

Cheryl Jefferson Bell

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Gender: Female

Ethnicity:
African-American

Age range: 60-plus

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Delegate # 2022

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

I have served as a General Conference Delegate in 2019, 2016, 2012, 2008, and 2004 and as a Jurisdictional Conference Delegate in 2000. I was a candidate for the episcopacy in 2008 and 2012. I have served on the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) for 8 years. I currently serve on the Connectional Council. I previously served on the Transitional Committee when Nebraska and Kansas East and West became the Great Plains Conference. I have served as a district superintendent for 8 years (2001-2009) and associated committees/duties. I have pastored rural and urban, cross racial, large and small churches.

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

I feel called to serve the church in this capacity. I have a vested interest in participating in the future of our denomination and a deep love for The United Methodist Church. I have the experience of serving in the last 6 General Conferences and feel a responsibility to help us to move forward no matter what that future may be.

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

Besides bringing my ministry, life and delegation experiences, I am an African American female clergy who has deep roots in this denomination and a love for this church and our conference. My experience serving on our delegation since 2000 has provided me with knowledge and connections. I am a good listener and strive to spiritually discern the will of God, as well as considering the will of the people, when I vote and in how I serve.

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?

In the midst of deep division reflected in and by GC2019, I believe we are called to continue to do ministry and fulfill our mission of making disciples in Jesus' Name, until we can't, with personal/corporate integrity. Because of the vote of GC2019, some believe that they cannot, in true integrity, continue to provide ministry under the UMC umbrella, should the vote at GC2019 become fully implemented. This will cause some to exercise non-disciplinary activities/behaviors, in the name of holy resistance, as they remain in the UMC, as we now stand. Others will choose to leave. I think the actions of 2020 will provide the real way forward for the Church. In the meantime, we need to keep doing what we've been doing, making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world!

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

It is difficult to see reconciliation between opposing sides around human sexuality. In light of that (my opinion), the UMC faces the challenges and opportunities of answering the question “Is it possible to figure out a way to remain under the same UMC umbrella when it comes to human sexuality?” If that can happen, in some way, in 2020, that would be a great opportunity (and miracle) for the UMC, to show that we can agree to disagree! However, if it can’t happen, it may be time to give birth to a new version of the UMC! Although this will be a challenge, it will also be an opportunity to release folks, regardless of where they fall on the issue, to do ministry, fully and with integrity! It’s an interesting and historical time in the life of the UMC! To God Be The Glory!