

Randall Hodgkinson

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Church: Topeka First UMC

District: Topeka

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Gender: Male

Ethnicity: Caucasian

Age range: 52

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Delegate # **123**

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

LOCAL CHURCH: Former member board of trustees, lay leadership, and finance committees; former chair Staff-Parish Relations Committee; former lay member to annual conference; currently liturgist; Sunday school member; sanctuary choir; WAFFLE volunteer (elementary school late start program); BSA Venture Crew adult leader

DISTRICT: Certified Lay Servant (2004-present) (frequent pulpit supply around district); Topeka District lay leader (2013-present)

ANNUAL CONFERENCE: Board of Ordained Ministry (2007-present)(Call Team chair, 2012-2014; treasurer 2016-present); Connecting Council (2014-present); 2013 UNDC youth study trip adult leader; 2012 Jurisdictional Conference reserve delegate (KEC); 2016 Jurisdictional Conference delegate (GP)

WORLD CHURCH: World Methodist Council delegate 2016-present (Ecumenical Relations Committee)

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

In the two General Conferences I have attended as part of the conference delegation, I have witnessed so many positive aspects of the UMC and its ministry and so many negative things about the way our denominational polity is currently functioning. I want to be part of a team that works toward keeping and strengthening the UMC as a vibrant witness in my city, nation, and world. I want to help lead a denomination that equips and enables its clergy and local churches to be positive and transformational forces in each community. I pray for a General Conference that discerns and realizes such a vision!

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

Having served in different aspects of local church leadership and ministry will help me understand how various petitions could affect local churches. After serving 12 years on the Board of Ordained Ministry, I have formed a deep appreciation of ordained and licensed ministry, but I have also become protective of the unique ministry of the laity. Serving as a delegate to the World Methodist Council has given me a broader perspective on diverse ways that Methodism impacts and is impacted in different parts of the world. I also think I have a gift of organization and attention to detail that can help our conference delegation.

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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 2016 General Conference felt desperately divided and asked our bishops to lead us to live and be in ministry together. The bishops proposed a middle way that was rejected by a narrow margin in St. Louis. Now the denomination is more broken and widely divided than ever. The Church must keep trying to find some structure that will allow each participant to practice his or her faith and work for the Kingdom. Because our current polity structure has repeatedly failed, I hope the Church will be open to new and more effective structures that might bear such fruit.

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

The UMC (and Christendom in general) faces declining relevance in the United States, reflected in declining numbers of active participants and declining influence in many of our communities. But we have the opportunity to reach out beyond our buildings to meet and serve people where they are. Our country and the world desperately needs the witness of a community of believers that exhibit the “radical” message of grace that is (or should be) at the foundation of the UMC. In a disconnected internet age, people increasingly want meaning and connection. Let’s show them we are Christians by our demonstrated love!