

Steve Baccus

Address: 707 N. 3rd Ave.

Minneapolis, KS

Church: First United Methodist Church

District: Salina

Email: spbaccus@gmail.com

Gender: Male

Ethnicity: Caucasian

Age range: 60-70

Phone: 785-392-7140



Delegate # **102**

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

Lay alternate delegate to 2016 and 2019 General Conferences. Great Plains Conference Council on Finance and Administration as well as GP Conference Investment Committee. Chair of local church finance committee for many years

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

I have been an alternate delegate for the past four years and attended both the 2016 General Conference in Portland and the 2019 special called General Conference in St Louis. It takes time and work to learn how to be a good delegate. I believe I have committed the time and effort in studying and attending all the delegate meetings throughout the years as well as both General Conferences. Because of this I believe I'm equipped to do a good job of representing the members of the Great Plains Conference.

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

First, I have experience as a delegate having served as one since 2016. I'm also retired from full-time employment and thus have the time and the desire to fulfill this obligation. I have also owned and managed a good-size farming operation in NC Kansas, a fourth generation farmer. In addition I served in senior leadership (vice-president and president) of our state's largest agricultural organization for 17 years. Those experiences have taught me how to look at, examine and understand issues and the people surrounding each issue. Not to mention my age has given me a lifetime of experiences and the maturity to carefully and calmly examine substantive issues.

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 over-riding message of the Bible is one of love. Jesus repeatedly urges us to love one another, to love our neighbor. Having attended the 2019 General Conference I didn't see a lot of love and leaving the Conference and now even after the conference I don't see a lot of what Jesus expects of us. We have a huge job ahead of us to heal our church and to discern how God will guide us in that effort. We have to reach out to those in our church who are hurting. Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, we're not doing that while we're slinging arrows at one another. We need to let the "heat" subside for a short time and then reach out to those who are feeling rejected and begin the conversations about how we help them to once again feel like part of the church and we need to do that before the 2020 General Conference.

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

First, the split generated by the debate of human sexuality issues of the Book of Discipline.

Second, the decline in membership/attendance at our churches.

Third, the over-riding thinking/feeling among the general population that mainline denominations are no longer relevant. We can resolve all of these issues. As a membership organization we must be relevant to the wants and needs of our membership. They have to have a reason and desire for belonging and engaging. It's our responsibility to do whatever needs doing as an organization to ensure we are relevant in their lives. So far, it appears we've done a less than adequate job of doing just that. We need to look at the much bigger picture, focus on the good things we do like UMCOR and our activities worldwide with youth and grow those areas of our church. We have local, individual churches who are doing some wonderful things in their communities. We need to learn from them and help them grow and spread the word about what works and how it works. By working at both the global level and the local level we can turn this around and make the United Methodist Church relevant in the everyday lives of our members!