



**WE PRESS ON**

2022 North Central Jurisdictional Conference  
of The United Methodist Church



**Episcopal Nominee Information  
2022 North Central Jurisdictional Conference  
for  
Rev. Dan Schwerin**



**Name:** Rev. Dan Schwerin

**Conference:** Wisconsin

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**Fax:**

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**Current Appointment:** Assistant to the Bishop, Wisconsin Conference UMC

**Family:** My pronouns are he, him, and his. My wife Julie and I live in Sun Prairie, WI. My adult children are Rachel (Jared) and Andrew (Beth). We have four above average grandchildren and a contemplative cat named, 'Spooky.'

## **Background and Experience:**

### **Formal Education (please also include significant Continuing Education):**

Wisconsin Conference Anti-Racism Task Force Cultural Competency Training (2021-22)  
Self-Differentiation and Writing from the Bowen Center for the Study of the Family (2019)  
Ambiguous Loss & Resilience by David Bowman from the University of Wisconsin (2017)  
The Use of Relational Meetings in Ministry, Dr. Angela Cowser, GETS (2016)  
Clergy Coaching from Don Mendenhall (2013)  
Staffing and Supervision by Susan Beaumont from the University of Wisconsin (2013)  
Transitional Interim Ministry Specialist (TIMS) Certification and UMEA Endorsement (2011)  
UM Board of Discipleship New Church Development Training (1996)  
Perkins School of Theology Mentor Program (Systems Theory focus) (1992-94)  
M. Div. Perkins School of Theology at SMU in Dallas, TX (1989)  
B.A. Carroll College, Waukesha, WI (1985)

### **Ordination Dates and Conference of Which You Were a Member:**

Elder: Wisconsin Conference (1991)  
Deacon: Oklahoma Conference (1987)

### **Previous Work Experiences and Pastoral Appointments:**

Assistant to the Bishop, Wisconsin Conference (2021-present)  
Waukesha: First UMC, Waukesha, WI (downtown/urban/regional setting) (2007-2021)  
Wisconsin Conference District Superintendent Metro North and Metro South Districts (2004-2007)  
Wisconsin Conference District Superintendent Metro South District (2002-2004)  
Jackson: Still Waters Founding Pastor (suburban setting) (1996-2002)  
Parfreyville UMC, Waupaca, WI (Wisconsin tourist setting) (1990-1996)  
Duncan: Stephens UMC, Duncan, OK (racially mixed neighborhood setting) (1985-1990)

### **Connectional and Ecumenical Church Experiences:**

#### **1. Current:**

North Central Jurisdiction Committee on the Episcopacy (2020-present)  
Wisconsin Conference Response Team (2021-present)  
Wisconsin Conference Committee on the Episcopacy (2016-present)  
Wisconsin Conference Delegation to General Conference co-chair (2019-present)  
Bishop's Task Force on the Wisconsin Way Forward chair (2019-present)  
Wisconsin Conference Institute of Congregational Development faculty (2018-present)  
Family Systems & Centering Prayer Group co-chair (2008-present)  
Wisconsin Conference Board of Laity Faith Alive faculty (2016-present)  
NCJ Urban Ministry Network (2002-2008), chair (2008-present)

#### **2. Previous:**

Clergy Coach for Self in Systems Thinking (2017-2018)  
Wisconsin Conference Committee on the Episcopacy (2012-2016) Chair (2016-2021)  
South East District Circuit Leader SE 10 (2007-2021)

Wisconsin Conference Delegation to the North Central Jurisdictional Conference (2012, 2016)  
Wisconsin Conference Task Force on Re-districting and Structure (2012-2013)  
General Conference Funding Patterns Task Force (2004-2008)  
Bishop's Response Team (2003-2008)  
Metro South and Metro North District Superintendent (2002-2007)  
Milwaukee Ecumenical Judicatory Leaders (2002-2007)  
Wisconsin Conference Board of Congregational Development (1996-2002)

**Community Service Activity:**

**1. Current:**

**2. Previous:**

Waukesha Association of Religious Leaders (2007-2021), chair (2017-2021)  
SOPHIA (Wisdom interfaith justice network) Waukesha County (2011-2021)  
Nonprofits started or incubated at First UMC Waukesha since 2007:

- Healing Hearts of Waukesha County (grief support for children and families) (2009-2021)
- St. Vincent de Paul Coming Together to Get Ahead (leaving generational poverty) (2015-2021)
- Greater Milwaukee El Sistema (helping kids access music and community) (2016-2021)

Board of Education West Bend School District, West Bend, WI (elected 2000, 2002)  
Washington County Red Cross Board (2000-2002)  
Helped to start Waupaca County Habitat for Humanity (1994)

**Publications, Awards, Honors:**

Endorsed for the episcopacy by the Wisconsin Conference delegation and Wisconsin Annual Conference (2019-present)  
ORS, a poetry collection published by red moon press (2015)  
The Haiku Foundation Touchstone Award for Distinguished Books (2015)  
General Board of Global Ministries Innovative Ministries Award for Refugee Ministry (2002)  
Denman Award for Evangelism (2002)  
Wisconsin Conference Vital Congregations Award (1994)

**Special Interests and/or Hobbies:**

Family, grandchildren, writing poetry, reading, fishing, Brewers, Packers, and Bucks fan. Julie and I enjoy a game of horseshoes and a walk after dinner.

**Faith and Leadership**

**Describe Your Understanding of the Nature and Mission of the Church:**

The nature of the body of Christ is relational and always renewed by our life in Christ. Relationship is the vehicle for revelation and transformation. Paul's image of the body of Christ lit my moral imagination, called me, and is at the heart of how I see ministry. As a church planter, I found that relational theology spoke to people coming from experiences of broken ecclesiology and in the ministry of the annual conference, relational theology helps us build bridges for racial justice and radical inclusion.

The church is the body of Christ always self-giving for the healing of creation. The Trinity is a revelation of healthy receiving and self-giving that makes the love of God known in relationship. If relationship is the vehicle for revelation and transformation, we must make relationships that are always transforming us in love. The mission of the church is to be changed that we might be and make disciples of Jesus for the transformation of the world. To engage the mission of the church, we must grow in love toward becoming whole persons living into the Shalom of wholeness-making community as a light to the nations. To do so our systems must move toward Beloved Community that engages racial justice and radical inclusion personally and systemically. Wesleyans are always people grounded in a renewal movement, and as such, we must continually take moral inventory and audit systems in the direction of racial justice and radical inclusion. The United Methodist Church offers us countless ways to be in relationship with shared mission globally and to practice stewardship that increases care of the planet God has given us to love. We are people of tenacious hope because we are always in relationship with Jesus Christ!

### **Share Your Vision for The United Methodist Church:**

The United Methodist Church is in need of change. We must build bridges to racial justice and radical inclusion of the kind we have been blessed to engage in the Wisconsin Conference.

To do so, my vision is that The United Methodist Church would become more like walking a labyrinth than a flat, two-dimensional slogan or image devoid of movement in love. We have a God made known in Jesus who walks us all into and through the labyrinth for the life we find there. We were made to be led to the Center each day. I find that I am hungry every single day for the Center that we find with the help of Jesus. Life in the center heals us and changes us—and brings wholeness from the center back to the margins. The relationships we make on the margins change us and reveal the Center at the margins. There are no barriers in a labyrinth: we are all included and called to move in the love of Jesus Christ. Love puts us shoulder to shoulder, integrates the Center with the margin, and calls us all to walk with Jesus. Our vision must dismantle broken systems that prevent us from increasing racial justice and radical inclusion. Our movement must flatten hierarchy and invest more locally. Our movement must remain a movement! In Wisconsin, we are blessed with the gifts of global recruitment that serve our ministries and having 49% cross-racial appointments means churches and clergy are being moved out of monocultural understandings simply by being involved in The United Methodist Church.

I look forward to the opportunity to help an annual conference establish structures and systems that render racial justice and radical inclusion even as we start new ministries with new populations. I would be excited to become a learning community to renew our vision and tools for ministry. I look forward to global partnerships with other conferences and agencies that expand our witness and impact.

I feel strongly that God is in process with us and that we are called to move in love. I am grateful to bring 35 years of experience as a local church pastor—including a pandemic pastor—I know what it is to adapt, equip, and go deeper in faith all at the same time. My experience on cabinets under three bishops have helped me learn from the labyrinth of being The United Methodist Church.

**Describe Your Concept and Style of Leadership:**

I have a blended family style of leadership from my experience growing up in two experiences of blended family. I am a relational leader. I believe relationship is the vehicle for revelation and transformation. ‘God was in Christ reconciling the world...’ (2Cor. 5:19) is the heart of how I think.

Ministry proceeds at the speed of relationships that make Christ known. Everywhere I am appointed, I work with leaders to free congregational systems from bullies or processes that exclude. To do so one must be at peace with messiness. Groups do their best work when they are not uptight. I laugh often and help others laugh, mostly at myself.

I believe that these days call for spiritual leaders who need to (1) experience our own cultural humility and transformation to equip healing and inclusive community, (2) develop healthy and inclusive systems in community, and (3) move healthier organizations toward the global mission we share. What we pay attention to grows and I have had a fire in my belly for paying attention to Shalom, inclusion, and innovation in the church and the annual conference.

As the person Bishop Jung asked to lead his Bishop’s Task Force, I have moved from developing beloved community with nonprofits in a local church setting in Waukesha to collaboration that allows conference systems to increase racial justice and radical inclusion. I may seem like the least likely person to do that, but the God of Jacob and Deborah loves to call the unlikely.

Over time we have made changes in Wisconsin on the cabinet level and program level that are bearing fruit with: (1) the Anti-Racism Task Force’s ongoing cultural competency training, (2) appointment making and support so that we are nearing 49% of our appointments being cross-racial, (3) developing new churches with new people (26 Hispanic churches, 8 Korean, 3 Hmong, 2 Congolese, etc.), and (4) continued messaging that theologically supports a vision to increase racial justice and radical inclusion. This is another example of one of my favorite maxims: what we pay attention to grows.

I believe the North Central Jurisdiction desires leadership that upholds the Building Beloved Community covenant we approved in November 2021, and episcopal candidates with a demonstrated capacity to do this work in multiple contexts and on the conference level.

**Describe Your Gifts and Graces:**

Wherever I go, with God’s help: (1) we get healthy, (2) we create a learning community, (3) we develop innovative ministry, and (4) we grow stewardship. I am grounded, pastoral, and entrepreneurial. Every one of my days starts with *Lectio Divina* in the psalms—I take a line with me for the day. Today’s is from Psalm 25:20: “O keep my soul and deliver me.” So, for example, I began today thinking about what strength keeps my soul, and how we are all in God’s project to deliver and save—and I put that line in my phone. Then I start the day writing a poem, maybe two. I create before I manage. Grounding in Jesus Christ early, at noon, and at night is the gold in my life. My Sabbath Day is Friday.

With God's help,

- as a student-pastor, I shepherded a church to become racially mixed, vital, double in size and be a strength in an economically challenged neighborhood.
- I led a congregation to quadruple in size and renovate its building and discipleship system for the population expansion they were experiencing.
- I started a new church that became self-sustaining and built its first building during my six-year pastorate. In that new ministry we relocated, loved, equipped, and integrated nine Bosnian Muslim families into the community after the Balkan wars in the mid to late 1990s.
- As a superintendent, I served on two cabinets and started new congregations in that role. I worked to create a pilot program to help the Wisconsin Conference make healthy and effective cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments.
- In my next setting, I shepherded a congregation after a financial breach of trust. We developed a strong discipleship system, as well as launched and incubated several nonprofits to benefit children. These nonprofits support families dealing with grief, equip families out of generational poverty, and teach children to learn an instrument and play in an orchestra. We used a lean entrepreneurial model of modest experiments in innovation until something began to work and then invested in the experiments that showed promise to create an environment of beloved community and collaboration across our nonprofit partners. We provided leadership in the community as the city responds to a growing population of those living homelessly, and we incorporated many of those struggling with homelessness into our ministry. Prior to 2019, in Waukesha County, Wisconsin, we led First UMC in a multi-year process to become and live as a reconciling congregation in The United Methodist Church. We navigated a staff and technology shift to increase our impact during the pandemic.

Since 2021, as the Assistant to the Bishop, I have been working with Bishop Jung as I lead the Bishop's Task Force to implement his vision. Together we continue to:

- increase racial justice and radical inclusion,
- bring forward an integrous disaffiliation process,
- create a response to the Boy Scouts' bankruptcy that puts survivors at the center of our response,
- and develop a Conference response team (for breaches of trust).

This is my third experience of cabinet which is helping me grow. I am asked to teach and preach often.

### **Describe How You Have Experienced the Call to the Episcopacy and How God Has Prepared You for the Episcopacy:**

I experienced my call to ministry when I was seventeen in a small United Methodist Church planted among farm fields. Worship that day lit my mind with the reality and power of the body of Christ, and I believe each of us has a place in and gifts for that body. While I came from my own set of privileges, I did not come from wealth. I had to trust Jesus to open doors for education, formation, and equipping. Jesus is the stranger always at the door calling us forward to grow in love and grace.

Colleagues and conference leaders encouraged me to pray and consider a calling to the episcopacy since 2015. As the General Conference of 2019 was ending, I started to receive emails urging me to pray about offering myself to serve again in the next delegation, and

whether I might offer my life as the church discerns who is being called to episcopal leadership. Since their encouragement to pray as Lent began in 2019, I have prayed and reflected on my calling and readiness every single day.

After my colleagues elected me as the first clergy delegate for the 2020 General Conference delegation, I set up two clearness committees—a Quaker discernment process—and God has continued to strengthen and sustain my openness to the church's discernment. As the years have unfolded, the delegation and annual conference have endorsed me. Bishop Jung asked me to pray about serving with him in the episcopal office which has confirmed my sense of call.

Our delegation opened the endorsement process to any elder in the Wisconsin Conference, and in their discernment, they have chosen to endorse me. I believe they were looking for a person who had a long-standing record of advocating for full LGBTQIA+ inclusion, someone who has an entrepreneurial spirit and experience leading systemic transformation.

How has God prepared me? Increasingly I see how my experience of a blended family was a deeply formative experience. My father made it clear to me as a boy, we were given new people to love, and we needed to create family in ways that would benefit us all. I had no idea that one of those people, my sister, would one day help me care for my father as he was dying. My daughter's marriage to a man born in Mexico helped me understand the dynamics surrounding how and why families pool resources enough to send a young man to the United States, smuggled by a coyote.

I have benefited from a post graduate program in family systems theory and spending the last 14 years in a group that met monthly (apart from July) to do centering prayer and reflect on systems issues in the lives of laity, clergy, and churches. Extensive time in family systems theory and practice has been one of my lenses for leadership.

God has prepared me by calling me to be a local church pastor for 35 years. I have been a pandemic pastor. I have been entrepreneurial in all my appointments but always pastoral. Helping a large multi-staff church heal from embezzlement and become a reconciling congregation was a great teacher. My experience on three cabinets and advancing systemic change in the direction of racial justice and radical inclusion has been instructive. I cannot quantify what I have learned from serving with Bishop Jung in the episcopal office. I am influenced daily by the most inter-dependent thinker I know.

God has prepared me with the work of the Episcopal office. I am the first contact with breaches of trust. My work rebuilds integrity. At day's end, I walk four hundred and fifty-eight steps home counting blessings. Most days I could go around the block, too.

God will use my 'yes,' wherever the church discerns it. I trust you with your discernment and thank you for this consideration. May the peace of Christ be with you.

**Episcopal Election Covenant** has been signed and received by NCJ Secretary, Rev. Paul R. White.

**Episcopal Candidate Forum:** Rev. Schwerin will be participating in the North Central Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy (NCJCOE) video forum. This forum will consist of a

fifteen-minute interview with each episcopal candidate who elects to participate. All interviews will be posted on to the North Central Jurisdictional (NCJ) website on or around September 1, 2022.