

David Livingston

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Church: Lenexa St. Paul's UMC

District: Kansas City

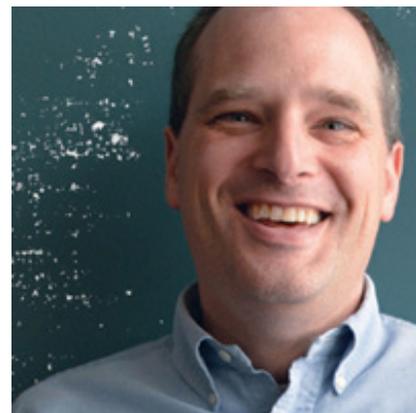
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Gender: Male

Ethnicity: Caucasian

Age range: 45

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Delegate # 2027

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

General Conference delegate 1996, 2016, 2019
Jurisdictional Conference alternate 2008
One Church Coalition leadership team, 2018-19
Forward in Unity Team, 2018-19
Conference Personnel Committee, 2017-
Conference Nominating Committee, 2014-17
Great Plains Transition Team, 2012-14
Board of Ordained Ministry, 2004-10

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

General Conference 2016 was painful. 2019 was more painful. Despite the decisions that have been made I still believe that we are stronger together. I believe that 90% of us agree on 90% of the topics. While some loss is unavoidable, I want to work toward preserving the best of who we are so that future generations can be brought to faith in Christ through the Methodist movement.

The United Methodist Church has formed me in my faith since before my birth. It is the only church both my parents and I have ever known. Whether it is now entering hospice care, a new phase of life, or a rebirth I want to be part of forging the future.

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

Particularly over the last three years I have been able to build relationships with UM leaders across the country and in Africa. Those relationships include people from varied theological perspectives.

I believe that I am trusted and respected across those lines, which is especially important right now. I've been involved in strategic decision making on the general conference floor and prior to general conference.

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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?

We cannot continue to do what we have been doing. We must make fundamental changes. I'm convinced that part of this change must involve allowing the United States the same ability to customize the Book of Discipline that those outside of the U.S. have. Our current system treats the U.S. standards as "normal" and allows central conferences to adapt them to their "abnormal" cultures. A more faithful and just approach is to acknowledge that every culture is unique and the way we present the Good News must always be adapted even while the content remains the same.

One item that will be discussed in 2020 is a Global Book of Discipline. This could be one step in this direction.

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

Within the denomination, we have a huge trust deficit. Our lack of trust has made at least the last two general conferences almost completely ineffective. John 17 says our unity is a witness to the world. We make a poor witness right now.

Our other largest obstacle is structural. We have a structure that restricts creative and adaptive ministry. I still believe that the Methodist approach to theology, with Scripture primary and informed by experience, reason, and tradition, speaks to people. If we can reclaim our focus on the mission of the church we can have a bright future. Love God, love others, share the Good News.