

Statement from ICOE Officers: Kim Ingram, chairperson; Jasper Peters, vice chairperson; Beata Ferris, secretary

The Judicial Council's Decision 1513 was in response to a request from the "Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference related to the authority of the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy."

The decision states that "the action of the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy (ICOE) in recommending the assignment of a bishop to the West Virginia Episcopal Area in the Northeastern Jurisdiction (NEJ) and the Holston Episcopal Area in the Southeast Jurisdiction (SEJ) is not consistent with the allocations approved by the postponed 2020 General Conference."

The ICOE respects the decision of the Judicial Council and offers these brief comments in response.

The ICOE, acting in July, based its decisions on the best information and circumstances available at the time, with no other viable options. Paragraph 49 of the Constitution stipulates that "No bishop shall be transferred unless that bishop shall have specifically consented." This constitutional requirement posed a significant challenge for the ICOE, which sought to harmonize competing concerns such as church polity, fiscal responsibility, and mission effectiveness without sacrificing any of these priorities. After extensive discussions, inquiries, and scenario evaluations, the ICOE ultimately recommended a solution to the Jurisdictional Conferences that stayed within the 32 active bishops serving in the United States.

The Judicial Council did not offer any remedy to their observation that "the assignment of a bishop to the West Virginia Episcopal Area in the NEJ and the Holston Episcopal Area in the SEJ, is not consistent with the allocations approved by the postponed 2020 General Conference."

Moving forward, several groups will work collaboratively between now and 2028 to ensure thorough preparation for the next election of episcopal leaders. This collaborative effort will uphold the Discipline and honor decisions made by the postponed General Conference

We extend our deep appreciation to Bishop Wallace-Padgett, who serves with dedication across two conferences and two jurisdictions.