

## ARUMC General and Jurisdictional Conference Form



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Please send this completed form, and a photo of yourself as a separate attachment, to [vicki.davis@arumc.org](mailto:vicki.davis@arumc.org) by April 15, 2015.

### Membership:

**Clergy** (*Clergy Member in Full Connection - Para. 35, 2012 Book of Discipline.*)

**Lay** (*A professing member of the United Methodist Church for at least two years preceding their election; and an active participant in the United Methodist Church for at least four years preceding their election; and a member of a church within the Arkansas Annual Conference - Para. 36, 2012 Book of Discipline. Lay delegates need not be voting members of the Annual Conference to be elected.*)

### District:

Please select your district. Central District

### Church:

What is your local church? First United Methodist Church Fort Worth (Central Texas Conference)

### Commitment as a Delegate and Christian Conferencing Guidelines:

**I have read and accept the [Christian Conferencing Guidelines](#).**

Yes

No

### Share your reasons for wanting to be a delegate.

*Please limit to 150 words.*

This sounds old-fashioned, but the main reason is that after more than a year of prayer, conversation, and discernment, it seems to be my duty and calling to offer myself as a delegate. (Whether I will actually be a delegate depends on your discernment!) My work as a seminary professor has given me insight into theological education and the processes leading to ordained ministry. I also believe that being a UM Clergy delegate to General and Jurisdictional Conference is one of a handful of things I do really well; I have developed legislative know-how, political skills, and connections across our denomination that would help me do the work that needs to be done. Because we are in such a mess, those kinds of proficiencies, skills, and connections would be especially important in the 2016 General Conference. Finally, it is immensely satisfying to engage in legislative work that furthers our mission.

**What leadership experiences have you had in the church or community that will help you do the work of the delegation?**

*Please limit to 150 words.*

Previous service as an Arkansas clergy delegate to General and Jurisdictional Conferences (including writing regular reports home to our annual conference)

Membership on the General Conference Legislative Committee on Higher Education and Ministry (three times)

Service as vice-chairperson of that legislative committee and twice as chairperson of legislative sub-committees

Previous successful experience writing General Conference legislation and organizing groups to write and support legislation, primarily regarding theological education, deacons, elders, local pastors, and associate members

Membership on 2004-08 University Senate, the body overseeing UM colleges and universities

Service as vice-president of the Commission on Theological Education, the body overseeing our UM seminaries and the UM accreditation of non-UM seminaries

Membership on 2004-08 Commission on the Study of Ministry

Membership on 2008-12 Council of Bishops' Task Force on Theological Education and Leadership Formation

Service in many roles in the local church, our conference, and the general church

Capacity to pray hard!

**Share three (3) areas crucial to The United Methodist Church's mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world:**

*Please limit to 150 words.*

Here are three areas that will be important at the 2016 General Conference and where I believe I could make a difference.

1. Strengthening and reforming theological education

With vibrant and faithful theological education, we can grow a vibrant and faithful church equipped to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

2. Fine-tuning key disciplinary paragraphs regarding our orders of ministry

Although our disciplinary paragraphs relating to the orders of ministry can be excruciatingly boring, the way we structure these orders will be critical for our future.

3. Finding a way through (or around or under or over) deep divisions within our church

Here is a sad and obvious fact: we are deeply divided as a church. Our tensions and conflicts usually generate more heat than light and often distract us from our mission. These divisions will be particularly pressing at this General Conference.

**What are three (3) issues emerging from those areas you stated above:**

*Please limit to 150 words.*

### 1. Theological education

Not all UM seminaries are doing a good job shaping the leaders we will need to fulfill our mission. I am working on pieces of legislation designed to keep our schools more accountable to the church.

### 2. Ordering of Ministry

I am supporting pieces of legislation that would 1) help streamline the cumbersome process leading to ordained ministry; 2) make it easier to hold clergy accountable while keeping protections and safeguards in place; and 3) strengthen the roles and missional opportunities of elders, deacons, local pastors, and associate members.

### 3. Deep divisions within our church

The 2016 General Conference will likely be one of the most divided and conflictual ever. We will need people who can work across different groups and with various proposals to try to find a way through the conflict for the sake of our shared mission. I believe I can help do that.