



2024 General Conference Delegate Elections Letter

Dear Annual Conference Members,

The postponed 2020 General Conference will be held April 23 - May 4, 2024, in Charlotte, North Carolina and the North Central Jurisdictional Conference will be held July 10 - 13, 2024, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

The laity and clergy, who were elected at the 2019 West Ohio Annual Conference, remain a part of the 2024 West Ohio Conference General/Jurisdictional delegation. However, for a variety of reasons, some of the delegates, laity and clergy, are no longer available or desire to be a part of the delegation.

Therefore, at the upcoming called West Ohio Annual Conference on October 28, 2023, at Ginghamburg UMC, Tipp City, **we will be electing seven (7) lay delegates, two lay alternates, and two clergy alternates to Jurisdictional Conference to complete the West Ohio delegation.**

If you would like to nominate yourself to serve as a delegate, you may do so by completing the bio form included at the end of this letter. **Your bio is due by September 8, 2023**, to be included in the Voter's Guide. It may be mailed to Jill Philipp, Attention: Election Team, West Ohio Conference 32 Wesley Blvd, Worthington, Ohio 43085 or emailed to election@wocumc.org. You may provide a current photo of yourself to be included in the Voter's Guide.

Laity may be nominated for election at the Laity Session on October 28. All full member deacons and elders, active and retired, are eligible for election on October 28.

The voting will be electronic on this one-day Annual Conference. As you may recall, we are now, by Constitutional Amendment, required to have each person elected by a majority of those voting. This means we cannot move to suspend the rules and move the inclusion of the remaining persons needed to complete the delegation.

Please read carefully through the *Values, Guidelines and Procedures* attached to this letter, and also found on the West Ohio Conference Website election page. We ask that you refer to the election webpage as you have questions. Stay alert to emails that come between now and the called Annual Conference on October 28. Please watch for the Voter's Guide to be sent in October 2023.

We believe God is an active partner in our election process and ask that you surround this election with prayer.

The West Ohio Annual Conference Election Team

David Scott and Marla Brown, Co-Chairs

Christina Albrecht, Alethea Botts,

Kim LaRue, Matt Overman, Ann Wheat

Staff: Conference Registrar Jack Frost

GENERAL & JURISDICTIONAL DELEGATE ELECTION PROCESS

- We utilize a self-nomination process for both lay and clergy. Bios received by September 8, 2023 will be included in the voter guide. Names and bios received after September 8, 2023 will not be in the voter guide but will receive an election number.
- Nominations from the floor will be taken at the laity session of the called Annual Conference, October 28, 2023.
- Election numbers will be assigned to all laity nominated through the self-nomination process or at the initial laity session and to all clergy who are elders and deacons in full connection. A listing of names and election numbers will be provided at Annual Conference.
- Voting will be done utilizing electronic keypads.
- Write-In votes will not be possible.
- We will be electing seven lay delegates and two alternates lay delegates and two clergy alternate delegates to Jurisdictional Conference. Each elected person must have a majority of the vote.
- 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 Election Team will compile and provide a 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 identification, racial-ethnic identity and age category of each person receiving votes
 - The order (elder/deacon) of each clergy candidate
 - A report of the gender identification, racial-ethnic, age category (under 30, 31-45, 46-60 and over 60), and order composition of the delegation elected to that point in time.

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 Election Team will make available to any candidate and to any local congregation or group recommending a candidate, via an approved mailing house, access to mailing information of clergy and lay members of Annual Conference. Those requesting the information may, at their own expense via the mailing house, distribute election materials, provided they covenant to abide by our common values. The Election Team must report to the Conference any persons/groups not abiding by this process.
4. The Conference Election Team 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 Election Team.
 - This Compilation will be distributed within the bar of the Conference to all its members prior to the first General Conference ballot.

- Groups participating in this process will covenant to distribute updated recommendations only through this process. The Election Team must report any exceptions to the Conference.
6. 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.

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 gifts 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 ELECTION TEAM

The task of the Election 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:
 - The source must be identified.
 - Materials negative to any candidate are not permissible.
 - 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.

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 ¶ 502:

- Clergy members of West Ohio elect, as delegates, full-member Elders and Deacons, whether active or in a retired relationship who are committed to the United Methodist Church.
- 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;
 - Are committed to the mission of The United Methodist Church; and
 - Have been professing members of The United Methodist Church for at least two years.

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.

2024 Election Information

Qualified clergy and lay members of the West Ohio Annual Conference are invited to become candidates for election to the West Ohio Delegation to the 2024 General Conference and the 2024 North Central Jurisdiction Conference in The United Methodist Church. The election of needed delegates to complete the West Ohio delegation will take place at the **called West Ohio Annual Conference Session, October 28, 2023**.

It is both an honor and a responsibility to serve as a delegate. It provides you the opportunity to be involved in the denomination and work with United Methodists throughout the nation and world, praying, worshipping together, and deciding legislation.

- **What is General Conference?**

General Conference is the top policy-making body of The United Methodist Church. The 862-member assembly regularly meets once every four years to consider revisions to church law, as well as adopt resolutions on current moral, social, public policy and economic issues. It also approves plans and budgets for church-wide programs for the next four years. The 2024 General Conference session is scheduled to meet from April 23 to May 4, 2024, in Charlotte, North Carolina.

- **What is Jurisdictional Conference?**

The constitution of The United Methodist Church established five jurisdictions within the United States, and it specifies which states will be a part of each. Each jurisdiction is responsible for boundaries of annual conferences within those states and electing its own bishops. West Ohio is part of the North Central Jurisdiction. The 2024 jurisdictional session will be held from July 10 to July 13, 2024, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

- **How many delegates will be elected from West Ohio?**

The majority of the 2024 West Ohio delegation was elected in at the 2019 West Ohio Annual Conference. The delegation will consist of 7 clergy and 7 lay delegates to General Conference and 7 clergy and 7 lay delegates to Jurisdictional Conference and 2 clergy alternate delegates and 2 lay alternate delegates. This October 28 at the special West Ohio Annual Conference session we will elect 7 lay delegates, 2 lay alternates and 2 clergy alternates to the Jurisdictional Conference to complete the delegation.

- **What does a delegate do at the General or Jurisdictional Conferences?**

General Conference delegates are assigned to a legislative committee. They study resolutions that have been submitted for changes to The Book of Discipline. They divide into work groups to summarize and present information to the entire delegation to address legislation. They vote on legislation which then becomes The Book of Discipline. The focus of Jurisdictional delegates is the election of new bishops.

- **What is the time commitment for a delegate?**

Delegates should be prepared to invest themselves fully in the General and Jurisdictional Conferences. There is a 17-day commitment of conference meetings plus regular meetings in advance with thousands of pages to review to prepare for legislation. Meetings at both conferences start at 8:00 am and can last until 9:00 pm or later.

- **Who is eligible to become a delegate?**

Clergy: Part I. Division Two, ¶ 35. Article IV.— The clergy delegates to the General Conference and to the jurisdictional or central conference shall be elected from the clergy members in full connection and shall be elected by the clergy members of the annual conference or provisional annual conference who are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, and those provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements and 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.

Laity: Part I. Division Two, ¶ 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.

Questions? Email any West Ohio Conference Election Team member:

- Co-Chair: David Scott, davidjscott@juno.com, 513-518-9937
- Co-Chair: Marla Brown, revmarlaebrown@gmail.com, 937-776-9348
- Christina Albrecht, christinaa@peaceumc.org, 614-545-8645
- Alethea Botts, pastorbotts@gmail.com, 614-327-9562
- Kim LaRue, kimlarue@powellumc.org, 614-327-8432
- Matt Overman, moverman@GrandLakeChurch.org, 419-733-3586
- Ann Wheat, awheat58@gmail.com, 614-261-5458

2024 General Conference/Jurisdictional Conference Delegate Candidate Bio Form

Please return the completed bio along with a current photo of yourself
by **September 8, 2023**, by mailing it to Jill Philipp, attention Election Team, 32 Wesley Blvd, Worthington,
Ohio 43085, or emailing it to election@wocumc.org

Name _____

Gender Identification _____

Age Category: Under 30 __ 31- 45 __ 46 – 60__ Over 60 __

Ethnicity _____

District _____

Church _____

Contact information _____

Please answer each of the following questions in 150 words or less per question:

Why do you seek election to the West Ohio Conference Delegation?

What are the one or two most significant questions for this General Conference, and how would you respond to them?

What is your passion in ministry and how do you live this out?

How will your passion in ministry inform your decisions if elected?