

2016 LAY DELEGATE ELECTION PROCESS FOR HOLSTON CONFERENCE

One of the most important items of business during the 2015 annual conference session will be the election of lay and clergy delegates to 2016 General and Jurisdictional Conferences. The Holston Conference Board of Lay Ministry offers the following information regarding the nomination and election process for lay delegates.

Eligibility for election

Any lay person who has been a professing member of The United Methodist Church for at least two years preceding election, has been an active participant in The United Methodist Church for at least four years preceding election, and is a member of The United Methodist Church in the annual conference where elected at the time General and Jurisdictional Conferences are held is eligible for election. Book of Discipline (2012), Paragraph 36.

Nomination process

Nominees will be asked to complete the [nomination form](#). Part of that process requires the nominee to obtain the certification of his/her pastor that he/she satisfies the eligibility requirements set forth in the preceding paragraph. The nomination form includes the nominee's name, address, occupation, local church and district, ethnic constituency, current photograph, and biographical sketch of not more than 50 words. That information will be published in the Book of Reports distributed to all members of annual conference in May. Nominees must declare whether they are seeking election to both General and Jurisdictional Conferences or Jurisdictional Conference only. Additionally, nominees will be given an opportunity to submit a 200 word statement that will be published on the Conference website, but will not be included in the Book of Reports. The nomination form must be completed and membership certification submitted to your district office before February 15, 2015. Persons may also be nominated from the floor of the Laity Session at annual conference. Holston Conference Standing Rules, Rule #33.

Inclusiveness among nominees

We are reminded throughout the Book of Discipline of the importance of seeking to be inclusive among those in leadership positions in The United Methodist Church. The same is true of those we elect to represent our conference at General and Jurisdictional Conferences. Ideally, our delegation will reflect the diversity of gender, age, ethnicity, race, color, national origin, status, and economic condition evident in our congregations.

Time commitment

General Conference will meet in Portland, Oregon, May 10-20, 2016. The Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference will meet at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, beginning on Wednesday, July 13, 2016. In addition to being present at those conferences during the dates they are in session, delegates will need to allow time for travel to and from the locations of the conferences.

An important part of the preparation for the conferences is attending meetings of the Holston delegation during the months preceding the conference sessions. Generally, the delegation holds at least six such meetings. The work of the General Conference focuses on petitions and resolutions which amend paragraphs in the Book of Discipline and provide direction to the general boards and agencies of The United Methodist Church. In recent years, between 1,200 and 1,500 such petitions and resolutions have been considered at each General Conference. Part of the process of preparing for General Conference involves studying those petitions and resolutions as well as reports filed by general boards and agencies that will be considered and acted upon by the General Conference. Those materials are provided to delegates approximately 90 days before the General Conference and are comprised of several hundred printed pages. General Conference delegates can also expect to receive a variety of mailings and e-mail messages from individuals and groups providing information about issues of interest to their constituencies. The primary business of the Jurisdictional Conference is the election of bishops. Delegates will receive an abundance of information intended to introduce them to episcopal candidates and solicit support for their election.

Financial obligation

Arrangements for air travel to and from General Conference are handled by the General Conference Secretary's office and do not require any payment by the delegate, unless the delegate needs to make travel arrangements for a spouse or traveling companion who is not also a delegate. Meal and lodging expenses are reimbursed at a set per diem rate. In 2012, that rate was approximately \$140 per day. Since the average hotel room rate was about \$160 per day, the per diem was not sufficient to cover all of a delegate's meal and lodging expenses; that is likely to be the case again in 2016. For Jurisdictional Conference, each delegate pays his/her own travel, room, and meal expenses and receives mileage and per diem reimbursement at the end of the conference session.

Serving as a delegate to General and Jurisdictional Conferences is both an honor and a challenge. It provides insight into the work of The United Methodist Church at levels beyond what most of us have experienced in our local congregations and annual conference.

If you have additional questions about the nomination and election process for lay delegates or the commitment involved in serving on the delegation, please contact Conference Lay Leader [Del Holley](#), your District Lay Leader, or your District Office.

After reading these requirements, proceed to the [nomination form](#).