

Election of Delegates to the 2020 General and Jurisdictional Conferences

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” – Matthew 28:19 CEB

This year, at our 2019 Session of the Wisconsin Annual Conference, we will be voting for lay and clergy delegates for the 2020 General and Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church.

What is General Conference? General Conference is an international body of the Church made up of approximately 800–900 delegates who represent all of the United Methodist annual conferences from around the world. Half of the delegates are laity and half are clergy.

What happens at General Conference? General Conference regularly meets every four years, and it is the body that determines the direction and polity of our global United Methodist denomination. During the General Conference sessions decisions are made about the ministries of The United Methodist Church and the funds that support those ministries, changes to *The Book of Discipline* are approved or rejected, and important issues facing our denomination are discussed and acted upon. Delegates to General Conference discuss and vote on petitions and resolutions proposed by individuals, agencies, annual conferences, and other groups within the denomination. These actions then result in a revision of the *Book of Discipline*, *Book of Resolutions*, and denominational policies on current social issues.

What is a Jurisdiction? A Jurisdiction is a collection of annual conferences that meets every four years. The Wisconsin Conference is a member of the North Central Jurisdiction, and the primary function of the Jurisdictional Conference is to elect and assign bishops who will lead the Church into the future.

How do I get elected to be a member of the Wisconsin delegation? Clergy and lay members of the Wisconsin Conference can submit their names to the Conference Secretary as persons interested in being elected to the delegation. Persons who wish to be considered as candidates for election may submit a brief biographical sketch, indicating their qualifications and reasons for wishing to be elected as a delegate. Submission of a biographical sketch is not required in order to be elected. However, such biographies provide helpful information to those voting. *Biographical sketches are due by April 5, 2019.*

The Wisconsin Annual Conference will elect three Lay Delegates and three Clergy Delegates to the 2020 General Conference, which is scheduled for May 5–15, 2020 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

We will also be electing three Lay Delegates and three Clergy Delegates to the North Central Jurisdictional Conference scheduled for July 18–20, 2020 in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Elected delegates are expected to attend ALL of the General and/or Jurisdictional Conference sessions, so elected delegates need to arrive at least one day prior to the start of the Conference for which they are a delegate, and will be free to leave the day after the conference is scheduled to conclude. Please keep this in mind if you are interested in being elected as a delegate.

Who is eligible to serve as a delegate?

LAY ELIGIBILITY: BOD ¶ 36. Article V.—The lay delegates to the General and jurisdictional or central conferences shall be elected by the lay members of the annual conference or provisional annual conference without regard to age, provided such delegates shall have been professing members of The United Methodist Church for at least two years next preceding their election, and shall have been active

participants in The United Methodist Church for at least four years next preceding their election, and are members thereof within the annual conference electing them at the time of holding the General and jurisdictional or central conferences. (2016 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, emphasis added)

Essentially, any Professing Lay Member of a United Methodist Church in the Wisconsin Annual Conference who meets the Disciplinary criteria listed above is eligible for election. One does NOT have to be a voting Lay Member of the Annual Conference to be considered for election as a delegate to General and Jurisdictional Conferences.

CLERGY ELIGIBILITY: BOD ¶ 35. Article IV. —The clergy delegates to the General and Jurisdictional Conferences shall be elected from the clergy members in full connection – Deacons and Elders of the Wisconsin Annual Conference (2016 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church)

Who is Eligible to Vote for Delegates?

Laity: All lay members to Annual Conference can vote for lay members of the delegation (BOD ¶ 602.4)

Clergy: Those eligible to vote for the clergy delegations include: (BOD ¶602.1)

- All full members of the annual conference – Elders and Deacons
- Provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements
- Associate members of the annual conference
- Local pastors who have completed Course of Study or an M.Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election*
(*appointed consecutively since July 1, 2017)

Clergy members of other Annual Conferences who are serving in Wisconsin are not eligible to be a delegate or vote on delegations from the Wisconsin Annual Conference, but would be eligible for delegation election and voting in their designated Annual Conference.

What would be expected of me if I were elected to the delegation?

General Conference consumes approximately two weeks of time including travel, followed by the Wisconsin Annual Conference in June, which lasts four days. The North Central Jurisdictional Conference is in July and lasts approximately four days also. This means delegates must commit to a minimum of four weeks within a three-month time frame from early May through July of 2020.

There will also be numerous meetings of the delegation each month during the year following your election to prepare for General Conference, and delegates are expected to attend each of these meetings to adequately prepare for General and Jurisdictional Conferences. And though there is a per diem provided by the General, Jurisdictional and Annual Conferences, this will not likely cover all costs of being a delegate. Use of personal funds will probably be required to cover additional expenses.

What else should prospective delegates keep in mind?

- Delegates are elected for the entire quadrennium (4 years). They must be prepared to stay in and with the delegation throughout the quadrennium (2020–2024) and attend all meetings/events as scheduled by the delegation and its leadership both before and after the General and Jurisdictional Conference sessions;

- Delegates will be expected to attend any Special Sessions of the General and/or Jurisdictional Conference that may be called between the 2020 and 2024 General Conference sessions;
- Lay Delegates to the General Conference become Lay Members of the Wisconsin Annual Conference for the subsequent quadrennium, and should be prepared to attend and participate in the Annual Conference Sessions from 2020 through 2024;
- Delegates need to be both capable and willing to make a personal financial investment in the global church, as not all expenses for General and Jurisdictional Conference delegates are covered by the Per Diem offered by the General Conference and the Jurisdictional Conference, or by the Annual Conference;
- Delegates will be expected to read and comprehend hundreds, or perhaps thousands, of pages of material in preparation for both the General and Jurisdictional Conference. Much of this material may not be available to delegates until after January 1, 2020;
- Delegates need to have the physical stamina and health to put in very long days (which often begin before 7 am and end after midnight) for the entire 11 days of the General Conference session.
- Delegates need a basic knowledge of the polity, doctrines, structures, and systems of The United Methodist Church (as a global and connectional denomination) based on *The 2016 Book of Discipline*);
- Delegates should be familiar with basic parliamentary procedures and protocol (based on Robert's Rules of Order);
- Delegates must have the ability to comprehend the content and rationale of the proposed amendments to *The Book of Discipline*, as well as a basic knowledge of *The Book of Resolutions* as adopted and revised at the General Conference;
- Delegates are willing to take on and complete/fulfill responsibilities, tasks or projects, either voluntarily or as assigned by the delegation;
- Delegates make a commitment to team building and teamwork within the delegation by appreciating and celebrating diverse gifts and callings to connectional leadership in The United Methodist Church;
- Delegates are willing to actively participate in the process of endorsing an episcopal candidate, using spiritual discernment and collaborative efforts as indicated;
- Delegates maintain connections and communication between the General Church, the Annual Conference, and local congregations; advocating to the General Church the values expressed by the Wisconsin Conference vision and to the Annual Conference and its congregations the work of the General Church that expresses the commitment of The United Methodist Church to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

How do I submit my name to be a Candidate for Election to the 2020 General and Jurisdictional Conferences of The United Methodist Church?

If have questions about this process or if you are ready, willing, and able to make the required commitments and would like to be considered as a candidate for election to the 2020 General and Jurisdictional Conferences of the United Methodist Church, please contact our Conference Secretary, Susan A. Haller: ConfSec@wisconsinumc.org or phone: 608-640-6020.

An electronic form for the biographical sketch will be made available on our website at www.wisconsinumc.org/resources and select the Conference Secretary tab. **Biographical sketches** must be **submitted** to the Conference Secretary no later than **April 5, 2019**.

Biographical information includes the following:

- Full Name
- Complete address*
- E-mail address* and phone number*
- Year you became a member of (laity) or were ordained (clergy) in The United Methodist Church
- Local United Methodist Church or Charge you currently are a member of (laity) or are appointed to/affiliated with (clergy)
- Responses/Answers to the following questions –
 - How have you participated in the life The United Methodist Church (include denominational, connectional, district, annual conference and general agency/board involvement, General or Jurisdictional Conferences)?
 - Why would you like to be considered for election as a delegate to General and/or Jurisdictional Conference?
 - What unique skills, knowledge and/or gifts would you bring to the delegation?
 - What are your priorities for The United Methodist Church?
 - In light of the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference, how do you believe the Church is called to move forward in fulfilling its mission?
 - How will you use your experience as a delegate to serve the local church, the Wisconsin Conference, and The United Methodist Church?

Delegate Covenant: If elected, I agree to attend all sessions of the General and Jurisdictional Conferences, and to prepare myself by attending all pre-conference and post-conference meetings.

Signature _____ Date _____

*Address, telephone and e-mail information is for the Conference Secretary's use only, and will NOT be published.

The **Biographical Sketches submitted by April 5, 2019** will be compiled and published on our Conference website, along with the Pre-Conference Workbook information, on or about May 3, 2019.

Questions about the delegate election process and biographical data should be directed to:

Rev. Susan A. Haller, Conference Secretary

E-mail: ConfSec@WisconsinUMC.org

Phone: 608-640-6020