, or some other senior church leader and at least two lay representatives).~~

~~The Methodist Church in Ireland: three members (including the Secretary of Conference and at least one lay representative).~~

~~Other churches: two members each (including a senior church leader).~~

Each member church has three seats on the council (including at least one senior church leader and at least one lay person)

c. The Council shall have power to vary the representation of member bodies.

d. Each member Church shall be free to determine the length of service of its representatives, in order to secure both continuity and change in the membership of the Council.

e. Observer churches may participate in the meetings of the Council with voice but without vote.

f. Related organizations can participate in the meetings of the council. The council welcomes their input on matters related to their role. They will not serve as members on committees and work groups, but they may be invited as consultants.

g. The meetings of the council including the business sessions are public and guests may be present, they will not have voice or be invited to serve on committees and work groups.

### 3-4. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

a. Meetings

The executive committee will meet at least twice a year called by the co-chairs. Any three members of the executive committee may call an extra meeting. A meeting must be called with at least a 20 days notice. At least half of the members need to be present for a quorum.

b. Composition

The two co-chairs

~~The secretary~~

The treasurer

And in addition between 4 and 7 members

The executive committee shall reflect the composition of the council. Gender balance and a balance of lay and clergy is desirable.

Not counting the secretary in the balance, the executive committee shall be composed of at least one member each from the Methodist Church of Great Britain, from the Methodist Church in Ireland, from each of the three central conferences of the United Methodist Church, and from one of the autonomous Methodist or Wesleyan member church.

#### c. Responsibilities

- Take ownership of the work of the Council throughout the year.
- Keep oversight of the resolutions of the Council so that work is carried out as agreed.
- Engage with requests from the Officers of the Executive.
- Act and speak on behalf of the Council in between the meetings of the Council.
- Play a leading role in the development of the Council working with the aims as agreed by the Council.
- Attend third party meetings on behalf of the Council where required.

Officers and members of the executive committee do this by:

- Attending executive committee meetings and being prepared to make considered contributions to the items discussed as part of the Agenda.
- Playing a key part in the organizing/leading of the Council meetings and related activities.
- Being willing to offer resources (time or otherwise) to the work of the Council throughout the year.
- Engaging in an annual reflection with the other executive committee members on the effectiveness of the work carried out by the executive committee on behalf of EMC, in order to constantly improve the function of the executive committee and to ensure that an appropriate balance of skills is reflected in executive committee membership.
- Keeping the work of the Council in mind as they engage in their own denominations and ensure synergy of direction where possible.

The co-chairs

- Chairing the meetings of the Council and the executive committee
- Keeping the strategic work of the Council under review
- Co-ordination of the work of the Council and the executive committee in between meetings of both
- Lead the executive committee by enabling and empowering their participation in the work of the Council
- Oversight and management of the Support Officer (EMC)
- Meeting regularly to plan and develop the work of the executive committee and Council

Treasurer

- Oversight and management of the financial affairs of the Council
- Regular reporting to the executive committee on expenditure and income
- Management of the applications for support funding for engaging around the continent

- Bringing to the executive committee an annual budget
- Ensuring the annual audit of the accounts and presentation of these to the Council

#### 4.5. PROCESS FOR NOMINATION OF NEW MEMBERS TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- The EMC executive committee will invite nominations to the executive committee from member churches when a vacancy arises, such as when a member completes their six-year term or a seat becomes vacant for other reasons.
- ← All member churches are invited to bring forward two ~~one~~ names for nomination to the executive committee. ~~Member churches with two or more seats on the Council may bring forward two names.~~
- Member churches may bring forward names of any EMC member, regardless of length of service, from their own member church or from any other member church.
- The executive committee will examine the nominations and propose no more than 3 per seat to be brought forward for the election to be held at the council meeting in the fall. In proposing these names the executive committee will seek to balance gender, geography, member church, expertise and status.

#### • COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

a. Committees may be established on proposal by the executive committee.

b. The Fund for Mission in Europe (FMiE) is a committee of the council.

The committee distributes the funds raised through EMC for those churches and conferences in Europe who need help in their mission and social work.

The chairperson of FMiE and up to ten other persons are elected and the manager is appointed by the Council, normally for a four-year period.

The business manager of the FMiE is invited to participate in the council meetings with voice but no vote.

FMiE reports and is accountable to the Council.

The meeting costs of FMiE are included in the budget of the Council.

c. European Methodist Youth and Childrens Forum (EMYCF): The EMYCF is a forum of youth and children's leaders brought together with the support of the Council for exchange of ideas.

d. Working groups may be established by the Council as needs arise.

e. Committees and working groups report and are accountable to the Council.



## 5.6. RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

- a. Relationship: The European Methodist Council consults with the related organizations. The related organizations have no official representation on the council. They may participate as guests.

### b. Related Organizations

~~The European Methodist Youth Council (EMYC)~~

European Commission on Mission (ECOM):

~~European Lay Seminar.~~

General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church (GBGM), primarily through its Europe Secretary.

~~Joint Commission of the United Methodist Central Conferences in Europe:~~

~~The United Methodist members of the Council may meet in a separate session to deal with matters of common interest.~~

The Methodist Ecumenical Office Rome (MEOR)

Methodist related Theological Schools in Europe (MTSE)

World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women (Europe Continental) and World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women (Britain and Ireland).

World Methodist Council (WMC), primarily through its Geneva Secretary.

World Methodist Historical Society – European Section.

## 6.7. CHANGES TO THE BYLAWS

- The executive committee and any member of the council may make a motion to amend the bylaws. Such a motion must be made in writing and sent to the co-chairs at least one month prior to any council meeting.
- The bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting at any meeting of the Council.

## VIII. Reports of the Working Groups and other Groups

### Working Group Church and Society

#### How can the tradition of Wesley's General Rules speak to our lives?

The General Rules wanted to encourage people on the way of faithful living, following Jesus Christ. We translated them into our time and now speak of guidelines.

They invite us to look at the world and see God's grace around and in us. And they ask us to look at how we count on God's grace in our daily lives.

We are invited to live in the space of God's grace. We make choices. We are responsible. That is why Wesley asked people, how well they were doing with the General Rules.

- Look at the guidelines by yourselves and in groups.
- See how far God's grace reaches in you and in the world.
- Make a choice to live in ways that match that grace.
- Let other people help you be committed and accountable.

Try it with colleagues, in small groups in the congregation or when people are joining the congregation.

Think about these questions:

- What do the single guidelines have to do with your life?
- What do you want to try out in your life?

*Marietjie Odendaal*

# Guidelines for a responsible way of life

(Following John Wesley's General Rules)

We affirm the Good News of Jesus Christ. We hold on to the creeds and statements of our Christian faith tradition. We believe that faith grows, when it changes the way we live.

These guidelines invite us into conversation. They want to help us look at how we live in the world. They can become stepping stones for our faith journey.

## 1 Do no harm

- Take responsibility for my actions and choices.
- Change where my way of living harms God's Creation. That includes all other forms of life and relationships between people.
- Resist the pressure of wealth, influence, fame and social expectations. Instead offer my life and talents for God's use. This includes a rhythm of life that makes room for rest.
- Seek to be so informed, that I can act freely, responsibly and joyfully in the interests of peace.
- Unlearn habits of addiction and support people who want to overcome their addictions.
- Treat all people with dignity and in a hospitable manner. Speak and act lovingly and use power carefully.

## 2 Do good

- Discover the wonders and beauty of God's gifts in creation. As a follower of Jesus Christ, take care of and protect them. Work, for instance, against everything that endangers life.
- Love where it is difficult. Try new ways to see, act and think.
- Live simply and find habits that make me free.
- Do good to all people, as I am able.
- Learn to make peace, even when it takes courage.
- Be faithful and hopeful in all things.

## 3 Accept God's grace

I can experience God's grace in many ways, for example:

- Church services and celebrations, the Lord's Supper, individual and joint prayer.
- Studying the Bible and learning with and from other Christians.
- Fasting: taking a step back from everyday routines (food, media, shopping, etc.).

The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the love of God  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all.

Revised version:

Revisions are underlined

## **Living with the "Guidelines for a responsible way of life"**

How can the tradition of Wesley's General Rules speak to our lives?

Wesley had people in need of hope and stay in mind, when he wrote the General Rules. This longing for hope and stay would reveal itself when three simple rules were observed:

1. Doing no harm
2. Doing good, as far as possible, and
3. Continually seeking the space of God's grace.

We are invited to live in the space of God's grace. We make choices. We are responsible. That is why Wesley asked people, how well they were doing with the General Rules.

We translated them into our time and now speak of guidelines. They invite us to look at the world and see God's grace around and in us. And they ask us to look at how we count on God's grace in our daily lives.

- Look at the guidelines by yourselves and in groups.
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- Make a choice to live in ways that match that grace.
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Try it with colleagues, in small groups in the congregation or when people are joining the congregation. Think about these questions:

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# Guidelines for a responsible way of life

(Following John Wesley's General Rules)

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These guidelines invite us into conversation. They want to help us look at how we live in the world. They can become stepping stones for our faith journey.

## 1 Do no harm

- o Take responsibility for my actions and choices.
- o Change where my way of living harms God's Creation. That includes all other forms of life and relationships between people.
- o Resist things and people that put me under pressure and bind me. Instead I offer my life and talents for God's use. This includes a rhythm of life that makes room for rest.
- o Seek to be so informed, that I can act freely, responsibly and joyfully in the interests of peace.
- o Unlearn habits of addiction and support people who want to overcome their addictions.
- o Treat all people with dignity and in a hospitable manner. Speak and act lovingly and use power carefully.

## 2 Do good

- o Discover the wonders and beauty of God's gifts in creation. As a follower of Jesus Christ, take care of and protect them. Work, for instance, against everything that endangers life.
- o Love where it is difficult. Try new ways to see, act and think, to love God and neighbor.
- o Live simply and find habits that free me to do good.
- o Do good to all people, as I am able.
- o Learn to make peace, even when it takes courage.
- o Be faithful and hopeful in all things.

## 3 Accept God's grace

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- o Studying the Bible and learning with and from other Christians.
- o Fasting: taking a step back from everyday routines (food, media, shopping, etc.).

The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the love of God  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all.

# IX. Finances

## Financial Statement 2023

<b>Einnahmen</b>	<b>Rechnung 2023</b>		<b>Konsolidiert 2021 - 2024</b>	
Beiträge Jährliche Konferenzen				
Schweiz	45 000.00		135 000.00	
Frankreich	4 500.00		13 500.00	
Österreich	3 238.00		9 714.00	
Bulgarien	0.00		1 875.00	
Nord-Mazedonien	750.00		2 250.00	
Serbien	750.00		2 250.00	
Ungarn	1 500.00		4 500.00	
Slowakei	0.00		1 500.00	
Tschechien	1 500.00		3 000.00	
Polen	1 500.00		4 500.00	
Nordafrika	0.00	58 738.00	0.00	178 089.00
Gaben und Zinseinnahmen		217.05		273.05
<b>Total Einnahmen</b>		<b>58 955.05</b>		<b>178 362.05</b>
<b>Ausgaben</b>				
Zentralkonferenz	0.00		130 513.60	
Sitzungen Exekutivkomitee	18 767.47	139 042.83	44 108.60	174 622.20
AG Theologie und Ordinierte Dienste	0.00		0.00	
AG Kirche und Gesellschaft	0.00		3 043.00	
AG Kinder und Jugend	2 848.00		2 848.00	
AG Liturgie	0.00		0.00	
AG Kirchenordnung und Rechtsfragen	0.00		0.00	
AG Frauendienst	0.00*		0.00	
AG Bischofsamt	366.30		366.30	
Reserve für a.o. Aufträge	0.00	3 215.20	25 623.04	31 881.54
Superintendententreffen	0.00		0.00	
Weitere Tagungen	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Beiträge der Zentralkonferenz an:				
Weltrat	2 755.24		8 440.49	
Europäischer Rat	5 610.51		17 909.97	
Jugendrat (EMYC)	0.00	8 365.75	0.00	26 350.46
Verschiedenes				
Druckkosten	1 805.35		1 805.35	
Bibliothek / Archiv	7 500.00		22 500.00	
Übrige Kosten	9 087.32	18 392.67	9 433.25	33 738.60
<b>Total Ausgaben</b>		<b>48 741.09</b>		<b>266 592.80</b>
<b>Einnahmen</b>		<b>58 955.05</b>		<b>178 362.05</b>
<b>Ausgaben</b>		<b>48 741.09</b>		<b>266 592.80</b>
<b>Einnahmen-Überschuss</b>		<b>10 213.96</b>		
<b>Ausgaben-Überschuss</b>				<b>- 88 230.75</b>

## Balance Sheet as per December 31, 2023

	CHF	CHF
<b>Aktiven</b>		
Zahlstelle EMK	90 494.23	
Guthaben	537.25	
<b>Passiven</b>		
Kreditoren / Trans. Passiven		2 265.57
Rückstellungen		0.00
Eigenkapital		78 551.95
Ergebnis		10 213.96
<b>Total</b>	<b>91 031.48</b>	<b>91 031.48</b>

*Plan-les-Ouates, 27. Januar 2024, Iris Bullinger*

## Auditor's report on the Annual accounts 2023 Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe

As auditor, I audited the accounts (balance sheet and income statement) for 2023.

I checked the opening and closing balance sheets, reviewed the annual transactions on the income statement accounts and found that the accounts are clean and correct.

The 2023 accounts close with a revenue surplus of CHF 10'213.96.

As at December 31, 2023, the reported equity amounted to CHF 88,765.91.

The undersigned confirms the accuracy of the 2023 annual financial statements and the balance sheet as at December 31, 2023 and proposes that discharge be granted to the Treasurer, Iris Bullinger, and that she be thanked for her clean and conscientious work.

Schaffhausen, January 30, 2024

*The auditor:  
Stefan Hafner*

## Statistics based on the Annual Conferences 2023

<b>Bezirke Gemeinden Glieder Gottesdienste</b>										
	Bezirke	Gemeinden	Bekennende Glieder	Getaufte Glieder	Freunde	Total Pers.	Gottesdienstbesuch Erwachsene	Gottesdienstbesuch Kinder	Bekennende Glieder pro Bezirk	Bekennende Glieder pro Gemeinde
<b>nach Ländern</b>										
Albanien*	3	6	239	2	80	<b>321</b>	200	60	79.7	39.8
Algerien	4	6	170	0	20	<b>190</b>	99	8	42.5	28.3
Belgien	1	1	23		5	<b>28</b>	10	0	23.0	23.0
Frankreich	16	16	1 016	59	549	<b>1 624</b>	865	246	63.5	63.5
Nord-Mazedonien*	7	10			2 000	<b>2'000</b>			0	0.0
Österreich	7	7	617	442	429	<b>1 488</b>	226	35	88.1	88.1
Polen*	20	41	1705	237	260	<b>2 202</b>	1 400	141	85.3	41.6
Rumänien*	1	3	29	1	85	<b>115</b>	49	33	29.0	9.7
Schweiz	68	99	4 467	458	3 021	<b>7 946</b>	3 244	537	65.7	45.1
Serbien*	9	14	379	110	209	<b>698</b>	278	47	42.1	27.1
Tschechische Republik	14	19	789	215	431	<b>1 435</b>	978		56.4	41.5
Tunesien		1				<b>0</b>				
Ungarn	11	26	490	644	700	<b>1 834</b>	1 099	365	44.5	18.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>9 924</b>	<b>2 168</b>	<b>7 789</b>	<b>19 881</b>	<b>8 448</b>	<b>1 472</b>		
<i>Vorjahr 2022</i>	163	251	10 106	2 123	7 833	20 062	8 239	1 333		
<i>Differenz +/-</i>	-2	-2	-182	45	-44	-181	209	139		
<b>nach Konferenzen</b>										
Prov. JK Österreich	7	7	626	442	429	1497	226	35	89.4	89.4
JK Schweiz-Frankr.-NA	88	123	5 840	517	3 595	9 952	4 218	791	66.4	47.5
JK Tschechien ohne SK	14	19	810	215	431	1 456	978	0	57.9	42.6
Prov. JK Ungarn-Rum.*	12	29	541	645	785	1 949	1 148	398	45.1	18.7
JK Polen*	20	41	1 732	237	260	2 229	1 400		86.6	42.2
Prov. JK RS-NMK-AL*	19	30	639	112	2 289	3 019	478	107	33.6	21.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>10 188</b>	<b>2 168</b>	<b>7 789</b>	<b>20 102</b>			<b>379.0</b>	<b>261.7</b>



Pfarrpersonen Mitarbeitende	Personen in voller Verb. zur JK aktiv	Mitglieder auf Probe + a.o. Mitglieder aktiv	Lokalpastoren aktiv	Laienmitarbeiter aktiv	Volle Verbindung + a.o. Mitgl. i. Ruhestand	Clergy		Beginn der Arbeit
						aktiv	total	
<b>nach Ländern</b>								
Albanien	1	2	0	1	0	1	3	1922/1990
Algerien	0	1	1	2	3	0	2	1886
Belgien	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1920/2008
Frankreich	9	4	2	1	11	9	15	1791/1868/1907
Nord-Mazedonien	2	0	3	4	2	2	5	1873/1921
Österreich	6	1	1	0	1	6	8	1870
Polen	22	1	0	2	4	22	23	1895/1920
Rumänien	3	0	0	0	0	3	3	2011
Schweiz	46	2	30	1	54	46	78	1840/1856/1866
Serbien	7	0	3	1	1	7	10	1898
Tschechische Republik	10	3	4	1	4	10	17	1920
Tunesien	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	
Ungarn	9	1	3	0	6	9	13	1898/1905
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>178</b>	
<i>Vorjahr 2022</i>	118	17	41	11	84	118	176	
<i>Differenz +/-</i>	-2	-2	6	2	2	-2	2	

<b>Bekennende Glieder:</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>Differenz</b>
Prov. JK Österreich	742	746	744	646	642	617	-25
JK Schweiz-Frankreich-NA	6 605	6 407	6 215	6 138	5 924	5 676	-248
JK Tschechien	1 160	1 179	1 131	1 078	834	789	-45
Prov. JK Ungarn-Rumänien	477	509	516	521	508	519	11
JK Polen	2 105	1 925	1 924	1 978	1 787	1 705	-82
Prov. JK RS-NMK-AL	457	434	631	595	639	618	-21
<b>Total</b>	<b>12 935</b>	<b>12 564</b>	<b>12 353</b>	<b>12 069</b>	<b>10 334</b>	<b>9 924</b>	<b>-410</b>
+ Makedonien	1'200	1'200	1'200	1'200	1'200	1'200	0
+ Total Past. Mitglieder						264	+264
<b>Total Gesamt</b>	<b>14 135</b>	<b>13 764</b>	<b>13 553</b>	<b>13 269</b>	<b>11 534</b>	<b>11 388</b>	<b>-146</b>
<i>Änderung in %</i>	+0.13	-2.62		-2.10	-13.08	-1.27	

## V. Institutions of the Central Conference elected for the quadrennium 2021 - 2024

Office	Clergy:	Laypeople:
Bishop, Chair	Stefan Zürcher	
vice-Chair		vacant
Secretary	Markus Bach (CH)	
Treasurer	Iris Bullinger (CH)	

### Executive Committee

#### *Members with voting rights:*

Bishop, Chair	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 Czech Republic	Sup. Ivana Procházková	Martina Chlupáčková
AC Hungary	Sup. László Khaled	Dávid Csernák
AC Poland	Sup. Andrzej Malicki	Bozena Daszuta
AC Serbia-North Macedonia-Albania	Sup. Daniel Sjanta	Emil Zaev
Chair WG Episcopacy	Jörg Niederer	

#### *Members with voice, but not vote:*

Bishop in retirement	Bishop Heinrich Bolleter	
	Bishop Patrick Streiff	
France and Belgium	Sup. Grégoire Chahinian	
Algeria und Tunesia	Sup. Freddy Nzambe	
Rumania	Sup. Rares Calugar	
North-Macedonia	Sup. Marjan Dimov	
WG Theology and Ordained Ministries	Zoltán Kovacs (HU)	
WG Children and Youth		Ivana Pastor (RS)
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	Erica Stalcup (CH)	
WG Discipline and Legal Affairs	Sup. Wilfried Nausner (AL)	

## Council on Finance and Administration

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Chair ad interim	Stefan Hafner (CH) Daniel Burkhalter (CH) vacant
Auditor of the Treasury of the Central Conference	Stefan Hafner (CH)

## Pension Board

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Chair:	Bishop Stefan Zürcher
Members of the Council on Finance and Administration:	Stefan Hafner (CH) Daniel Burkhalter (CH) vacant
Additional person:	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 Czech Republic	Petr Procházka	
AC Hungary	László Khaled	Grethe Jenei
AC Poland	Sławomir Rodaszyński	
AC Serbia-North Macedonia-Albania	Ana Palik-Kunčak	
<b>Reserve:</b>		
AC Austria	Martin Obermeir-Siegrist	
AC Switzerland-France-North Africa	Gunnar Wichers	
AC Czech Republic	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 Czech Republic	Pavel Hradský	
AC Hungary		Henrik Schauer mann
AC Poland	Józef Bartos	
AC Serbia-North Macedonia-Albania		Maria Parnicki
Local Pastor	Ruedi Stähli (CH)	

**Reserve:**

AC Austria		Hayford Boateng
AC Switzerland-France-North Africa	Theo Rickenbacher	Marc Berger
AC Czech Republic		Josef Thal (CZ)
AC Hungary	Márton Hecker	
AC Poland		Bozena Daszuta
AC Serbia-North Macedonia-Albania	Lila Balovski (RS)	
Local Pastor	Christine Moll (CH)	

**Judicial Court**

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Members	Martin Streit (CH) István Csernák (HU)	Christa Tobler (CH) Philipp Hadorn (CH) Bernhard Pöll (AT)
<b>Reserve:</b>	Milen Stefanov (MK) vacant	Regula Dannecker (CH) vacant

**Counsel for the church**

---

Counsel	Markus Bach (CH)
Reserve	Stefan Schröckenfuchs (AT) Petr Procházka (CZ) Gábor Szuhánszky (HU) Etienne Rudolph (FR)

**Working Group Episcopacy**

---

AC Austria	Stefan Schröckenfuchs
AC Switzerland-France-North Africa	Jörg Niederer (Chair)
AC Czech Republic	Ivana Procházková
AC Hungary	László Khaled
AC Poland	Bozena Daszuta
AC Serbia-North Macedonia-Albania	Daniel Sjanta

**Working Group Theology and Ordained Ministries**

---

Zoltán Kovács (HU - Chair)  
David Field (CH)  
Michael Nausner (AT)  
Daniel Sjanta (RS)  
Edward Puślecki (PL)  
Jana Daněčková (CZ)  
(and 1 person of the Central Conference Germany)

## **Working Group Church and Society**

---

Marietjie Odendaal (CH - Chair)

David Chlupáček (CZ)

Dorothee Bührma (AT)

## **Working Group Children and Youth**

---

Ivana Pastor (RS - Co-Chair)

Simon Joel Zürcher (CH - Co-Chair)

and the delegates of the countries of the CC

## **Working Group Women's work**

---

Monika Zuber (PL - Chair)

Maria Đurovka-Petraš (RS)

Murielle Rietschi Wilhelm (CH)

Coordinator of the Women's work in the Central Conference: Barbara Büniger (CH)

## **Working Group Liturgy**

---

Erika Stalcup (CH - Chair)

Esther Handschin (AT)

Jana Křížova (CZ)

## **Working Group Discipline and Legal Affairs**

---

Wilfried Nausner (AT/AL - Chair)

Petr Procházka (CZ)

Serge Frutiger (CH)

László Khaled (HU)

# Representatives beyond the Central Conference CSE in Commissions and Working Groups

## European level:

### **European Methodist Council (EMC) and Joint Commission of UMC in Europe**

---

Bishop	Stefan Zürcher	
	Adrian Myslinski (PL)	Lilla Kardosné Lakatos (HU)
	Vladimir Fazekas (RS)	Anna Shammas (CH)

### **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)
Manager FMiE, with voice, but not vote		Andreas Stämpfli (CH)

### **European Lay Seminary**

---

Christa Wichers (CH)

### **Methodist e-Academy (Governing Board)**

---

Bishop	Patrick Streiff, Chair	
	Zoltán Kovács (HU)	
	Christoph Schluep (CH)	

### **Community of Protestant Churches in Europe - CPCE (South-East Europe regional group)**

---

Wilfried Nausner (AT/AL)  
vacant

## Worldwide level:

### Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters

---

Bishop	Stefan Zürcher	
	Andrzej Malicki (PL)	Thomas Fux (AT)

### Commission on General Conference

---

Lea Hafner (CH)

### Connectional Table

---

Stefan Schröckenfuchs (AT) Dániel Vadász (HU)

### General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM)

---

Jean-Paul Dietrich (CH)

### In Mission Together (IMT)

---

AC Czech Republic	Jana Křížová	
AC Hungary-Rumania	Rares Calugar	Laura Tordaj-Szuhánski
AC Poland	Adrian Myslinski	
AC Serbia-North Macedonia-Albania		Jennifer Moore (NMK)
		Maria Đurovka-Petraš (RS)
Coordinator		Urs Schweizer

### General Commission on Archives and History (GCAH)

---

Judit Lakatos (HU)

### The United Methodist Publishing House)

---

Ueli Frei (CH)

### World Methodist Historical Society – European Section

---

Vice-Chair	Judit Lakatos (HU)
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### World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women (WFMUCW)

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Vice-Chair Continental Europe	Lilla Kardosné Lakatos (HU)
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### World Evangelism

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Regional Secretary Central and Southern Europe	vacant
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Last update: December 2024

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