

D. Election Team Task Force Report

Dear Members of the West Ohio Annual Conference,

Welcome to the 2011 West Ohio Annual Conference Election process. This year we will elect a General Conference delegation of clergy (deacons and elders) and laity. We will also elect an additional lay and clergy delegates for Jurisdictional Conference. Finally alternates to the Jurisdictional Conference will be elected. Jurisdictional delegates are the alternates for General Conference.

At the 2010 Annual Conference session, legislation concerning voting for these delegations was approved and the Elections Team appointed by the Bishop. Our job is to help the election process align with the legislation. Included in this Voter Guide you will find summaries of the election process, the values that undergird the process and specific steps in how to vote.

We believe God is an active partner in our election process and ask that you would surround this election with prayer. Pray that we will elect a delegation that will represent the passion and the diversity of this Annual Conference. Pray that we will bring out the best in each other while avoiding the worst as we move through the process. Pray for wisdom and discernment for interest groups/caucuses supporting slates and for individual Conference members casting ballots. Pray that we will trust God to do more through those we elect than we can ask or imagine.

Every eligible clergy person will be assigned a voting number. Every lay person who has self-nominated or who is nominated by the Laity Session will receive a voting number. Enclosed in this guide is the biographical information for those persons who met the deadline of December 31 to submit information and indicate a desire to be considered for election. They are not the only people for whom you can vote. Your discernment process may lead you to other persons you believe deserve to be elected and other persons will be lifted up through a variety of channels including communications from caucuses and groups and the compilation of slates from various groups. That is just fine. There is space for write-in balloting.

The Election Team has worked throughout the year to get ready for election 2011. We reviewed carefully the various options for casting our ballots and recommended to the Annual Conference Planning Team that we continue with Scantron electronic balloting one more year and move to use keypad voting in all future elections. We want this election to feel like a trustworthy process. Introducing new technology in the midst of other changes adds another element of uncertainty.

It is our prayer that God will bless and guide our election process and take the results and anoint the delegation with the power of the Holy Spirit to do the work of the church in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

The West Ohio Annual Conference Elections Team
Philip Brooks and Rae Lynn Schleif, Co-Chairs
Leroy Chambliss, Tom Slack, David Firth, Cindi Dietrich, Nickie Smith and Gloria Layson
Staff: Conference Secretary Cean Wilson and Conference Registrar Jack Frost

GENERAL & JURISDICTIONAL DELEGATE ELECTION PROCESS

- We utilized a self-nomination process for both lay and clergy, **bios received by December 31, 2010 were included in the voter guide**. The names of those received after **12/31/10** were listed in the voter guide.
- **Nominations from the floor will be taken at the laity session on Sunday evening.** Bishop Ough will convene the annual conference at the beginning of the laity session.
- We are exploring the option for each candidate to create a 90 second video posted and viewed on a Conference sponsored site that will be maintained from March 1-June 30. Specific guidelines will be developed in regard to length and content of the video.

- **Election numbers** will be assigned to **all laity nominated through the self-nomination process** or **at the laity session** and to **all clergy nominated through the self-nomination process**. **All other Elders and Deacons in full connection and meeting the requirements to be elected to General/Jurisdictional will be given a temporary election number.** When a clergy member who has been assigned a temporary election number receives at least 25 votes on one ballot, he/she will be assigned a new election number from the numbers available on the printed ballot. A listing of names and election numbers will be provided at annual conference and an update with any new numbers will be provided after the first lay and clergy ballot.
- **Voting will be done utilizing Scantron ballots**, where the voter will color in the appropriate bubble for the candidate's election number. The ballots must be completed in pencil. The West Ohio United Methodist Credit Union will supply pencils.
- **Write-in votes will be accepted.** There is space at the bottom of the ballot that may be used for write-in votes. If additional space is required, please write "OVER" in large letters at the bottom and use the back of the ballot. **All clergy write-in votes need to include both the candidate's name and their temporary election number. On the first lay ballot you may vote for someone without a number assigned by simply writing in their name at the bottom of the ballot. Once a candidate has been assigned an election number, they can no longer be a write-in vote: the appropriate bubble for their new number is to be colored in on the ballot.**
- We will be electing **clergy and lay delegates to General Conference**. We will elect an additional **clergy and lay delegates to Jurisdictional Conference**. **Clergy and lay alternates** will also be elected.
- If requested and approved by the Annual Conference, the Conference will determine a time and place for Conference members to have conversations with lay and clergy candidates.
- **The Conference Elections Team will compile, print and distribute a printed tally after each ballot.** This tally will include:
 - The name and number of the candidate
 - The vote total of each person receiving votes (subject to rules established or amended by the body)
 - The gender, racial-ethnic identity and age category of each person receiving votes
 - The order (elder/deacon) of each clergy candidate
 - A report of the gender, racial-ethnic, age category, and order composition of the delegation elected to that point in time

ON CHOOSING DELEGATES

What characterizes an excellent member of West Ohio's delegation to the General and Jurisdictional Conferences? *The Book of Discipline* lays down basic requirements in paragraphs 34 – 36:

- Clergy members of West Ohio elect as delegates full-member Elders and Deacons, whether active or in the retired relationship.
- Lay members of West Ohio elect lay delegates who . . .
 - Are members of local congregations in West Ohio;
 - Have been active participants in The United Methodist Church for at least four years; and
 - Have been professing members of The United Methodist Church for at least two years.

These required minimums imply that clergy and lay candidates for General and Jurisdictional Conferences are persons who have stood the test of faithfulness to The United Methodist Church and who continue to be loyal members, upholding the Church by their prayers, presence, gifts and service. It is also understood that delegates must be in sufficiently good health and have energy enough to put in long hours, not only at the

sessions of the General and Jurisdictional Conferences, but also prior to the sessions. The delegation will hold a number of meetings before the Conferences, and preparation for General Conference in particular requires reading mountains of reports and materials. Candidates need an awareness of United Methodist history and doctrine, and a basic grasp of our polity and discipline.

Beyond this, what do we seek in those we elect to our delegation? First of all, we look to persons who have chosen Jesus Christ as the only Lord of their life – those who have been able to set self aside and let Jesus reign. Such individuals enjoy a personal, moment-by-moment relationship with the living Christ.

We seek candidates who understand the worth of all persons and are willing to listen to their brothers and sisters who cry out for justice. Furthermore, delegates must think globally: We are a global Church, and our decisions have a global impact.

We trust that our delegates will be persons of integrity. They will sit in the councils of the Church, listen to all sides, and state their own convictions in a straightforward manner. They will vote their conscience, and they will consistently try to discern God's will when they vote on proposals and for aspirants to general Church offices such as the episcopacy, the judicial council, and others.

Thus, using all of their best information and judgment, with fervent prayer, our delegates will cast their votes, as they believe God wills. The Wesleyan Quadrilateral will guide their discernment of the Lord's will: Scripture, Tradition, Experience and Reason. A decision will not be based upon labels such as "progressive," "reactionary," "liberal," or "conservative," but upon their answers to these simple questions:

- Is it right?
- Is it just?
- Is it wise?
- Is it possible?
- Above all, does it honor God?

The West Ohio Conference is blessed with rich diversity, including a variety of theological interpretations. Given the marks of excellence outlined here, it is also important to us and to the general Church that, insofar as possible, we elect delegates who will share the blessings of: urban, suburban and rural roots; the traditions of lakes, plains and Appalachian hill country; a beautiful tapestry of ethnic church experiences; both female and male perspectives; the energy of youth, the inquiry of young adults, the commitment of adults and the wisdom of age.

In our diversity there is unity: We are one people, especially in the prayers surrounding this elective process.

WEST OHIO CONFERENCE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE CONFERENCE ELECTIONS TEAM

The CONFERENCE ELECTIONS TEAM was established by the vote of the Annual Conference. On June 14, 2006, the Conference approved RECOMMENDATION #7—"Election of Delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences." The session also approved the corresponding changes in the RULES OF THE CONFERENCE. These changes are proposed for the 2010 Annual Conference:

VALUES BASED ELECTIONS

The Basic Christian Value

Jesus Christ, Savior and Lord, is our model for all of life.

Derived Values

- All persons, created in God’s image, are of inestimable worth.
- Unity is one of God’s gift to the Church.
- Every election should be a corporate discernment of God’s will.
- Elections should reflect the rich diversity of our Conference.
- Elections should include theological discourse.
- Elections should be marked by fairness and our care for one another.
- We should elect leaders from throughout our Conference who will effectively and faithfully serve the mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Guidelines for the Conference Elections Team

The task of the Elections Team is to assist the West Ohio Conference to conduct the election of General and Jurisdictional Conference delegates according to guidelines based on our common values, as follows:

1. We respect each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. No other “label” is needed!
2. In our speaking and in our listening, we seek to discern God’s will.
3. Personal attacks and inflammatory language are not acceptable.
4. Honest engagement of issues is always acceptable. Unity is not the same as uniformity!
5. Special care will be taken to encourage the candidacy of qualified persons broadly representative of the diversity of the Conference.
6. Election materials circulated in print or electronically will be monitored as follows:
 - a. The source must be identified.
 - b. Materials negative to any candidate are not permissible.
 - c. Materials are to display a candidate’s positions and qualifications in a positive manner.
7. Efforts to persuade are appropriate, but attempts at manipulation are not. This applies equally to circulated materials and nominating speeches.
8. Recommendations of all groups following the guidelines will be made available to Conference members fairly and equally.
9. Balloting will be done in such manner and at such a pace as to promote our corporate discernment of God’s will.
10. The Bishop is encouraged immediately to rule out of order any actions contrary to these guidelines.

VALUES BASED ELECTIONS PROCEDURES

1. A record of each ballot, complete with all pertinent information about each candidate, will be announced prior to taking the next ballot.
2. Any candidate wishing to withdraw from the election shall notify the Bishop, who will report the withdrawal to the Conference.
3. The Conference Elections Team will make available to any candidate, and to any local congregation or group recommending a candidate, the appropriate information by electronic media with mailing information of clergy and lay members of Annual Conference. Those requesting the information may, at their own expense, distribute election materials, provided they covenant to abide by our common values. The Elections Team must report to the Conference any persons/groups not abiding by this process.
4. The Conference will prepare and distribute a VOTER GUIDE.
5. In addition, all official and unofficial groups are asked to include their elections information in a *Compilation of Recommended Candidates* to be created by the Conference Elections Team.

- a. This *Compilation* will be distributed within the bar of the Conference to all its members. The original *Compilation* will be distributed prior to the first General Conference ballot and again prior to the first Jurisdictional Conference ballot.
 - b. Slate updates may be distributed once a day during the elections. The Conference Elections Team will consult with the participating groups to determine the timing of distribution.
 - c. Groups participating in this process will share in its cost on an equitable basis as determined by the Elections Team.
 - d. Groups participating in this process will covenant to distribute updated recommendations only through this process. The Elections Team must report any exceptions to the Conference.
6. Following the first General Conference ballot, there will be an opportunity for Conference members to have conversations with the top 35 candidates, both lay and clergy. If so directed by the Conference, a similar opportunity will be given for conversations with the top 25 candidates, both lay and clergy.