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2023 LAITY ELECTION PROFILE BOOKLET

for the

Texas Annual Conference

Procedure for Conducting Election of Lay Delegates to General Conference

The process of electing lay delegates to the Postponed 2020 General Conference is open to any interested individual. However, through the Delegate Profile Booklet lay delegates voting members are better informed about the qualifications of persons who have specifically expressed an interest in being elected. Balloting and counting will be quicker and more accurate.

Procedural Steps:

1. All interested individuals were invited to submit photographs of themselves together with brief resumes for inclusion in this booklet to be distributed to all lay delegates to Annual Conference. This booklet has been prepared and is being sent via email blast to all lay delegates as an addendum to the Pre-Conference Journal. The availability of the resumes and photos of persons interested in serving as delegates to the Postponed 2020 General Conference will enable all lay delegates to Annual Conference to study individual qualifications and vote more intelligently.
2. The voting procedure will be as follows:
 - A. Each person listed in the distributed booklet will have their name printed on a paper ballot with a checkbox to the left of their name.
 - B. Lay persons not in the booklet will have an opportunity to submit their name for the election process at the Laity Session of the Annual Conference.
 - C. Ballots will be tallied by our TAC Tellers, (Lance Richards is the Head Teller):
 - i. Following the voting session the Laity Session will move through its agenda, stopping at appropriate places in the agenda for the tally announcement and submitting of the subsequent ballot.
 - ii. When a delegate is elected, the newly elected delegate's name will be added to the list of Postponed 2020 General Conference Delegation on one of the screens at the front of the Grand Ballroom.

2023 LAITY DELEGATE PROFILES
submitted by Lay Delegates
offering themselves up for election as delegates to
the postponed 2020 General Conference
of
The United Methodist Church

April 23, 2024 – May 4, 2024
CHARLOTTE CONVENTION CENTER
Charlotte, North Carolina



Name: Janet Allen

Church Membership: Houston, St. Mark's (Pecore)

District: Central South

Occupation: Academic Research Executive

1. What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?

I believe God is calling the UMC to strengthen its resolve to remain faithful in connection and to focus shared resources to respond to the needs and dreams of communities worldwide. The UMC is called to be transformational, healing and joy filled. Even when challenged by questions of policy, structure and rules, we are called to remember that these questions arise from a responsibility to one another and to the mission of the UMC.

2. What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?

The General Conference faces the need for 1) re-commitment to the work and life of the church together in response to God's call to all of us in the UMC; 2) renewed commitment to the organization and processes that provide guidance, structure and stewardship; 3) revision of processes and structures that prevent or hinder full engagement in ministry and mission; 4) thorough discernment and dedication to resolving stewardship challenges before us.

3. Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.

I can offer skills and experiences that could be helpful during this time of crisis and restoration. I recently served as a part of the group of clergy and laity organizing That We May Be One (TWMBO), which has shown how the church will rise to the challenges before us. In my career in the Texas Medical Center I have led and engaged in teams charged with a broad range of ethical, fiscal, regulatory and process related goals in a complex health sciences setting. All of these efforts require discernment, engagement, dedication and care.

4. Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.

I have served as a lay delegate to the TAC for a decade and most recently as a part of the group of clergy and laity organizing TWMBO. I serve on the board of FAM Houston, a non-profit born from a UMC ministry and sustained through partner churches as well as businesses, individuals and community organizations. I have held various leadership roles at St. Mark's UMC including Lay Leader, Staff Parish Relations Chair and various task forces including the fire building recovery team as well as ministries with Children and Youth including Scouting and shared mission activities across the connection.

5. Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels.

I attended the General Conference of 2019 as an observer and was inspired by the dedication and vision of those who dream of a renewed life together in the UMC.



Name: Bill Avera

Church Membership: Jacksonville, St. Matthew

District: Northwest

Occupation: School Based Chief of Police/Emergency Manager

1. **What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?**

The UMC remains vibrant and viable. It is time to get past the divisiveness of the past and concentrate on remaining faithful to scripture as we go about the business of being welcoming and inclusive to all of God's Children! Our Open Hearts, Open Minds, & Open Doors slogan has never been more appropriate than in this time!

2. **What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?**

1) Looking at the Conference structures around the world, to include General Conferences. 2) Ensuring that the Book of Discipline's language provides regional conferences the flexibility to do ministry as appropriate in their locales, while remaining true to Christ's teachings. 3) Remain a vibrant Church, dedicated to making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World.

3. **Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.**

I am passionate about the United Methodist Church. I was confirmed in 1967, just prior to the birth of the UMC. I believe that as a professing member of the Church, one must present themselves for service. I have extensive knowledge of the UMC and its polity and discipline. I feel that I have the personality to both listen and actively participate in the ministry that is General Conference. I want to give back to the Church that has provided me with my spiritual growth, development, and identity for many years! I would be honored to represent small churches in the TAC.

4. **Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.** I've been a member of the UMC since its inception. I have served in almost every local church office, to include Board Chair, Lay Leader, and SPRC Chair. At the District level, I have been Lay Leader and a member of the DS committee. At the Conference level, I have served on Equitable Comp, Chair of Conference Trustees, and Lay member to AC. I've served been a Lay Servant since 1989, in three annual conferences. I've served on the Episcopal Residence and Episcopacy Committees in two Annual Conferences.

5. **Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels.** At the Jurisdictional Level, I was 1st Alternate Lay delegate to Jurisdictional Conference in 2004 in Corpus.



Name: Linda Elms

Church Membership: Katy, St. Peter's

District: Southwest

Occupation: Retired Christian Educator

- 1. What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?**
We are called to continue to not only spread the Gospel but to show the love of God through our actions. As we continue to show God's love we will need time to heal and rebuild. Our world suffers from many problems that only our love of God and our neighbors will ever be able to heal.
- 2. What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?**
The split of our denomination has been a very sad thing. We will need to work together to find ways to continue our mission while healing our deep wound. The issue that has split our denomination has not gone away. We will still continue to decide how we will work together to make everyone welcome into our congregations and leadership.
- 3. Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.**
I have been a member of the United Methodist Church for over 50 years. This was not the denomination I was raised in. I chose to be a member of the United Methodist Church because the beliefs of our denomination are dear to my heart, especially the need for mission around the world. I want to be part of helping in the healing and new growth that is in our future.
- 4. Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.** I have served for 5 years as a district delegate to the Texas Conference. I have served on the Conference Board of Laity in both Texas and Northwest Texas Conferences. I have served as a Conference president of United Women in Faith (formerly United Methodist Women.) I have served in various Conference, district and local positions with UWF. I served on Amarillo Wesley Community Center board of directors. I currently chair the Missions Committee at St. Peter's. Led studies at Conference Schools of Mission.
- 5. Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels.** I served as first alternate delegate to the 2008 and 2012 General Conferences with the Northwest Texas Conference. I served as a jurisdictional delegate to the 2008 and 2009 Jurisdictional Conferences. I have served on leadership teams for 2 UMW Jurisdiction conferences. I served on the Jurisdictional Boundaries Committee in 2008 and the Jurisdictional Committee on Nomination 2012.



Name: Jan Ervin

Church Membership: Baytown-Mont Belvieu New Faith Community

District: South

Occupation: Retired from the Texas Annual Conference

- 1. What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?**
Be a church where all are welcome and included in the church as a full member regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation.
- 2. What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?**
Trying to re-write the wording of the Book of Discipline to fit who we want the United Methodist Church to be now and in the future.
- 3. Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.**
I know and understand the inner workings of The United Methodist Church. I feel I can help with the changes we want to see the United Methodist Church support and live by.
- 4. Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.** I have worked at the local church level as a Church Secretary and Business Administrator for my first 20 years as an employee of the UMC. The last 18 years I have served as The Administrative Assistant for the Assistant to the Bishop. Following retirement at present I am filling in as the Administrative Assistant for the South District Office.
- 5. Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels.**
I served the last South Central Jurisdictional Conference as the Conference Coordinator, helping to run the conference from registration, meals, location, etc.



Name: Deborah Evans

Church Membership: Houston, Clinton Park

District: Central South

Occupation: Retired

1. **What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?** N/A
2. **What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?** N/A
3. **Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.**
To help the church move forward.
4. **Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.** Served on various church committees within my church.
5. **Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels.** N/A



Name: Steven Fisher

Church Membership: Houston, St. Stephen

District: Central South

Occupation: Family Ministries Director

- 1. What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?** The mission remains the same but we've been in our own way for a while. We're in a season of change but we find ourselves in a moment of great potential too. God is calling us to serve others, to spread the Good News, and to love God and neighbor as we do ourselves. God is calling us away from infighting, mistrust, and schisms, and calling us back into ministry.
- 2. What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?**
The Special Session of General Conference in 2019 reflected badly on us all and increased the divide within our denomination. We haven't had a traditional General Conference since 2016 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The United Methodist Church has a lot to discuss and questions to answer. Perhaps our greatest difficulty will be to prioritize what must be brought to the floor at conference and that what it is allows us to be the church more efficiently and with greater clarity.
- 3. Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.**
I am a Family Ministries Director at my church. I work with the youngest churchgoers who are discerning their discipleship pathway. I am inspired by them weekly and see the profound truth of Matthew 18:3. I believe strongly in their voices and would use my position as a delegate to make them known. I'm also keen to ensure that any legislation proposed is rooted in our Wesleyan tradition.
- 4. Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.** I am a Youth Ministry Specialist for the Texas Annual Conference Ministry Specialist Initiative. I sit on the board for the Conference Educators Fellowship. I was on the board of the Wraparound Advisory Council (a partnership between churches and HISD). At St. Stephen's I am the Family Ministries Director which is a position that oversees all areas of children's, youth, college, and young family ministry. Before joining the church staff I served as a member of our church council, SPRC, and Education committees. I also led a three year term as the chair of our hospitality committee.
- 5. Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels.**
I have not served as a General or Jurisdictional Conference delegate. I have served as a Texas Annual Conference Delegate on five occasions.



Name: Warren Fisher

Church Membership: Houston, St. Luke's

District: Central South

Occupation: Attorney

1. **What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?**

I believe God is calling us to focus on our stated mission "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" and to do this in ways that are inclusive, leaving room for dialogue and disagreement on matters that are not essential to faith.

2. **What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?**

1) Move beyond the disagreements that have divided us for decades and apply healing balm to the wounds and scars that remain. 2) Deal with the new financial realities of a smaller denomination. 3) Develop more effective, efficient, and flexible governance structures and bureaucracy. 4) Revise our Book of Discipline to be more inclusive.

3. **Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.**

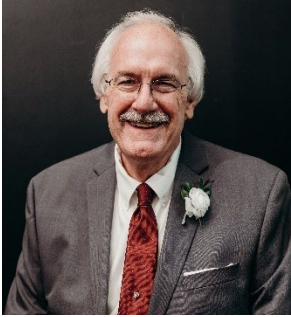
I love the United Methodist Church. I am a lifelong Methodist and a descendant of Methodist preachers and church leaders. I want to do whatever I can to help the church flourish to be God's instrument in the world.

4. **Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.**

I have held nearly every senior leadership position at St. Luke's - Houston, including Chair of the Church Council and Chair of the Trustees. I led a long-range planning exercise that laid the groundwork for a major building project and the launch of a new worship and discipleship community. At the district level, I have served as a District Delegate to Annual Conference.

5. **Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels.**

I have never been a delegate to General or Jurisdictional Conference. I have followed closely the activities of the last several General and Jurisdictional Conferences, however. And I did attend the 1976 General Conference in Portland... to sing with the Bellaire UMC Youth Choir.



Name: Randy Foster

Church Membership: Crosby, Crosby

District: South

Occupation: Retired

- 1. What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?**
Remember what has made you great, focus on that. Make disciples of Christ.
- 2. What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?**
Heal and refocus on being disciples of Christ.
- 3. Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.**
I was "volunteered" to be a delegate. This will be my first time being a delegate and attending an Annual Conference. I'm looking forward to this experience.
- 4. Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.**
I have served as the President of our United Methodist Men group, church trustee, and member of the SPRC. I have been a small group leader on several UM ARMY trips.
- 5. Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels.**
This will be my first time to attend the TAC.



Name: Dennis "Corky" Fowler

Church Membership: Houston, St. Luke's

District: Central South

Occupation: Retired

1. **What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?** To make disciples for Jesus to transform the world. Also, to work for transformation of the Wesleyan movement that has been damaged over the last number of years. I think that thoughtful members of our church will know exactly what I mean.
2. **What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?** Getting the UMC back to its true reason for being.
3. **Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.**
I want to be part of the process for a brighter and more thoughtful future for the UMC.
4. **Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.** Lay graduate of Perkins School of Theology, Alum Council Member, Lay Education Board Member, District Lay Leader - two districts, Gen Commission for the Status and Role of Women - Board Member, Wesley Community Center - Board Member, TAC Delegation for General and Jurisdictional Conferences – twice, Methodist Children's Home – Commissioner Leadership roles in congregation mergers
5. **Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels.**
Twice



Name: Debbie Gilbert

Church Membership: Pearland, First

District: South

1. **What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?**
LOVE. DISCIPLE. REACH THE IMPOVERISHED. SPREAD THE GOSPEL TRUTH.
2. **What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?**
Being about the work of Christ, making disciples of Jesus Christ, revising the Book of Discipline.
3. **Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.**
To serve as a delegate gives opportunity for listening, gaining knowledge of the issues and collaborating with fellow delegates to look to the future of the UMC.
4. **Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.**
Volunteer leader at Pearland First UMC for approximately 37 years
5. **Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels.**
N/A



Name: Wayne Haglund

Church Membership: Lufkin, First

District: East

Occupation: Lawyer

1. **What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?**
I believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to return to its roots of holiness and social justice, to be a church characterized and recognized by its love of all persons and its concern for the oppressed and the forgotten. The church is called to challenge the status quo and to restore a sense of God's love, grace and mercy.
2. **What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?**
The most important issues facing the next General Conference are reestablishing the identity and unity of the United Methodist Church; recommitting to being a church open and welcoming to all, and rededicating to mission, outreach and to making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
3. **Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.**
My experience as a lawyer, representing 15-20 independent school districts, community colleges, a university and an 11 county community center for the intellectually disabled and mentally ill and as chair of the county child welfare board for forty years has given me a unique perspective for the people the UMC must meet, serve and attract. I want to serve as a delegate in order to use that experience to strengthen the church.
4. **Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.**
I have served the Texas Annual Conference as a member and Chair of the Conference Board of Trustees, as a member of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry (2 appointments). I have served the District as its legal counsel, as a member of the District Board of Ordained Ministry. I was honored to receive the first Silver and Gold Award by the East District for a central role in leadership in ministry. My roles at the local church include service as chair of the Church Council; Chair of the Staff Parish Relations Committee (3 times), Chair of the Education Committee, MYF leader, usher for 45 years, high school Sunday school teacher, adult class teacher, and as legal counsel.
5. **Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels.**
N/A



Name: Earl Hooper, Jr.

Church Membership: Santa Fe, Aldersgate

District: South

Occupation: Retired CEO

1. **What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?**
Strengthen the financial status of the remaining UMC churches in the district that have lost significant funding and members due to the disaffiliation process that they may be able secure the fiscal assets of the properties, increase membership, and out-reach of the UMC.
2. **What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?**
How to go about securing the future(s) of the remaining churches before they collapse under the reduced funding brought about by the disaffiliation process.
3. **Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.**
To represent Aldersgate UMC and address my concerns concerning the church surviving this difficult time brought about by the disaffiliation.
4. **Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.** I serve on the Staff Parish Relations Committee and Finance Committee of the church. Also have been a member of the church since it's formation.
5. **Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels.** N/A



Name: Linda Humber

Church Membership: Houston, Clinton Park

District: Central South

Occupation: Retired

1. **What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?** N/A
2. **What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?** N/A
3. **Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.**
To help the church move forward.
4. **Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.** Served on various church committees.
5. **Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels.**
N/A



Name: Tina Monique James

Church Membership: Houston, St. John's

District: Central South

Occupation: Director of Public Health

- 1. What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?**
UMC is called to serve as a source of succor for God's people who may be struggling or enduring a challenging season. Furthermore, the church should be a foundational resource for those seeking spiritual growth.
- 2. What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?**
Engaging the young adult, and teen populations for a lifetime commitment to church ministry. D&I will also likely remain a top priority. "I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb."- Rev 7:9
- 3. Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.**
To represent the interest of our congregants especially as pertains to the Laity perspective. To raise the voice of the largely unchurched populous, that might feel marginalized and/or ostracized by religiosity or church rhetoric.
- 4. Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.**
Served as overseas missionary in Africa for 3 years and subsequently worked in Faithbased Global NGO sector in the developing world. Served in Ministry leadership of congregations in Africa. Stateside, served on Pastor Parish Relations, Choir Leadership, Usher Board Leadership, Young Adult Ministry, Youth Evangelism class and Middle School Bible Study teacher. Previous active parishioner of Annual Conferences in New York, North Georgia, Tennessee-Western Kentucky, Baltimore-Washington, and Texas.
- 5. Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels.**
N/A



Name: Deborah Moffett

Church Membership: Houston, St. Paul's

District: Central South

Occupation: Strategic Planning Consultant

- 1. What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?** I think the UMC is positioned to move forward with grace, if it is open to new and different conversations.. I daily see stories of new faith communities being created and the love that is blossoming. I believe the UMC and its people should lean into the positive energy that has evolved as the dark cloud of hurtful comments, political posturing, and name calling gives way to new and diverse communities focused on the relevant issues of the day, celebrating and embracing the gifts of each of God's children, and putting love at the heart of everything it does. The relief and sense of hope is palpable and the UMC has an opportunity to be open to opportunities and people put in its pathway, listen to and follow the lead of the next generations of leaders and support the work that is already happening in communities. I have listened to our upcoming clergy candidates and think the UMC will be in good hands if it listens to and encourages new and different ideas and approaches.
- 2. What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?**
Given the delays caused by the pandemic and the disaffiliation actions taken during the last year, I believe the General Conference must ensure a framework is in place that will empower and encourage churches and their congregants to open the doors of their buildings and get out into the world. If we are to stay relevant we must lead with love. That would mean examining our guiding principles for barriers to entry and meaningful engagement, evaluating the way we support and relate to one another, and ensuring our guiding principles reflect the 21st century world in which we live.
- 3. Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.** I would like to serve as a delegate because I believe I could bring value to the General Conference conversations. I have worked in a variety of positions within the UMC, both at the church and conference level, and that experience has provided a good perspective on the inner workings of the church. I also have a love of, and respect for, the strategic planning process which requires looking for hidden ideas and dreams and developing a path for moving forward that everyone can support. I think General Conference is in need of delegates who can.
- 4. Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.** At the local church level I have served on Board of Trustees, chaired a Task Force to identify the church's next significant mission opportunity, chaired Outreach Council, coordinated the church's soup mobile ministry, and coordinated a key administrative function of a capital campaign. I have also served as President of a large Sunday School class. At the conference level, I assisted in the development of the Laity Unleashed curriculum and co-led the sessions for a variety of audiences (lay adults, Wesley Foundation students, Christian Leadership staff, and individual church ministries. I have served on the Board of Ordained Ministry for five years and have served as a delegate to Annual Conference for four years.
- 5. Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels.** N/A



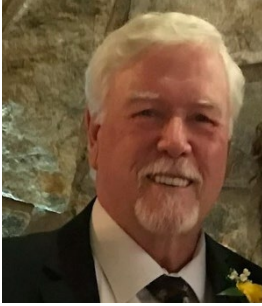
Name: Melissa Perry

Church Membership: Kingwood, Strawbridge

District: Central North

Occupation: Retired teacher

- 1. What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?**
I believe God is calling the UMC to love each other regardless of our differences and that we are to recognize that each person is a masterpiece of God's work (Ephesians 2:10) and we are not to disrespect or question his work. We are to welcome everyone and serve all people.
- 2. What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?**
I believe of course LGBTQ rights is the main issue but other social justice issues will have to be addressed as well, such as, racism, women's rights, and immigration. The UMC will have to address the disaffiliating churches and the lack of UMC presence in some areas. Also how to figure out how to treat the new Global Methodist denomination with Christian love but still not allow that denomination to destroy the United Methodist denomination.
- 3. Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.**
I believe diversity is imperative to God's Kingdom and the United Methodist Church needs to be diverse in order to be true representative of God's people. I would like to have a voice in ensuring that the UMC is inclusive and diverse and that we can work together to better show God's love to the world.
- 4. Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.**
At the former Atascocita United Methodist Church I served on the Staff Parish Committee as a member, as the chairperson, and as the secretary for four years total, I served on the Administrative Board as an at-large member for three years two of those years as secretary, and I served as an at-large district delegate for three years for the North District. My position on the Ad Board in 2022 allowed me to vocally oppose the disaffiliation of the church to join the Global Methodist Church, I felt it my responsibility to share positive UMC information with the congregation so both sides were available but unfortunately the church voted to disaffiliate. I now serve as an at-large member on the Administration Council at Strawbridge UMC.
- 5. Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels.**
I have had no experience at the General or Jurisdictional level.



Name: Mike Ramsey

Church Membership: Missouri City, First

District: Southwest

Occupation: Retired

1. **What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?**
God is calling on us, the United Methodist Church, to work hard in reaching people who need God but have not yet found God. These people may have been pushed away by the church. We need use prayers, presence, gifts, service, and our witness "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world". We can start this process by changing the Book of Discipline to be more inclusive regarding the language regarding human sexuality.
2. **What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?**
We need to take care of and secure the +-50% remaining churches struggling with budgetary issues. We must ensure they don't fail caused by reduced funding from disaffiliation. In addition, we need to come back together as the UMC. We have been hurt by what has happened but we can prevail repair and move forward. We can all come together and this should be highlighted at General Conference.
3. **Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.**
I want to be involved in the decision-making process at General Conference and voice my concerns in the UMC surviving this difficult time brought about by disaffiliation. My personal faith is important to me and I want others have the same opportunities to come to God.
4. **Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.**
I have served the Texas Annual Conference as Church delegate for 2 years and a District delegate for 2 years, my roles at FUMCMC include Staff Parish Relations Committee 5 times, Lay Leader, served on Trustees and Finance committees.
5. **Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels.**
I have never served on either but am looking forward to the opportunity.



Name: Laura Rhoads

Church Membership: League City, Bay Harbour

District: South

Occupation: Health Care Manager

6. What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?

I believe God calls the United Methodist Church to continue the good work laid in our foundation but with a focus on reaching people today who don't yet know God, who need God, or who have been ignored or hurt by the church. We can use our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness to transform the world around us. In a complicated, confusing world we can be light and grace and peace.

7. What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?

General Conference will need to deal with the shrinking church both due to disaffiliation and also due to the fact that many people are unchurched or have left organized religion entirely. Understanding how we fulfil our mission with less people and resources is critical. I think it is also important to set into policy methods by which secure voting can be carried out despite a disruption in travel as we have seen in the past few years. This may not be the last time we experience disruptions and putting sound practices in place prior to future issues will be prudent.

8. Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.

I want to be involved to help the UMC grow and expand and reach more people in this world. My personal faith is important to me but making sure others have the same or better opportunities to understand that God loves them is a legacy I want to leave.

9. Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.

I have led teams at our local churches including Evangelism and Women's Ministry. I have led Sunday School classes and small group bible studies. I have been a part of the music ministry in several churches. I've volunteered with youth, children's, and missions over the years as well. I was part of a new church plant that was a success. I have volunteered at the Annual Conference level by participating in the Group Health Benefits subcommittee as this aligns well with my career path.

10. Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels. N/A



Name: Kelsey Richardson

Church Membership: Houston, Clear Lake

District: South

Occupation: Family Ministries Director

- 1. What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?**
I believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to get back to the basics. To love and accept everyone. To truly represent that all are welcome at the table. To repair the damage done.
- 2. What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?**
I think there are multiple important issues facing General Conference. First, restructuring districts, budgets, appointments, and churches. Second, we need to help our local churches and ministries that have experienced huge loss this year and are struggling to make it right now. Third, we need to truly live out and show that we have an open table where all are welcome.
- 3. Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.**
I want to serve as a delegate to represent the people who need a voice that simply want a seat at the table. The people who have been hurt by the previous leaders and excited at the new leadership and cling to the hope of our future with where the UMC is headed.
- 4. Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.**
I have served in youth ministry in United Methodist churches in Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas for the past 10 years. I have been serving in Family ministry at United Methodist Churches in Texas for the last 5 years. I served on District and State levels of youth ministry in Louisiana UMC conference.
- 5. Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels.** N/A



Name: Gary Scoggin

Church Membership: Texas City, St. John's

District: South

Occupation: Environmental Sustainability Consultant

1. **What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?**

The biggest issue is changing the Book of Discipline to remove the restrictive language regarding human sexuality. Beyond that, we need to look at the structure of the UMC as it exists after the separations. We need to be a more nimble and less bureaucratic church. Coming out of General Conference we should have an effort to restructure the UMC to achieve this nimbleness while remaining true to our Wesleyan heritage.

2. **What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?**

The biggest issue is changing the Book of Discipline to remove the restrictive language regarding human sexuality. Beyond that, we need to look at the structure of the UMC as it exists after the separations. We need to be a more nimble and less bureaucratic church. Coming out of General Conference we should have an effort to restructure the UMC to achieve this nimbleness while remaining true to our Wesleyan heritage.

3. **Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.**

I love the United Methodist Church. Having grown up in a different denomination I was drawn to Wesleyan theology. But while the UMC is still spiritually vibrant it is demographically a denomination in decline. I want to be part of the solution in reversing this decline. I think the reset I mentioned above can put us on such a path. There are exciting times ahead for the UMC and I want to be a part of that excitement.

4. **Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.**

I have many years of leadership at the congregational level. I have been Lay Leader at St. John's UMC in Texas City several times; this includes leading the congregation through a building fire followed by a relocation all during several pastor changes. At the District level, I served on the District Locations Committee and am currently a lay representative on the South District Leadership Team.

5. **Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels.**

I don't have any experience at the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels. However, in my work career, I had extensive experience working in senior level leadership teams and working with executive teams for one of the world's largest companies.



Name: Florence Snyder

Church Membership: Porter, Friendship

District: Central North

Occupation: Retired Claims Consultant

1. What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?

I believe our mission has not changed. We are still called to bring the message of God's saving grace to those around us and to make disciples for the transformation of the world.

2. What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?

This General Conference will do much to shape the future direction of our denomination, especially as it relates to the LGBTQ community.

3. Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.

I want to be sure as we make decisions about the future of the United Methodist Church that we do not depart from our Wesleyan heritage.

4. Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.

I am currently a Lay Delegate from Friendship UMC and as such am on our Board of Stewards. I am also the President of our local United Women in Faith as well as the President of the Central North District United Women in Faith. In addition, for many years I served as choir director at Friendship UMC.

5. Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels. N/A



Name: Jerry Springfield

Church Membership: Woodville, Hope

District: East

Occupation: Retired Educator

- 1. What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?**
To be a beacon of light for all who believe in Christ and want to follow Him.
- 2. What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?**
To remember our mission is “Making Disciples of Christ for the Transformation of the World”.
- 3. Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.**
I am the son of an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church and a Certified Lay Servant. At 75, I understand the work of the church and the workings of the church. I wish to serve my church, district, conference and Christ as a delegate to the General Conference.
- 4. Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.**
I have served on the board of two congregations. I have served as SPRC chair, Lay Leader and Lay Delegate. I have served as a member of the district church location committee and am currently on the district committee for lay servant training. I’ve been the lay delegate to annual conference both for my congregation and district.
- 5. Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels.** N/A



Name: Stacy Stepler

Church Membership: Houston, Memorial Drive

District: Southwest

Occupation: Executive Director

1. What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?

God is calling the United Methodist Church to live together in a manner worthy of Christ's gospel as Paul encouraged the church of Philippi. More than ever, the UMC must be an example of God's radical love to everyone so that we can make disciples of Jesus Christ throughout the world. As John Wesley said, "though we cannot think alike, may we love alike?".

2. What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?

Right now, many issues are facing the General Conference, but we particularly need to heal. Harm has been done, but we are at a place where we can repair and move forward. There is room at the table for all and this should be reflected in the work of General Conference.

3. Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.

I want to serve the church that has always been a part of my life. I would like to participate in the hard work of holy conferencing. I will carefully listen and discern the best path forward. It will be challenging work, but I want to participate in this work. I hope to help shape the future of our church so that we will continue to be a viable church that shares the grace, light, and love of Jesus Christ with the world.

4. Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels. Southwest District Leadership Team, 3 years. Local Church: Chair of Discipleship Committee 2 years, which included serving on Church Council and Ministry Team. Board Stewards 3 years. Lead a Bible Study for Moms of elementary children for 5 years. Lay Delegate to TAC, 7 years. Various VBS leadership roles and UWF (UMW) leadership roles.

5. Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels. N/A



Name: Tom Stratton

Church Membership: Brenham, First

District: West

Occupation: Self Employed

1. What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?

Continue proclaiming the Good news of Gods Grace! Create a healthy impact in each Community, and concentrate on making disciples of Jesus Christ. It's important that we show Love and Acceptance to Everyone.

2. What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?

I think the most important issue is being committed to realizing a Unifying Vision for the UMC in the World that we live. There are issues, and despite Disaffiliation, The UMC still has a strong presence Texas, America and throughout the world. Our Theology is founded on scripture and must remain part of the Historic Orthodox Christian Faith.

3. Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.

I'm not a Bible Scholar, but I do engage with people and relationships. Part of the Heart Principles I try to practice is to create Win-Win solutions.

I've always thought it is important to lead by example, and to share my faith as needed.. I believe the Texas Annual Conference has great leadership with Bishop Cynthia Harvey and her staff, as well as a strong group of District Superintendents, Clergy and People. Consolidating the Districts was a positive step to help Unify and Connect the local Churches in the Conference, and I would like to be part of this process to make this happen.

4. Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.

My wife and I moved to Brenham in 2021, and joined the FUMC Brenham June 5, 2022, and we have been life long Methodists. I currently serve on the Board of Stewards and was asked last month to serve as Lay Leader of the church, and will be a Lay Delegate to the TAC Annual Conference. I currently serve as President and teach our Adult Sunday School Class of 50 members. Before moving to Brenham, we lived in Austin Tx and were members of Westlake UMC part of the Rio Texas Conference. I served as Chair of the Admin Board 1997-1999, and was Lay Delegate for 2 years during that time to their annual conference. I served on various boards including Leadership Advisory Team, PPR, Finance, Trustees, Mission and Hospitality. I was president of the Fellowship SS class with 110 members for 5 years before leaving Austin.

5. Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels. N/A



Name: Kristen Tropeano

Church Membership: Kingwood, Strawbridge

District: Central North

Occupation: Director of Student Ministry at Strawbridge UMC

6. What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?

I believe God continues to call the United Methodist Church to create disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. To speak to those who have felt unloved or unwanted by the Church and to reconcile. God calls us to go into our communities and actually be a part of the community, to know our neighbors names and stories, to go outside of the physical walls, to venture outside of our comfort zones, and to recognize and affirm the sacred worth of all people. God has called us to show God's love to all.

7. What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?

I believe the biggest issue facing General Conference is church politics. The United Methodist Church has been caught in the crossfire of people playing politics and forgetting those that we have been called to love and to serve. We need to focus on restructuring as a denomination in a way that will allow us to serve people faithfully in each of our communities without sacrificing our connectionalism. We need to find a way to remain one body even in times of disagreement.

8. Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.

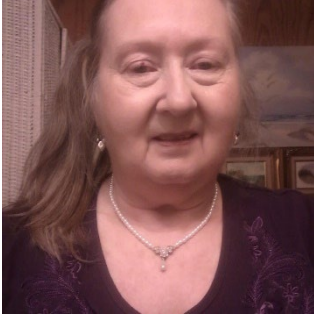
I feel called to the work of renewal. Recognizing where we have come from and where we need to go in a way that allows us to honor those who have laid the groundwork, those who are only just now finding a seat at the table, and those who haven't received an invitation yet. I believe there is good and important work ahead of the UMC, and that is work worth doing together.

9. Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.

Throughout my life in the United Methodist Church I have served as a Student Leader, on Youth Missions Teams, District Youth Teams, Conference Youth Council, Church Councils, Local Church Task Forces, as District Youth Coordinator & as the Jurisdictional Youth Ministry Organization Representative for the Texas Conference. I have served in Children's, Student, & Young Adult Ministries in the South West & Central North districts. Additionally I have served several years & continue to serve in the formation & leadership for several Student district & conference camps, retreats, and immersive spiritual learning experiences.

10. Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels.

I have served as a representative of the Texas Conference at the Jurisdictional Youth Ministry Organization Conference.



Name: Jeanne Wentzell

Church Membership: Avinger, Avinger

District: North

Occupation: Retired RN, Veteran

- 1. What do you believe God is calling the United Methodist Church to do in the near future?**
Be open/welcoming to all people. Be involved in the community. Advocate for the needs of people in the community, the area, the nation, and the world.
- 2. What do you believe are the most important issues facing General Conference?**
Urban areas taking precedence over rural areas. Wealth taking precedence over other issues. Lack of courage in standing for truth, societal needs, equality, and in practicing human kindness.
- 3. Share briefly why you want to serve as a delegate.**
To provide representation for my church congregation and my area.
- 4. Share your experiences of leadership at the conference, district, or local church levels.**
Native Texan and life-long Methodist, now retired, but with leadership positions and action from MYF to Military Chapel Council to Parish Nurse in large Methodist Salt Lake City church to most positions in small rural church where I, my father, my grandmother, my great grandparents all grew up.
- 5. Previous experience you have had on the General or Jurisdictional Conference levels.**
Lay Delegate about 20 years ago from Lone Star and then from Avinger UMC past 4 years.

LAY DELEGATES:

Janet Allen

Bill Avera

Linda Elms

Jan Ervin

Deborah Evans

Steven Fisher

Warren Fisher

Randy Foster

Dennis "Corky" Fowler

Debbie Gilbert

Wayne Haglund

Earl Hooper, Jr.

Linda Humber

Tina Monique James

Deborah Moffett

Melissa Perry

Mike Ramsey

Laura Rhoads

Kelsey Richardson

Gary Scoggin

Florence Snyder

Jerry Springfield

Stacy Stepler

Tom Stratton

Kristen Tropeano

Jeanne Wentzell
