



WE PRESS ON

2020 North Central Jurisdictional Conference
of The United Methodist Church



**2020 North Central Jurisdictional Conference
Episcopal Nominee Information
for
Rev. Dr. Aleze M. Fulbright**



Name: Rev. Dr. Aleze M. Fulbright

Conference: Indiana

Street/PO Box Address: 301 Pennsylvania Parkway, Suite 300

City/State/Zip: Indianapolis, Indiana 46280

Telephone: 317-809-8001

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Current Appointment: Conference (District) Superintendent serving the Central District

Family:

Background and Experience:

Formal Education and Significant Continuing Education:

- Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Missouri State University

- Master of Divinity from Texas Christian University
- Doctorate of Ministry in Pastoral Leadership from Houston Graduate School of Theology.
- Executive Certificate in Religious Fundraising from Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis Lilly School of Philanthropy Lake Institute of Faith and Giving
- Certificate in Nonprofit Executive Leadership from Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
- Certificate in Executive Leadership from Southern Methodist University-Cox School of Business

Ordination Dates and Conference of Which You Were a Member:

2011 – North Texas Conference

Previous Work Experiences and Pastoral Appointments:

- Conference (District) Superintendent of the Central District (2019-Present)
- Conference (District) Superintendent of the East District (2018-2019)
- Director of Leadership Development for the Indiana Annual Conference (2014-2018)
- Associate Director for the Center of Leadership Development for the North Texas Conference (2011-2014)
- Associate Pastor of First United Methodist Church Commerce, and Campus Minister of Wesleyan Campus Ministries at Texas A&M University-Commerce (2008-2011)
- Assistant Controller of the United Way of Metropolitan Dallas, Inc. (2006-2008)

Connectional and Ecumenical Church Experiences:

- **Current:**
 - Board Member and Vice Chairperson for Bethany Fellows (www.bethanyfellows.org) –
 - Faculty Member of Indiana Annual Conference Extension School's Course of Study (COS 124- Transformative Leadership)
 - Curator and Facilitator for the Texas Annual Conference African-American Pastors' Transformative Pastoral Leadership (TPL) Program
- **Previous:**
 - 2020 Crossroad Retreat (West Ohio)
 - 2018 GBHEM Eight Year Assessment Task Team
 - 2016 NCJ BMCR Presenter (Indianapolis)
 - 2015 School of Congregational Development Workshop Presenter
 - 2014 SCJ BMCR Presenter (St. Louis)

Community Service Activity:

1. Current:

- Life Member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated

- Treasurer of Omega Nu Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated
- Spiritual Oversight Committee Member for the Midwestern Region of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated

2. Previous:

- Member of the Diversity and Inclusion Task Team – Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Central Indiana (2018)
- Graduate of Leadership United- United Way of Central Indiana (2017)
- Board of Member of the Salvation Army's North Texas Youth Education Town (2013-2014)

Publications, Awards, Honors:

Understanding Your Call: Knowing how 11 Biblical figures understood their calls from God can help you to understand yours (ISBN-13: 978-0998754666)

Special Interests and/or Hobbies:

- Birkman International Certified Coach/Consultant
- International Coaching Federation (ICF) Associate Certified Coach
- Lombard Mennonite Peace Center Certified in Mediation Skills
- Member of National Association of Parliamentarians

Faith and Leadership

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

Historically, the nature of the Church can be seen through several metaphors illuminated in Scripture; the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-27), God's family (2 Corinthians 6:8), the Light of the World (Matthew 5:13-15, Acts 13:47). I believe the purpose of the Church is to carry on the work of Christ, proclaiming the Good News and transforming lives. This transformative work cannot be fully realized in the confines of bricks and mortar (the building); it must be extended in our living and being throughout the world as followers of Jesus Christ. This extension is our Connectional nature as The United Methodist Church and our mission "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." Our United Methodist witness commits us to extend beyond our walls and borders, to partner in the work of God in the world, by deploying Christ followers and engaging communities for the work of transformation and impact for Jesus Christ.

Our historical understanding of the Church, its nature and mission in the world, can be found in The Methodist Church Articles of Religion and The Evangelical United Brethren Confession of Faith as chronicled in the 2016 Book of Discipline (and adjusted for gender inclusivity in parentheses): "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men (and women) in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same. (Article XIII)"

“We believe the Christian Church is the community of all true believers under the Lordship of Christ. We believe it is one, holy, apostolic, and catholic. It is the redemptive fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by men (and women) divinely called, and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ’s own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, the Church exists for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, and the redemption of the world. (Confession Article V)”

I believe the demonstration of the Church is to represent the kaleidoscope of God’s body, epitomized everywhere and in everyone; to demonstrate the physical presence of God in and to the world through the power of the Holy Spirit. To quote the song lyrics from artist John Michael Talbot, entitled the St. Teresa’s Prayer: “Christ has no body now, but yours; no hands, no feet on Earth but yours; Yours are the eyes through which He looks compassion on this world; Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good; Yours are the hands with which He blesses all the world...” The responsibility of the Church is to be in ministry with people, and assisting in the fulfillment of their spiritual and physical needs. As Matthew 25:35-36 (NSRV) suggests, “I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger, and you welcomed me, I was naked, and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison, and you visited me.”

If we take this responsibility seriously, lay and clergy must refocus on what it means to make disciples for the transformation of the world, and align our resources to this mission. We must recommit to nurturing our disciple-making methods, which is not primarily about discipleship pathways but ensuring all persons understand their purpose in the disciple-making process. We must create and reclaim a culture of innovation and imagination for what constitutes being the Church, and invest in unorthodox means of reaching new populations of people for Jesus Christ. I believe we have complicated the cause of Christ, and perhaps it is time to reassess for whom we serve and why we are called the Church.

Share Your Vision for The United Methodist Church:

As Conference (District) Superintendent, in two distinct districts, I have come to understand that the average worship attender/church goer only sees the lens of The United Methodist Church through the local context of ministry. I have come to understand that despite there may be many things for which there are differences of opinion/understanding, but yet these persons have found a community for which they have connected. I also understand that our United Methodist Church's name is best celebrated when we are first to arrive, actively engage, and provide lasting impact in communities around the world. It is through our connection and works of mercy for which, I believe, we can leverage us in becoming a more vibrant and relevant United Methodist Church.

I believe John Wesley and the Methodist movement’s originators were disturbers of systems and an agitator of the status quo. Therefore, I can imagine a United Methodist Church that will equip the local congregations, which are the outposts for making disciples of Jesus Christ for greater service and witness. I imagine reclaiming the Methodist movement by celebrating and elevating the call of laity to move us forward. I imagine a United Methodist Church that utilizes our voices beyond, our conflicts, to be the leaders of social action against injustices anywhere. I imagine a

United Methodist Church that will develop new leaders for now and in the future; who are ready to take risks, launch into uncharted waters, and cast fresh visions.

I imagine a United Methodist Church that encompasses a “big tent” that values all theological and developing understandings, which does not create prejudice or where harm can reside, and we are cordial in our differing of understandings and opinions; for me embodies the message of Christ and what it means to be the Body of Christ. I am an advocate for honoring the full humanity of all persons, the unbiased expression of love of all who choose to love, and the unique calling to pastoral leadership that God births within each of God’s beloved.

I would hope that those of us, who proudly proclaim The United Methodist Church as our faith home, can move beyond our complicity and reclaim our heritage, by agitating the consciousness of our communities to share about the Love of God grounded in Jesus Christ.

Describe Your Concept and Style of Leadership:

I personally lead through the lens of Hebrews 13:2 which states, “Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.” I strive to value the personhood of all, and in my leadership I value each person of sacred worth, and honor the generosity of their time, abilities, gifts, service, and witness. Additionally, my character is the only lens for which people will judge me and trust me. Therefore daily I desire to be “perfected in love” and remain humbled by God’s sanctifying grace, which is the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. It is through God’s Spirit working within me, that I am being transformed to align into the image of Christ and operate out of the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

As a leader, with a proven track record, I strive to ensure that my words align with my actions; and this is a daily commitment and a constant resolve as I serve alongside all persons within and outside of the church. My style of leadership is one that serves, listens, collaborates with others, draws out the greatest potential of others, evaluates for excellence, and delivers results.

Describe Your Gifts and Graces:

I am a follower of Jesus Christ who strives daily to be faithful in my personal discipleship, and spiritual leader who is committed to the mission, vision, and ministry of the Church. An adaptive leader, with a broad background, possessing a strong passion in striving for excellence. A person of conviction in living a personal mission to encourage, equip, and empower people to live on purpose through their God-giveness.

A lifelong learner, self-starter, innovator of efficient systems, connector of possibilities and potential, and a detail-oriented professional with solid leadership, management, and accounting experience. Vast experiences in leadership development, accounting, management, team-building, collaborating, connecting, budgeting, visioning, and forecasting.

StrengthFinders Signature Themes of Talent: Deliberative, Relator, Achiever, Competition, and Focus

DISC Assessment: High D Myers-Briggs Assessment: INTJ

Birkman Assessment: Yellow (Interest) Blue (Usual)

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

I believe I have been called to the Episcopacy, for such a time as this, to continue in faithfulness and avail my skills, gifts, and abilities for greater fruitfulness in God's Kingdom. I believe these unconventional times in the life of The United Methodist Church, will require unconventional and proven leadership; for which my work in the private sector, non-profits as a staff or board member, my vocational experiences throughout the Church, and serving two distinct Annual Conferences (North Texas and Indiana) have been a means of preparation to serve in the role of an Episcopal leader. More recently, my current service as a Conference (District) Superintendent for the past two years in two vastly different missional areas in the state of Indiana has also offered new insights into the cultural context of those we hope to serve.

However, I think most specifically as to what would influence my understanding of being a fruitful and faithful Bishop resides with the Indiana Annual Conference which, in 2014, identified an adaptive challenge and decided to align ministry resources to bring about a Leadership Development emphasis for non-clergy and clergy leaders. Through this adaptive opportunity, the department of Leadership Development was created to meet the needs of discovering, developing, and deploying fruitful leaders, both lay and clergy, in accomplishing the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. I was hired and appointed as the Director of Leadership Development to create a culture of leadership among the laity and clergy of the Indiana Annual Conference. In the four years of Leadership Development's existence, under my leadership, we were instrumental in developing an understanding of fruitful leadership, implementing sustaining initiatives, and cultivating a culture of call for new leadership, primarily the next generation or emerging leaders, that will help carry on the legacy and mission of the Church.

A few initiatives that started and are sustaining beyond my leadership to nurture the culture of leadership in the Indiana Annual Conference; Called to Fruitfulness, is an initiative for professional and spiritual development of clergy in the Indiana Conference. This eight-month process recognizes, renews, resources, and rejoices with clergy celebrating their five-year interval anniversary of Full Connection. Another initiative is the Clergy Assessment Performance Development tool. This tool is an online system of providing evaluation and feedback, accountability, and improved clergy fruitfulness. Lastly, the creation of an annual Call Sunday (Encourage the Call), which provides an opportunity for congregations to intentionally plant seeds of possibility for those in which God may be nudging for vocational ministry and service. The above mentioned initiatives only provide an entrée to the vast experiences and expertise that could be beneficial in the role of Bishop.

Additionally, I hold of Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting, from Missouri State University. Prior to entering full-time vocational ministry in 2008, I attained over ten years of experience in accounting management positions throughout the corporate arena. The position of three years I resigned to enter fulltime ministry, was the Assistant Controller for the United Way of Metropolitan Dallas, Incorporated. At the time, I had the opportunity to oversee the impact and financial management of the annual campaign, which was more than \$54M and the organizational budget was \$8.2M. I have found this opportunity, among my other corporate experiences, to be invaluable as I have served, and will continue to serve The United Methodist Church.

I understand the call to the Episcopacy as one of servant leadership. How can one lead unless they first serve? Lastly, my curriculum vitae summarize my professional experiences, community involvement, along with my educational achievements, including continuing professional and spiritual development, which further support this call to the episcopacy and the ways for which I would be fruitful in service. I believe I would bring energy and excitement, a fresh perspective, and a commitment to our mission and goals, as well as, demonstrate the connection with many leaders throughout The United Methodist Church. Ultimately, I value creating sustainable systems that continue beyond my leadership for lasting change and transformation.

More information can be found at (after March 1, 2020): www.alezefulbright.com

Endorsements:

Indiana Conference Delegation to General and Jurisdictional Conference

Episcopal Election Covenant has been signed and received by 2020 NCJ Secretary, Rev. Paul R. White.

Episcopal Candidate Forum:

The Rev. Dr. Fulbright 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 the North Central Jurisdictional (NCJ) website on or around April 1, 2020.