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2022 North Central Jurisdictional Conference  
of The United Methodist Church

## **Episcopal Nominee Information 2022 North Central Jurisdictional Conference**



**Name:** Rev. Dr. Aleze M. Fulbright

**Conference:** Indiana Annual Conference

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**Current Appointment:** Conference (District) Superintendent, serving the Central and West Districts

**Family:** Son- Myron D. Fisher Jr. (age 26, an education administrator residing in Kansas)

### **Background and Experience:**

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

Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Missouri State University

Master of Divinity from Texas Christian University-Brite Divinity School

Doctor of Ministry in Pastoral Leadership from Houston Graduate School of Theology

Additionally, I have completed the Executive Certificate in Religious Fundraising from Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis Lily School of Philanthropy Lake Institute of Faith and Giving; a Certificate in Nonprofit Executive Leadership from Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis; a Certificate in Executive Leadership from Southern Methodist University; a Birkman International Certified Coach/Consultant; Certified in Mediation Skills from the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center; member of the National Association of Parliamentarians; and an Associate Certified Coach (ACC) through the International Coaching Federation.

More information can be found at this link: [Meet Rev. Dr. Aleze M. Fulbright](#)

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

June 2011- North Texas Conference

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

2020-Present: Conference (District) Superintendent of the Central and West Districts

2019-2020: Conference (District) Superintendent of the Central District

2018-2019: Conference (District) Superintendent of the East District

2014-2018: Director of Leadership Development for the Indiana Annual Conference

2011-2014: Associate Director for the Center of Leadership Development in the North Texas Conference of The United Methodist Church

2008-2011: Associate Pastor of First United Methodist Church Commerce, and Campus Minister of Wesleyan Campus Ministries at Texas A&M University-Commerce

Before accepting the call to full-time vocational ministry, I was an accountant for ten years and served corporations and non-profits in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, including the position of Assistant Controller of the United Way of Metropolitan Dallas, Inc. (2006-2008).

A detailed resume can be found here: [Detailed Resume](#)

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

### **1. Current:**

Current: Member-Council of Bishop's Disaffiliation Task Force

Current: Member- North Central Jurisdiction Committee on Episcopacy (and Episcopal Areas Task Force)

Current: Conversation Partner/Participant-Wesleyan Investive's New Wesleyan Ecosystem

Current: Board Member and Vice Chairperson for Bethany Fellows ([www.bethanyfellows.org](http://www.bethanyfellows.org))

Current: Chairperson of Bishop's Advisory Team

Current: Cabinet Representative to the Indiana Annual Conference's Board of Ordained Ministry

Current: Faculty Member of Indiana Annual Conference Extension School's Course of Study (Teach COS 124-Transformative Leadership each Fall since 2017)

Current: Faculty Member of United Methodist Commission on Higher Education and Collegiate Ministry's Lead44 Coaching Program

Current: GBHEM Professional Coaching Resource: <https://www.gbhem.org/e-resources/professional-coaching-resources/>

### **2. Previous:**

2020: Planning Team for NCJ Innovate

2017-2021: Curator and Facilitator for Texas Annual Conference African-American Pastors' Transformative Pastoral Leadership (TPL) Program

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)

2011-2014: North Texas Conference Board of Ordained Ministry and Chair of Recruitment and Enlistment

## **Community Service Activity:**

### **1. Current:**

Current: Board of Trustee Member-University of Indianapolis (a UM Related Institution)

Current: Life Member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated (25+ years of active service)

## **2. Previous:**

2016-2019: Member of the Diversity and Inclusion Task Team- Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Central Indiana.

2016: Graduate of Leadership United- United Way of Central Indiana

2013-2014: Board of Member of the Salvation Army's North Texas Youth Education Town

## **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:**

Special Interests/Hobbies include participating in a weekly bowling league, experiencing new adventures with my son, and traveling for a bi-annual appointment (July and December) with self in the Caribbean for renewal.

# **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 Jesus Christ, proclaiming the Good News, and bearing witness of being Christ's disciples through the evidence of fruit (John 15:8) and the transformation of lives by our love. This transformative work cannot be fully realized in the confines of bricks and mortar (the building), it must be extended in our everyday living and being throughout the world as faithful 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 go extend beyond our walls and borders, to partner in the work of God in the world, by 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 (women and persons) 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 (women and persons) 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)."

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 linear 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 (or re-engaging those who have disconnected) 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. Lastly, the global pandemic has shown that the Church can be agile in spreading the Gospel message in ministering to its members and connecting with those who are curious about the faith; even beyond the Sunday morning experience.

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

As Conference (District) Superintendent that serves two districts (almost 200+ congregations), I have come to understand that the average worship attender/church-goer primarily views The United Methodist Church through the local context of ministry. I have come to understand that despite being many things for which there are differences of opinion/understanding, yet these persons have found a community for which they have connected. I continue to share with the laity, clergy, and communities I serve that people are still joining congregations (even virtually), when they have found authentic community and encountered the transformative work of Jesus Christ, in this they want to be part of investing and making a difference in the world.

I believe John Wesley and the original 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, for these ever-evolving times. I imagine a United Methodist Church that utilizes our collective voices beyond, our conflicts, to be the leaders of social action against injustices and inequities anywhere. I imagine a United Methodist Church that will develop new and diverse leaders for now and in the future; who are ready to take risks, launch into uncharted waters, cast fresh visions, and execute expanded means of impact in local communities.

I imagine a United Methodist Church that encompasses a greater sense of belonging 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 this 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 take this understanding of belonging personally and will actively advocate for it, as there have been times in the Methodist movement’s history where there were discussions about my personhood and my calling and for those who resemble me; there have been groups of people embroiled in deep division or on the brink of splitting because of my race (1844, 1939, 1968), and my gender (1956). Additionally, while going through the ordination process, there were questions about my ability to effectively pastor because I was a never-married, single mother

(2011), all based on one's interpretation of Scripture. I am saddened that the matter of "human sexuality" has brought us to this impasse, because as I look at all our Social Principles, I believe there are differing understandings/opinions, and yet there are not discussions about separation because of many of them.

All of this to summarize a vision for The United Methodist Church centered around Faith, Fire, Focus, Fruit. I would hope that those, who proudly proclaim The United Methodist Church as our faith home, will fervently move to reclaim our Wesleyan heritage, by being unapologetic in our theology of grace and sharing 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, so I live a daily commitment and constant resolve to my personal values of Authenticity, Integrity, and Transparency. Therefore, 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.

My style of leadership is one that serves alongside, actively listens, collaborates with others, draws out the greatest potential of others, strategically executes, and delivers results.

### **Describe Your Gifts and Graces:**

A spiritual leader with a pastor's heart 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 and sustainable systems, connector of possibilities and potential, and a detail-oriented professional with solid executive leadership, management, and accounting experience. An Enneagram 5 with vast capabilities 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

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

I sense this call to the episcopacy, a set apart call, is a continuation to further in faithfulness and avail my skills, gifts, and abilities for greater fruitfulness in God's Kin-dom and The United Methodist Church. I believe my work in the private sector, non-profits as a staff or board member, and my vocational experiences throughout the Church have been a means of preparation to serve in the role of an Episcopal leader.

If elected, I would uphold the responsibility to "guard the faith, order, liturgy, doctrine, and discipline of the Church (2016 BOD paragraph 403.1), which I embody in my service as a Conference (District) Superintendent for the past four years, and currently serving almost 200+ congregations in the Central and West Districts, across two vastly different missional areas in the state of Indiana. With the support and feedback of an Operational Team (lay and clergy), I encourage clergy and congregations through the global pandemic impacts (and even during the global pandemic) by providing accurate information/resources and regular zoom connections. I equip congregations to reimagine the "new normal" and what it means for our service and witness in communities (especially those smaller-membership congregations in depressed communities). Since 2020, I usher congregations in the discernment processes with regarding disaffiliation and have faithfully executed the BOD paragraph 2553. While also sharing in courageous conversations with congregations regarding their current realities and their stewardship of rich legacies by facilitating mergers or closures. I also have the privilege of empowering those persons who are sensing God's call by being a prayer resource and conversation partner.

Lastly in this role and through these responsibilities, I emphasis the consistent practice of spiritual disciplines to strengthen our ability to embody Christ in the world, and actively advocate for clergy self-care and renewal by modeling it. I speak up and out against the social ills and sufferings in the world through monthly newsletters, social media posts, and participation in community events. I intentionally set aside time to be present with local congregations through worship participation or preaching. Finally, I serve as the Chairperson of the Bishop's Advisory Team, which supports our episcopal leader by fostering strategic conversations and solutions for the betterment of the Annual Conference and Bishop Trimble's continued servant leadership.

Additional preparations that 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 inaugural 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 in any episcopal area.

Furthermore, 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 full-time 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 summarizes my professional and pastoral 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 focus, 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. I believe through my broad experiences I would be able to serve as an Episcopal leader during this time of change for the United Methodist Church, to assist in creating a firmer foundation and a hopeful direction that will lead us into God's faithful future.

Endorsements:

Indiana Conference Delegation to General and Jurisdictional Conference  
Indiana Annual Conference's Endorsed Candidate

**Episcopal Election Covenant** has been signed and received by 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 to the North Central Jurisdictional (NCJ) website on or around September 1, 2022.