

Alaska United Methodist Conference – Statement of Candidacy

Delegate for General & Jurisdictional Conference

Submitted by Tyler Watson

I'm writing to submit myself as a candidate for delegate to the 2028 General Conference. I have been a member of the United Methodist Church since 2019 and have been highly involved in both my local church, Turnagain UMC (TUMC) as well as in the Alaska Annual Conference and beyond. Locally I serve as Lay Leader and Lay Member to Annual Conference for TUMC. As a Certified Lay Speaker, I preach regularly at TUMC as well as provide pulpit supply for other UMCs in the connection. At the conference level I have served on multiple bodies including the Mission District Task Force, Leadership Team, and Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries. Beyond our conference, I serve as a board member of Faith Foundation Northwest. Through my service within the UMC I have developed a broad understanding of the issues that General Conference will need to address in 2028.

In professional capacity as a State of Alaska employee, I have developed a strong skillset in policy, procedure, and administration for large organizations. I have an eye for detail, process, and strategy. I'm an active member of my union and am an effective organizer and member of multiple deliberative bodies. My knowledge and expertise in Roberts Rules of Order make me an effective voice at the table.

Joining the UMC in 2019 was directly in response to the decisions made at that Special Session of General Conference. As a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ and a gay man I felt the call to serve in a greater capacity to urge the church to move towards a more open and inclusive posture towards the LGBTQ+ community. The actions of General Conference in 2024 made great strides in achieving the vision of a UMC that exemplifies the love of Jesus; however, the church cannot remain complacent. As a delegate to General Conference, I would serve a strong voice for not only my own community, but all marginalized groups long ignored or actively harmed by the global church.

A small conference like Alaska needs strong leadership and an effective voice at the table to ensure that our priorities and values are in the conversation at General Conference. The work that we in Alaska have done to live out our values and ask and address the hard questions can be a gift to the rest of the UMC. It would be an honor to be that voice.