

# Abigail Koech

**Address:** 924 East St.

Russell, KS

**Church:** Russell Trinity UMC

**District:** Hays

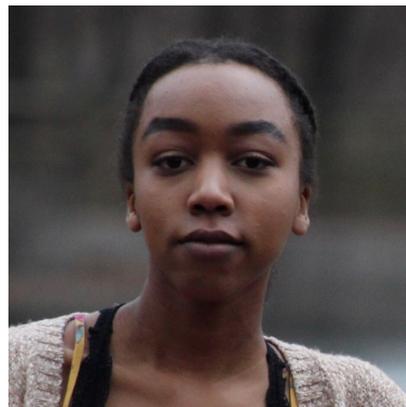
**Email:** abigailkoech.contact@gmail.com

**Gender:** Female

**Ethnicity:** African  
American

**Age range:** 18-35

**Phone:** 785-324-2908



Delegate # **128**

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

I lead worship at my local church every Wednesday as well as sing in the choir. I regularly attend youth group and Bible study. I also volunteer with many of our programs including VBS, Wednesday night activities, the Trinity Thrift Store, and other fundraisers. In addition to this, I am on the Administrative Council and Staff-Parish Relations Committee. I have attended and planned various events at many of our camps and colleges. I have been a district representative to Annual Conference for the past 6 years and always report back to my church. I have also served on the Hays District Council on Youth Ministries for the past four years and am the Communications Officer for the Conference Council on Youth Ministries. Through this, I regularly attend meetings and events throughout the Great Plains Conference and South Central Jurisdiction.

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

I would like to be considered because I care deeply for the Church and aim to do everything in my power to help it succeed. As a young person, I believe that it is important for my generation to be involved in these very prevalent discussions and decisions. We should be placed in leadership roles on a greater level because we are just as capable as any of our elders. I always strive to advocate for others and be a voice for those that aren't heard. I would like to be a delegate to represent my peers and even those that are older than me who feel as though they are not being listened to or adequately represented.

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

I have been a member of the UMC for a very long time and have educated myself on the legislative process and inner-workings of the Church. I am a first-generation American and have a broad understanding of society that extends beyond Western culture. I am also a youth and interact with church members across all generations and spectrums. As a member of CCYM, I have built upon my leadership skills and utilize them to hopefully shorten the bridge between the Conference and local churches. I regularly speak to both clergy and laity (including youth) across multiple jurisdictions and know their wants and needs. My experience with legislation has taught me how to be passionate while also making logical and objective decisions.

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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 don't think that there is a formula to how the Church should proceed, however, I do believe that we are called to move in grace, love, and unity. My biggest wish is that our diversity will bring us together rather than separating us. We should aim to grow in our inclusivity and I welcome the unknown in our communities. Although many feel disappointed and hurt, I hope that we can step outside of our personal realities and empathize with those that we share no commonalities with. It is imperative that we don't simply "put aside our differences," but instead, use them to our advantage.

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

I believe the challenges in the Church include: support for our local churches and young people, polarization, and communication. I think that the local church often feels unsupported because of the lack of communication between the different levels of the church. We have the opportunity to equip churches with resources to get more involved in Conference activities and be more informed with what goes on within it. This could solve many of our issues within the Great Plains Conference. In regards to the global church, we have the chance to establish our role as a denomination in society, especially with the public attention that we are currently receiving. The Church also has the opportunity to strengthen our connection with each other as United Methodists.