

Statement of Candidacy for Rev. Nico Reijns

After prayer and discernment with my spouse, my congregation's leadership, and trusted colleagues, I am making myself available for election as Alaska's clergy delegate to the 2028 General Conference, the first ever USA Regional Conference, and the Western Jurisdictional Conference.

I believe that 2028 will be an especially consequential year for the United Methodist Church as we must quickly make challenging decisions about our organization and structure. Some of our most important work is to decolonize our structures and attitudes, and to embrace our future as a smaller denomination, soon with a majority of membership outside the USA. Additionally, although we removed the language barring LGBTQ+ inclusion from *The Book of Discipline* in 2024, there is still a great deal of work to be done to become a church that is welcoming, inclusive, and liberating. As an elder with 30 years of active ministry still in front of me, I believe this work is part of my call and giftedness to order the life of the church.

My experience includes having attended the last five General Conferences in roles including delegation member (for PNW), advocate, and conference communications team member. I have also attended four of the last five Western Jurisdictional Conferences, twice as a reserve delegate and twice as communications team member. These experiences have given me in-depth insight into the preparation, the processes, and the work of delegates. Just as importantly, they have helped me form relationships with friends and colleagues around our global church. As experienced delegates told us at the Spring Learning Event, these relationships are immensely helpful for the work of a delegate before, during, and after General Conference.

In addition to having attended General Conferences, I have had opportunities to work for and with several of our General Agencies. As a college student I worked extensively with the Division of Young People's Ministries at Discipleship Ministries on national and international events. During seminary I was an intern at the General Board of Church and Society working on Global Health issues. For the past decade I have been involved with Wespath Benefits and Investments first on the Young Leaders' Advisory Board helping provide feedback on benefits design, communications, and educational materials, and now as the Alaska Conference's chairperson for pensions and health benefits. I have additionally provided input on white papers Wespath has published related to socially responsible investments, and in the fall of 2025 was part of a small group of leaders asked to contribute to rethinking paragraph 717 in the *Book of Discipline*. This paragraph governs how our church seeks to align our investments with our theology.

I ask for your prayerful consideration of my candidacy to bring not only my voice and experiences, but also Alaska's unique contributions and needs to our global church in 2028.