

Kurt Cooper

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Gender: Male

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Delegate # 2010

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

2014-Present, Camp Chippewa Site Council. 2012-16, United Methodist Global AIDS Fund Committee. 2012-16, Director, General Board of Church and Society. 2011-Present, KEC/GPAC Board of Ordained Ministry. 2011-14, Chairperson, KEC Order of Deacon. 2010-14, Chairperson, KEC Board of Church and Society. 2004-07, Co-Chairperson, KEC Task Group on Sexual Orientation and the UM Book of Discipline. 2004, General Conference KEC Lay Voting Delegate. 1995-97, 2008-14, KEC CCYM Conference Coordinator/Conference Co-Coordinator. 1992-Present, United Methodist Campus Minister, Emporia State University. 1990-Present, Adult Staff UMY Sr. High Institute, Community Life Coordinator (2008, 2013-Present).

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

From the moment my parents brought me home as an infant to the church parsonage, the United Methodist Church has been part of my life. This is the church where I was baptized, confirmed, ordained, and married. Most importantly, it is where I learned to profess and share my faith in Jesus Christ. It is the church that taught me about the sacred worth of all people. I have a deep desire for the United Methodist Church to be a diverse faith community. I would like to be considered so I can share in the conversation of what comes next.

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

My work in extension ministry has been focused on ministering with young people. As a campus minister, and as an advocate for youth, I believe I would bring to the delegation a unique perspective on developing young faith leaders for the 21st century. I also believe, the voice of a Deacon (or two) would benefit the work of our delegation. Deacons work to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world, and the needs of the world back to the faith community. In addition, I bring the experience of serving on the 2004 delegation and working with GBCS.

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 as a church are still deeply divided as a church on matters of human sexuality and scriptural interpretation. The decisions of the 2019 special session caused deep heartache and division among the people of the United Methodist Church. I pray for a church that will let us respond to the contextual ministry needs of a diverse and global church and will also allow us to share in our common Wesleyan heritage. I believe with hope that God is calling us toward something new and that we are living through the pain of something new being brought into existence.

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

We face the challenge of finding a way forward that allows us to continue to work on making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. It is in this challenge that I see the opportunity in being able to embrace the evangelical, pluralistic, and prophetic voices of the Wesleyan witness. We face the challenge and opportunity of being a church that can respond to specific cultural context and still grow a worldwide witness. And I feel we still have the challenge and opportunity of growing young leaders (but that conversation takes more than 100 words).