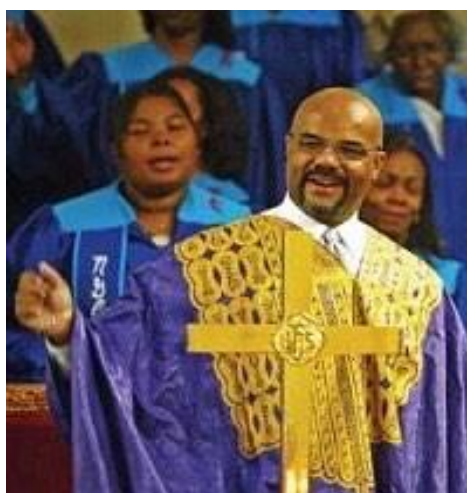




Episcopal Nominee Information 2022 North Central Jurisdictional Conference



Name: Jacques A. Conway (him/he/his)

Conference: Northern Illinois

Street/PO Box Address: 211 N. Grove Ave.

City/State/Zip: Oak Park, IL 60302

Telephone: (708)699-5801

Email: jconway@umcnic.org

Current Appointment: District Superintendent; Lake South District

Family: I have been married to my high school sweetheart, [LaMenta Conway, MD](#), for 38 years. Together we have 3 children Christian (Mark), Caleb, and Corey. Additionally, we have 2 grand puppies affectionally called Rainbow and Oso.

Background and Experience

Formal education (please also include significant Continuing Education):

Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, Rochester, N. Y., D. Min Program (Thesis in progress) (2022)
 Princeton Theological Seminary, Black Theology & Leadership Institute (2017)
 Loyola University Chicago, MBA Certificate (2010)
 Northwestern University School of Staff & Command (2002)
 Chicago Theological Seminary, Master of Divinity (1995)
 Loyola University Chicago, Bachelor's Degree (1985)
 Chicago Police Academy (1984)

Ordination Dates and Conferences of Which You Were a Member:

Probationary Deacon, Northern Illinois Conference (1996)
 Elder, Northern Illinois Conference (1999)

Previous Work Experiences and Pastoral Appointments:

[Oak Park Police Department, Oak Park, IL, Retired Senior Patrol & Community Police Sergeant \(1984-2006\)](#)

Park National Bank, Vice President Community Development & Engagement (2006-2009)
 Teamwork Englewood, Founding Board Member & Executive Director (2009-2012)
 Euclid Avenue United Methodist Church, Oak Park, IL – Associate Pastor (1993-1995)
 Chris/Greater Englewood Parish United Methodist Church, Chicago, IL – Local Pastor (1995-2003)
 Neighborhood United Methodist Church, Maywood, IL – Elder (2003-2016)
 St. Matthew United Methodist Church, Chicago, IL – Elder (2013-2016)
 Chicago Southern/Lake South District, Northern Illinois Conference – District Superintendent (2016-Present)

Service in Chaplaincy:

Oak Park Police Department, Oak Park, IL – Founder, Chaplaincy Program (1995-2020)
 Fraternal Order of Police, State Lodge, IL – (1998-Present)
 United States Secret Service (2020-Present)

Connectional and Ecumenical Church Experience:

[Oak Park River Forest High School District 200, Board President Elect \(2002-2010\)](#)
[NUMC Afterschool Tutoring Program \(2003–2016\)](#)
 Chair, Northwestern District Committee of Ordained Ministry, Member (2012-2016)
 Cabinet Member, Conference Council Finance & Administration (2018-2020)
 Annual Conference Shepherding Team 2016-Present
 Kids Above All, Executive Board Member (2016-Present)
[I AM ABEL](#), Executive Board Member (2015-Present)
[Christ The King Jesuit High School](#), Executive Board Member (2015-2021)
 Live Free Chicago, Executive Board Member (2014-Present)
 Leaders Network, Executive Board Member (2015-Present)
 West Suburban Journal Weekly, Columnist and Advisory Board Member (2006 – 2017)

Emeritus Appointments:

Illinois Juvenile Officers Association International Conference of Police Chaplains
 Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.
 Black Methodists for Church Renewal

Special Honors:

De Lasalle High School African American of the Year (2002)
 Featured in the following print and television media: Chicago Sun-Times, Chicago Tribune, New York Times, People Magazine, Ebony, Oak Leaves, Forest Park Review, [Wednesday Journal](#), West Suburban Journal, and appearances on [Fox News National Network](#) and the Lifetime Network.

Special Interests and/or Hobbies:

Antique vehicles
 Foreign Travel, having visited 23 countries and 5 continents.
 Frequenting baseball stadium, having visited 24 out of 30 Major League Baseball stadiums across the U.S.

FAITH & LEADERSHIP

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

The Church is called into being by the Father “who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). I understand, the nature of the church is the well-spring of God’s Eternal Word and the Holy Spirit. The church belongs to God, it is God’s gift, and cannot exit by itself or for itself.

The mission of the church is the exercise of faith by the conviction of the Holy Spirit, that serves to evangelize the inclusive love of God for all people. Equally importantly, beyond ministering to the spiritual needs of people, faith (or mission) work emphasizes compassion in action concerning the least’s immediate and practical needs.

John Wesley best describes the Church mission and purpose for God’s disciples in the following statement ; “Do you not know that God entrusted you with that money (all above what buys necessities for your families) to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to help the stranger, the widow, the fatherless; and, indeed, as far as it will go, to relieve the wants of all mankind? How can you, how dare you, defraud the Lord, by applying it to any other purpose?”

I glean from Wesley’s remarks, the Church is not solely the sum of believers in communion with God, nor is it partially the mutual communion of individual believers among themselves. The Church is common partaking, by people from all statuses, races, and genders in the life of God (2 Pet 1:4), who as Trinity is the source and focus of all communions. Thus, the nature and mission of the Church is both a divine and a human reality – a dichotomy of spirituality and acts of love.

Share Your Vision for The United Methodist Church:

I share the same clarity of vision for the United Methodist Church as our Founder, John Wesley, that the church is not a destination, a pew, or a structure; it's a vehicle of faith, beyond the four walls, that when used to share the inclusive love of God for all people will infuse the hearts of mankind with the sense of hope, renewal, and the Divine presence of God.

The vision for the church need not be adjusted, rather with God's guidance we should adjust our methods to realign with our vision.

There is an obvious journey still taking place within the Methodist church, not unlike the unorthodox shift in 1700s taking God's word in all its form from the pulpit to the open air; it is the exodus of our generation. We are leaving the slave plains of our mental captivity. We have turned over our brick and mortar, and we are answering the call to follow God; (Mark 16:15) And he said unto them, go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation.

With a unified vision, we must reignite the movement by creating and aligning new strategies that address the ever-changing needs of contemporary society. The issues of racial equity and social justice are important issues that remain at the core of the Methodist movement. Partly, as result of the churches long standing commitment to eradicate institutional inequities, formidable grassroots movements armed with social media have sprung forth to include the Black Lives Matter, LBGTQ, Me Too, and Taking A Knee. Overlooked yet equally deserving are contemporary issues of segmented populations the church must plan to address or miss the mark.

Affordable housing, transportation, and the aging population are growing challenges that require immediate assessment, planning and outreach strategies. It is estimated that by 2030, nearly 20 percent of the population will be older than 65. By 2035, adults over 65 will outnumber children under 18. By 2050, there will be more than 1 million Americans older than 100. A priority currently on the forefront of municipal agencies across the regions is the condition of homeowners aging in their houses, which may no longer be appropriate for their needs, and having few available affordable options to downsize. In tackling this challenge, we must ask ourselves how the United Methodist Church could maximize investment properties currently underutilized, advance the ministry vision, and help meet the growing demands of people in need.

I firmly believe that creating a long-term organizational, communication and outreach strategic plan to act as a compass in the hands of current and future United Methodist Church theologians we set the church on an actionable path to successfully carry out its vision for generations to come.

We serve an omniscient God, who is capable of all things, and I believe that as we look to God and cast God-sized nets we (the Church) will reap God-sized returns.

Describe Your Concept and Style of Leadership:

I learned the fundamental concept of leadership from the teachings of God through His written Word. "Anyone who wants to be first, must be the very last and the servant of all (Mark 9:35).

I would describe my leadership style as Servant-minded. My journey of growing up in a close-knit family and church instilled in me a responsibility that has somewhat faded in today's "Selfie"

culture. I was raised in an environment that demonstrated serving other people, my father was in law enforcement and my mother retired a career nurse. The men and women in my extended family had a solid belief that caring for others was a “calling” in life. This belief followed me from childhood through adulthood.

Teachers and community leaders also helped shape the person I am today. I struggled with disciplinary actions throughout my Catholic grammar school years. I wasn’t until Mrs. Coleman, my 8th grade teacher, that my circumstances would improve. Ms. Coleman treated me with compassion and understanding as she worked to identify my problem. She found that my disciplinary actions were a direct result of my academic struggles. I was too embarrassed to seek help and I acted out of frustration. Ms. Coleman, like others, never gave up on me. She replaced punishment with encouragement, demeaning words with praise, and isolation with inclusion. Ms. Coleman’s Christ-like example of kindness and leadership made an indelible impression on my life.

As one of the first African American police officer added to the ranks of the Oak Park Police Department, I faced discrimination, exclusion, rejection, and inequality. Those experiences, coupled with racial tension I witnessed as a child growing up in the 60s, compelled me to be an ally for the oppressed and the rejected. The sting of isolation made me clamor for meaningful change – acceptance, love, inclusion, dignity and respect – for all people regardless of race or gender.

Servant leadership has opened doors for me to model good behavior. Build leaders. Be an ally for diverse communities. Listen and learn. Speak out against inequality. And most importantly, it’s taught me to change the conversation away from our differences to our shared humanity because were strongest when we work together.

Describe Your Gifts and Graces:

Bi-vocational

Became the youngest Oak Park, IL police officer promoted to the rank of Sergeant, and first African American to retire from the department.

Founded the Oak Park Explorers, a program for high school youth to expose and prepare participants for a career in law enforcement. The co-ed program opened the door for youth to develop relationships with local officers and begin careers in public safety. I mentored more than 100 youth during the program. The program introduced participants to college campuses across the country. 100 percent of participants graduated and went on to college.

As a member of the CeaseFire organization for violence prevention, I applied prevention, intervention and community mobilization strategies that helped reduced shooting in the Chicagoland area.

Vision

Elected President of Oak Park River Forest High School, I led the initiative to change how the school managed student disciplinary problems, as a result disciplinary actions decreased by 15 percent. I also implemented police reinforcement inside of the school, which helped to forge

positive relationships between the students and local police officers helping to negate the notion ‘all police are bad’.

Appointed by Bishop Sally Dyck, to the position of District Superintendent of the Chicago Southern District, 2016 to present, while serving as a bi-vocational minister throughout my career. In this capacity, with God’s grace, I led the following initiatives:

- Started an urban camp for at-risk youth. The camp exposed participants to new experiences, people, and places and enriched the lives of participants. In all, the camp has served more than 200 students.
- In collaboration with district clergy and laity started a camp dedicated to uplifting youth. *A Day In The Country* youth camp took kids from the inner city to the country side. The purpose of the program served to enrich, whereby disadvantaged youth were exposed to different cultures, surroundings, and experiences.
- Developed annual leadership training for clergy and laity on the subjects’ finances, personal health, and organizational management. Additionally, incorporated annual pastoral training in the areas of Medicare and housing. These training tools empowered clergy to provide useful information to their congregants.
- Through prayer and example, encouraged communion among clergy members including shared bible studies and fellowship.
- While serving as superintendent, I challenged the United Methodist Churches in the Chicago Southern District to develop an initiative outside of worship that would have an impact on youth, community, health, and education. As a result, we began the application process to become host to a center for education. Chicago Freedom School takes an innovative approach to civic engagement, leadership development, and movement building. Their programs, resources and trainings invite young people and adult allies to study the work of past movements, deepen their understanding of current social problems, build new coalitions, and develop strategies for change. St. Mark United Methodist Church, Chicago, is one of two churches slated to host Chicago Freedom School. More recently, in 2022, our efforts secured \$350K in grants, renewable for 2 years, to benefit the St. Mark United Methodist Chicago Freedom School initiative.
- As Superintendent, I developed plans and led the initiative to start 3 new faith communities within the district. The faith communities consist of Ghanaian, Latino and African American groups. They are designed to meet the needs of the diverse growing populations, cultures, and increase discipleship within the region.
- I planned and led the effort to repurpose an underutilized church building, located in the Auburn Gresham community on the South Side of Chicago, into a performance and fine arts center. The center purposes to enrich youth and deter delinquency. Currently, I am working in collaboration with a community organization and several churches within the Conference to open a local thrift store on the South Side of Chicago. Staffed by volunteers

from partner churches, the thrift store will serve the community, reduce waste, and better utilize church resources.

Stewardship & Leadership

I was appointed to 2 churches, one being St. Matthew United Methodist Church, a historical Lexington Conference congregation located in Chicago, and the other Neighborhood United Methodist Church, the oldest congregation in the Chicago western suburb of Maywood.

- I helped to revive the small and struggling congregation of St. Matthew UMC by developing a 3year strategic plan. The plan entailed revitalizing the church structure, increasing worship attendance and leverage church assets. To begin, I recruited mission teams from local churches to help with the beautification of the dilapidated building. Together we planted gardens, repaired bathrooms, painted walls and beautified the landscaping. Within my 3 years of stewardship, and help from God, the congregation membership and worship attendance increased by 30 percent.
- During my 3-year 2 Point Charge, I received the call to aid in any way possible racial reconciliation. I initiated a multiuse plan for the renovation of the St. Matthew church building. The church is located in an area once home to Cabrini Green, a government subsidized housing development known as the most dangerous public housing project in the country and comprised mainly of poor and low-income African Americans. In the mid-90s Cabrini residents in good standing were displaced from their homes to make way for new market rate properties. The demolition took place as a part of a push to abandon high-rise public housing in the hope that tenants struggling with crime and poverty would find more accommodating homes in mixed-income communities. But residents and experts alike found that in many cases, these new developments do not represent true integration. Rather, there is still an invisible divide, both cultural and socioeconomic, between public housing and market-rate residents.

The St. Matthew Church Development stands to bridge the integration gap. The plan, projected to cost \$102.5M, includes expanding the church building to accommodate commercial, residential affordable housing, parking, and worship space, with 25 percent of the 175 apartments allocated to affordable housing and 75 percent market.

The effort is an economic and social enterprise to move reconciliation along racial and socioeconomic lines. To accomplish this, the ground floor location will be accessible from the street where people can walk in and integrate and ultimately fellowship with one another.

- I worked in collaboration with Historic Greenstone United Methodist Church (led by a local pastor) and the Conference to obtain a landmark grant in the amount of \$1.08M, the largest grant awarded within the Conference.

Administration

- As the Vice President of Community Development for Park National Bank, I identified a community need for a quality high school to serve the area. I worked cross-denomination

with the Jesuits to broker a \$2M interest free loan to help establish Christ The King Jesuit High School, which became the first predominantly African American Jesuit school in the country. I served on the board of Christ The King Jesuit for 6 years steering student recruiting, employment, and outreach efforts.

Inclusion

- During my role as Superintendent, I learned there had not been an African American man or woman ordained to Elder or Deacon in the Northern Illinois Conference in more than 10 years. To help lead the church toward a more inclusive reflection of God's people, God led me in recruiting a diverse pool of ministry of candidates currently in the process of joining the ministry within our Conference.

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

It was during a visit to a Methodist church in 1989 when I saw a pastor in my likeness that inspired within me the hope that I, too, could someday serve God's people. Growing up Catholic, I never saw an example of a man or woman of color leading God's people. I shared this revelation with my now wife who replied, "before you preach one sentence first learn to serve in the church".

I became a volunteer youth leader in 1992 for Rust Memorial Church. During this time, I witnessed an unspeakable tragedy that remains embedded with me to this day. A young and promising member of my youth group, LeMont Ford, was shot and killed. The senseless tragedy, committed by two gang members, was a case of mistaken identity. I was paralyzed with grief and hopelessness. While leaving the scene of the murder, I asked God why this promising, smart, college bound young man, active in the church had meet a violent end. I prayed and asked God to use me in a mighty way. God answered with such clarity, that shortly after the incident, while a full-time police officer, I entered seminary school full-time.

By and large, the things we see as police officers are not fun, exciting, or adrenaline-filled like in the television shows and movies. They are horrific and sad. Criminals are so desensitized to their actions that it reminds me of Jeremiah 17:9; because their hearts are wicked, they deceive themselves into thinking their actions are justified.

The day after seminary school graduation, I received a call from the District Superintendent. She called to appointment me to lead a church in Englewood, at the time Chicago's most crime infested neighborhood. When asked why I was chosen for the task she replied, "You can legally carry a gun and you won't be intimidated by the gang members. She added, "God called and equipped you to serve there."

With God's help, I began to make a positive difference in the lives of Englewood residents and the community. Worship attendance increased and the community programs were making an impact. Just when all seemed to be moving in God's direction, a church member's 8-yr-old child was shot and murdered in the alley of the church. My heart was absolutely shattered for the family and the church. I felt hopeless and lost. I prayed to God for strength and guidance. In like fashion to John Wesley, I held a public field sermon outside of Englewood Church. I emphatically called for a

return to God's love, peace and restoration. I made clear on that day Englewood Church was neutral territory off limits to guns and violence. The shooting incident near the church was the first and last during my 7-yr term.

God answered the prayer of restoration. The congregation grew from 25 members when I started as pastor to 150 members each Sunday. My appointment at Englewood Church ended when after the district conference, I was replaced by a church elder assigned with consolidating 5-area churches into one, including Englewood. The consolidation effort was unsuccessful due to lack of resources and planning.

God used two tragedies to help guide my path in bi-vocational service as police officer and pastor to help influence the minds and touch the hearts of the hopeless and the wayward.

In my bi-vocational role, I have worn many hats. From guiding troubled youth to sitting on a local high school board, I'm always working with God's help to better the greater community. But it's also the spiritual work, comforting the men and women in blue, that has been a blessing for many. Delivering a death notification to a family is never easy, even when you are a police chaplain. The total sum of my 27 experiences in the ministry – planting seeds in the field, casting the vision, shepherding the flock, feeding God's hungry – has helped to lay the foundation for greater faith works within God's Kingdom.

Like the call to ministry, God's calling to the Episcopacy is a humbling and overwhelming journey. As I've shared with colleagues and conference leaders who've encouraged me to take the faith steps toward the Episcopacy, I'm filled with competing emotions of unworthiness and the unwavering devotion to die to self and expend myself to others.

I place my trust and candidacy for the Episcopacy in the Lord's hands, knowing He will open doors and guide my steps in growth, grace, and ministry.

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

Episcopal Candidate Forum: Rev. Conway 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.