

2023 Annual Report – WDC Gifts Discernment Committee

In order to discern who can serve in leadership for the Executive Board and the four Commissions, we ask the larger body of Western District for suggestions of names. We check with each group about what their particularly needs are now. We bring our own suggestions from our experiences across the conference and we also reach out and specifically ask other people for suggestions.

We check for additional information for each name and we look at the balance of gender, age, ethnicity, race, and geography. We seek to bring nominees forward from as many different congregations as possible. Meeting every two weeks starting in mid-winter and ending before the annual assembly, we ask for God's guidance in our process and for the presence of the Holy Spirit in the people we ask.

Many times, the first person we ask for a position says yes. Other times, we receive many no's from the people we have discerned. Our work feels like a roller-coaster. We have joy and excitement in bringing people together to work at God's ministry of WDC, but also feel the keen challenges facing the larger church.

Our committee has spent time learning from the Anti-Racism Audit Report and is nominating a person of Hispanic ethnicity (BIPOC) for the Ministerial Leadership Commission, in response to that need addressed in the report. By the nature of our work, we grapple with participation in decision making and the cultural differences in understanding structure, that are discussed in the Report. Even with nominations that advance inclusion, and translation that makes more nominations possible, we are aware of how non-Anglos carry a particular burden in navigating leadership within WDC.

Suhelen Cazares served as interpreter between English and Spanish for the second year for our group.

Ardie Goering – Chair, Eldon Epp, Eric J. Jantzen, Dwight Mueller, Alberto Parchment, Rachel Voth Schrag, WDC Minister Heidi Regier Kreider - staff liaison