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Q&A w/ Emily Autry

2020 Global Mission Fellow from the Arkansas Conference

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Digital Content Editor



How were you selected as a Global Mission Fellow?

The short answer: I applied. The long answer: I graduated college in May of 2019 from the University of the Ozarks. I hold a bachelor of arts degree in religion and political science. I originally had the goal to attend seminary following graduation, however, I decided to take a year off from school, move back home, and spend time discerning my call in ministry. While attending a multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic conference for my home church, [Fort Smith First United Methodist Church](#), I felt God calling me to mission. This is when I decided to apply to be a Global Mission Fellow. I sent in my application in December of 2019, interviewed in January and early February, and by March, we were in a global pandemic and I was quarantined in Mexico totally unsure if the program would still go on. However, I got the call and was asked to serve during a pandemic in Miami, Florida, and I said yes!

Where will you be serving? What kind of needs are in the area where you're serving?

I am serving the [Florida Annual Conference](#) as a Coordinator for the [Fill the Table Initiative](#). Fill the Table is a year-long initiative whose goal is to engage 100,000 Florida United Methodist in feeding 3 million meals to alleviate hunger due to Covid-19, racial injustice, and aims to implement asset-based community problem-solving. There are 3 million people that suffer from food insecurity in Florida. This number is on the rise due to Covid-19 and the economic stress and unrest in our country right now. Although social distancing and safety precautions are important, and are being followed, food banks, food pantries, and feeding programs need volunteers and donations more than ever. Our churches are being asked to take part in feeding Florida right now!

What are your responsibilities as a Global Mission Fellow?

My responsibility as a GMF is to engage in my new local community of Miami, Florida. I am here to serve with the Florida Annual Conference to learn ways that God is already at work in this place. I have committed to living simply in order that I might better understand and witness to systemic injustices of the community and country. I also connect the church in mission. I get the chance to tell stories to the local churches about this experience of God's gracious love. It's also my responsibility to advocate for social change, and testify about hope in the face of injustice. I invite churches to participate in mission through prayer, financial support, emotional care, and common action. Lastly, this program gives me space and tools to grow personal and social holiness in order to better love God, myself, my call, and my neighbor.

What is your personal goal while serving in this role?

My personal goal while serving is to surrender wholeheartedly to God and this calling to mission that God has called me to. I want to learn and engage in every way possible in order to grow in my faith and my calling. By the end of these two years of service, I hope to have a deeper understanding of my calling to ministry and to be ready to attend seminary.

Do you have a favorite Bible verse or story that you'd like to share?

My favorite Bible story is Luke 4:14-30. Jesus uses Isaiah 61:1-2 to announce the nature of his own ministry – “to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to liberate the oppressed...” This story sets up the idea that Jesus was sent to tell everyone, not just the Jews, of the Good News. I am called to do the same. I am called to go out of the church and live in the world as a disciple of Jesus Christ to proclaim the Good News to everyone that I meet.

Who is the person who has influenced your life the most?

My Mom, Rev. DeeDee Autry, has influenced me the most in my calling and in my faith. My mom has always given me space to ask hard questions, be curious, and wrestle with God about our life in ministry. Being a Preacher’s Kid is really hard at times because our whole lives revolve around the church. Church work is hard work. Thankfully, my parents were so intentional about creating space for life outside of the church. My mom is one of the most faithful and spiritually driven people that I know. She is always listening to God and doing what God is calling her to do. She is a true example of what it means to live as a disciple of God. I pray to be as deeply grounded and driven as her one day.

How can we stay in touch and support you in your time of mission?

Email me at eauntry@umcmmission.org, Follow me on Facebook and Instagram where I regularly post updates on my week. My Instagram is [@em_grace1](#) or Emily Autry. I also have a blog: <https://emilyautry.wixsite.com/surrenderjournal>. I would please ask if you would give to my [advance account](#). This financial support ensures that I am able to continue my work in mission as well as future missionaries to come. [My Advance #3022615](#). Thank you so much!

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