

# Ashlee Alley Crawford

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**Gender:** Female

**Ethnicity:** Caucasian

**Age range:** 42

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Delegate # 2002

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

I served on Sessions Planning for the Kansas West Conference and the Board of Ordained Ministry for both Kansas West and Great Plains (2010-present). I've been Conference staff since 2014.

As far as the General Church goes, I was involved with the work of UMC higher education and campus ministries between 2005-2014. During that time, I was involved in a number of U.S.-wide efforts, grassroots and GBHEM, related to resourcing ministries. In conjunction with GBHEM, I served on 4 Design Teams for Campus Ministry and Exploration. In my current position as Conference Staff, I'm a part of a network of other Board of Ordained Ministry-related staff people from all over the US.

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

I am not a cradle United Methodist, but rather was introduced to the UMC more than 20 years ago as a college student. The theology of John Wesley and the practical expression of that through the United Methodist Church compelled me. Our institutional church is in crisis. I've always been a person with deep convictions, but in the midst of my convictions, I've found ways to be open to others, communicate with, and love people whose convictions are different than my own. I also seek to embody the wisdom John Wesley often shared with his preachers: "In the essentials, unity; in the non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, charity."

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

I have a strong network of connections from all over the U.S. from work I've done in the last 15 years. I know many from our jurisdiction, but also from each jurisdiction in the U.S. Additionally, in the nearly two decades that I've been in ministry (as both a lay and clergy person), I've walked alongside hundreds of people who are discerning next steps in their discipleship. Discernment, prayer, exploration of calling, communication, and leadership are particular areas of strength for me.

Also, I've had a great deal of experience in bringing together people of diverse perspectives and experiences and creating space for conversation. I seek to be an agent of peace and constant learner.

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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?**

I have a heart for unity in our United Methodist Church. I believe that the whole Church is better when we have diverse perspectives, experiences, and callings to be God's hands and feet in the world around us. In order for the Church to function in the spirit of unity, however, our foundation must be built in mutual love, respect, and care for one another. As such, I support and uphold our contemporary use of Wesley's Three Simple Rules, "Do no harm, do good, and stay in love with God." In order for the whole church to be able to move forward in mission together, we must find a way to live our conviction while loving one another and do this without harming one another.

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

The challenges of the UMC today are to remain focused on the mission of making disciples for the transformation of the world while also acknowledging our diverse convictions about sexual identity and marriage. Our broad theological spectrum and varying underlying theological convictions have led us to the breaking point in our beloved UMC. My hope is that we would find a way for the United Methodist Church in our global expression to remain under the same umbrella for mission and ministry.

We have a rich theological heritage and a broad reach. In our two states of Kansas and Nebraska alone, we have an opportunity to share the ministry of Jesus in every county. Our theology is robust with a strong call to social justice, personal holiness, with gathered worship and a warmed heart. It's a theology that speaks profoundly to the needs in our world.