

Anne Kiome Gatobu

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Delegate # 2023

What has been your involvement in The United Methodist Church (include district, conference, and general agency/board involvement)?

I have been a member of the United Methodist Church since 1994. Before then I was a lifelong member of member of the Methodist Church in Kenya since baptism at infancy. At age 9 I joined the choir and participated in church choirs everywhere I have lived. I have held leadership positions as youth, and in the women's fellowship in Kenya. On migrating to the U.S. I have been involved with UMW; serving and training churches for Stephen ministry; Speaking at conferences and facilitating various workshops. I have offered Bible studies for GBCS (Washington DC) and for WME youth conference in Costa Rica. I have served on UM Global Aids Committee since 2013.

Why would you like to be considered for election as a delegate?

I bring to the delegation a unique voice and service. As a first-generation immigrant, and a woman of color I represent minority population in the UMC. I am an embodiment of bi-culturalness with respect to thought and perspective. I can engage different cultures with ease and be a good liaison for the Great Plains delegation. I am a good listener (trained as a pastoral counselor and a coach) that seeks to represent the varied voices of our conference as opposed to my own convictions. I have served as a translator for the last four General Conferences since 2008. I also served as an alternate Jurisdictional Conference delegate for the GC 2016 and the special called GC 2019. I am therefore knowledgeable and understand the GC processes and procedures.

What unique skills, knowledge, and /or gifts would you bring to the delegation?

I bring skills and knowledge to the table that are unique to my identity. I have capacity to perceive from two worlds (as an immigrant woman of color who has lived in the U.S. for over 25 years) — especially on social-cultural and theological issues that are at the heart of contentions in our church. My graduate theological education (MA, MDiv. and Ph.D) is from Iliff School of Theology, a progressive school. Yet my formative experience of growing up in Africa and of later teaching in a conservative school (Asbury Theological Seminary) give me the unique experience of understanding and being sympathetic to two very different worldviews. I am well grounded in the Bible and believe in the value of living the Word through the Wesleyan quadrilateral of integrating scripture, tradition, experience and reason.

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In light of the 2019 special session of General Conference, how do you believe the church is called to move forward in fulfilling its mission?

The church belongs to God and should be focused on Christ's mission to give life to the world from a stance of love and acceptance of all God's children. I strongly believe that all "rules and legislature" of the church should emanate from Christ's greatest commandment, to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and all your mind, and Love your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27).

I believe that the contentions we currently have are a product of broken institutional structure of our United Methodist Church that did not factor the voice of a global church. Global expressions of faith are always going to be different, but what unites us is our faith and identity in Christ.

What do you believe are the challenges and opportunities facing The United Methodist Church today?

The United Methodist's global nature is one of its wonderful unique strengths, and yet one of the greatest challenges for today's church. The opportunity for multi-expressions of worship and faith due to the global nature of the church multiplies our capacity for evangelistic mission. It also offers unique opportunities for global missions that remind us that our world is not just within the radius of our immediate communities.

Yet, these global opportunities are also our greatest challenges today: How does the church change with changing dynamics of the society including the worldviews and the body of growing scientific knowledge and yet remain faithful to its spiritual formation role? How does the United Methodist Church embrace varied expressions of faith yet remain Christ-centered? How does the church cater to social cultural beliefs deeply embedded in varying communities around the world and yet be united as the light and way of Jesus Christ?