

Esther I. Hay

Address: P.O. Box 296

Waverly, NE

Church: Waverly First UMC

District: Blue River

Email: esther.hay@windstream.net

Gender: Female

Ethnicity: Caucasian

Age range: 65+

Phone: 402-432-4129



Delegate # **121**

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

I have been an active member of the United Methodist Church in the New Mexico, Kansas West, Kansas East, Nebraska and Great Plains conferences serving in various roles at the local, district and conference levels in the church and in United Methodist Women. Current Church involvement beyond the local church include: Great Plains Lay Reserve General Conference Delegate (2016 & 2019); Certified Lay Servant; Blue River District Director of Lay Servant Ministries; Lay Member of Annual Conference; Conference Committee on Nominations.

I was the first president of the Great Plains United Methodist Women (2014-2016) and currently serve as chair of standing rules. I am dean of Great Plains Cooperative Mission U at Kearney and vice president of the board of directors of Epworth Village.

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

Serving as a delegate is a way for me to give back to the church that has been such an important part of my faith journey by using my knowledge and experience on behalf of our conference. My experience as a member of United Methodist Women and as a Girl Scout executive have prepared me to be open-minded and forward thinking in discerning what it is that God is calling us, as beloved children, to be and do in today's world. I love this church and want to be a part of helping determine its future. It is important for United Methodist Women to have a voice in this decision-making process.

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

The gift of listening and encouragement that values diversity and inclusion.
Breadth of knowledge of the United Methodist Church.
Openness to change and new ways of being and doing.
Discernment and strategic thinking.

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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?

The Church is called to remain united in areas that both the traditionalists and progressives within our denomination can agree upon. At the same time, in the midst of our rapidly changing world, instead of only the “one size fits all” approach of the past there also needs to be a flexibility to provide ministry to and with all people in the many varied existing and emerging contexts throughout the United States. Central Conferences already have this flexibility. It is time for the US church to have that flexibility as well. As Wesleyan Christians we are called to both holiness and grace that extends beyond the comfort of the four walls we’ve established and draw the circle of inclusion wide.

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

Our biggest challenge and opportunity is to be a positive presence of God amid widely divergent views of “holiness and grace” in a rapidly changing world. Our world needs that unique witness! We need to reclaim the call that God has placed upon us as his beloved people. What happens may not be exactly what we had hoped for and is still in the process of emerging, however God still has new things to say and new tasks to be done. As people with many gifts and differences we love, praise and serve the One God of us all. In the midst of changes, let us listen to the voice of the one eternal God who continues to say to all of us “Fear Not, I love you, you are mine.”