

2021 Nominations Process

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

- Well, hello, I'm Bill Martin and I currently serve as the conference lay leader here in North Georgia. Thank you for taking the time to watch this video. The Nominations Process Quality Improvement Team has created this video to inform lay and clergy members of the North Georgia Conference of the opportunities that are available for service outside of the local church.

This team was created to assess and improve our nominations process. Our goal from day one was to make sure that the nominations process was clear and transparent to everyone.

While we can easily point to the Holy Spirit working within our local churches, it's important for us to also see how the Holy Spirit works on conference level. The leadership that serve at the conference level comes from local congregations. They are committed and devoted disciples of Christ. All too often, we view this work as merely administrative--filling in the blanks on a form--but our boards and committees do tremendous work throughout the connection.

For me, my time in service outside of the local church has been part of my spiritual journey. Serving with others from across the connection has helped me see the church in ways that I could have never viewed just sitting in my pew. It strengthened my belief in the power of the lay / clergy relationship. And it's helped me see fully the potential that the church has when we all work together.

I'd like to briefly introduce you to the amazing team members. Many of whom you will see as this video progresses. Tryphenia Speed is laity and she is a former president of the North Georgia United Methodist Women. Nate Abrams is laity and he is chair of our board of discipleship and advocacy. Pamela Perkins Carn is a lay member at Central UMC. Blair Boyd Zant is clergy and she is the director of the Center for Congregational Excellence. Yolanda Jones Colton is clergy and she chairs our fellowship of local pastors. Brian Tillman is clergy, and he is the associate pastor of Ben Hill UMC. Terry Walton is clergy, and he is the executive assistant to the Bishop, and then there's me.

Now, I'd like to turn this video over to my friend, Nate Abrams.

- Hi! My name is Nate Abrams. I am the chair of the Board of Discipleship and Advocacy and I am a lay person. I hold my membership at Bethany UMC in Smyrna. Our world and our North Georgia Conference is changing. And to keep pace with those changes we need diverse leaders at the conference level. We know that each of your congregations has people in them who know how to lead on the local level but we also want to make sure that we are tapping into those leaders to offer leadership at the conference level.

It's important that we have great and diverse leadership at the conference level to make sure that the work of the conference, which is the spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ so that we can make disciples for the transformation of the world, happens. And that it happens well.

As we designed this new nominations process, we decided that we were going to design it around the values of

- transparency
- inclusion
- diversity
- accessibility

Again, so that we can make sure that those of us who are leading the conference look like the conference and bring a diversity of skills and gifts to bear on the work of spreading the gospel in North Georgia.

- Hi, I'm Sue Hauptert-Johnson, Bishop the North Georgia Area of The United Methodist Church. I hope you are interested in our nominations process and that you are prayerfully considering putting your name into the pool to be considered for leadership in the North Georgia Annual Conference. I see my role as a leader is to make sure that folks are fully free to use their gifts and that they're put in places where they can use them.

I appreciate so much the gifts of Hal Jones, Director of Connectional Ministries, Bill Martin, our lay leader, who I work closely with, Nate Abrams, and all of the team that's working on our nominations process.

Because our goal is to have a large pool of gifted, excited, spiritually deep and motivated folks to lead the North Georgia Annual Conference into the future for next generations.

I'm excited by that prospect and I'm excited that you're interested in being part of it. I want us to have a wide range, a diverse, and a wonderful mix of folks. I want to celebrate that the Holy Spirit works not just in our own lives and in the lives of our individual congregation but through the whole annual conference. Our connection needs folks who are deeply immersed in scripture, prayerful folks who will discern together where the Holy Spirit is leading the North Georgia Annual Conference.

Numerous people benefit from our connection, numerous churches are committed to making our work together more important than our work alone. And so I welcome a wide and diverse group of folks.

I'm also interested in folks who will begin on day one collecting people around you to pass on the leadership torch to. That you will be teaching them about our Methodist heritage. You'll be teaching them about your work that you will cultivate and prepare new generations.

In Florida, we had a health questionnaire for each congregation and one of the questions was, "How often does your leadership turn over?" That is the sign of a healthy and vibrant organization that is constantly bringing new leaders up. And, so I anticipate leaders who will serve hard and will work hard, and then return to their local congregations and to encourage new leadership. We need folks who are well aware of next generations and new needs in the church. Part of your role as a leader to prepare your succession.

I hope that all of you who are considered for leadership, if you put your name in, that you love The United Methodist Church, that you're committed to its future, and that you love our Methodist heritage. And if you don't know as much about it, and if you don't know as much about the polity of The United Methodist Church, I hope you will bring a commitment to learn, and a commitment to deepen your understanding of our common heritage and what binds us together as United Methodists in the Methodist tradition.

I also hope you will come with the cooperative spirit. I like to work with people who work and play well with others. So I hope you will come ready to lend your gifts to the group that you will celebrate the gifts around you, that you will be willing to listen to viewpoints that you might not always agree with, but at all times you will be working together, bound together by the Holy Spirit, determining where the Holy Spirit is leading us. I am excited for the future of The United Methodist Church in North Georgia. I'm excited for the potential we have for a wide ranging and diverse group of leaders. And I am most of all excited that you are interested enough to be watching this today.

May God richly bless your journey. And may God bless our Annual Conference and its work together.

- Hello, I'm Tryphenia Speed, past president of the North Georgia conference United Methodist Women and a member of Cascade United Methodist Church. Living out the call to be a leader is not an easy task. I believe God equips and helps those who are called to serve. As a member of United Methodist Women I have served in leadership roles in my local church, the district, and the conference. I have had the opportunity to meet United Methodist members across the conference, both laity and clergy. Serving with persons called to do the work of the church is challenging and rewarding.

I count it all a joy, both the trials and the rewards of serving with God's people. I am grateful for the many opportunities I have had, I'm reminded that I can be generous with the giving of my gifts, my talents, and my service, which God has given me. Serving has helped me in my spiritual walk, in my acceptance of others, and to be flexible when it comes to change. To whom much is given, much is required.

- Hello, North Georgia Conference. My name is Randy Hardy and I am a member at McEachern Memorial United Methodist Church in Powder Springs. And I have been there a long time. About 45 years ago, I had some friends from middle school invite me to come play basketball. They said they had a lot of fun at their church and a lot of experiences at church, though I didn't know what that meant.

So I came to play basketball. Well, that ended up of course being the portal of entry that brought me in. I ended up going to MYF and then one thing led to another and well, 45 years later, I'm still here. The experiences that I've had, I wouldn't trade for anything. My work at the church has included almost anything that I can volunteer for. Anything I was prompted to do, I did it. And I actually worked at the district and conference level in a lot in different capacities.

We as Christians in the church, I feel like we're prompted. I know I have been over the years. Surly you hear that people have intuition, and I guess that's true, but for Christian men and women I think we know that there is another word for it. I believe that the Holy Spirit prompts us to do things and for me, for my situation, I have had times where I said, hmm maybe that's not really a prompting. Maybe that's just something that I shouldn't even consider. And other times I've said, "yes." I will be first to tell you that over the years, I have learned that saying yes is the very first step and joining up with the Holy Spirit and kingdom building work.

I would encourage anybody who is feeling prompted, that they actually say, "Yes, yes, Lord. I will do whatever you say you need me to do." I know for me and many others that we are blessed for it.

I hope you'll take this message to heart as you consider and discern your opportunities to serve not just the North Georgia Conference, but the greater Kingdom. Thank you so much.

- Hey, my name is Elijah Shoaf and I have served in conference leadership as the Conference Council on Youth Ministries President. I'm joining you right now from my dorm room here in Wooster, Ohio. I think that speaks to what the conference is trying to achieve when it comes to leadership. The conference is flexible, diverse, and ambitious when it comes to its selection of leadership.

The conference reached out to me when I was only 16 years old, when my local pastor asked if I would go to Annual Conference as a youth delegate. And since then, I have been on an engaging and thrilling ride of getting to lead the church into the next era.

This pandemic has shown us the need for strong leadership and the need for leadership that is willing to think outside of the box and willing to innovate for the church of tomorrow. Once this time is over we will have a great many sets of challenges in front of us. And I couldn't be more happy to participate in tackling those challenges and getting to watch as the church selects new leaders to help lead us into that future.

- Hello everyone, my name is Robert King. I am serving as the senior pastor at Golden United Methodist Church in Douglasville, Georgia. And as far as my conference responsibilities, I've actually served on two conference roles. One with the conference young adult ministry and second with the Ethnic Local Church Concerns Committee. The Ethnic Local Church Concerns Committee helps to nurture discipleship alongside pastors and laity and churches across the rich diversity of our ethnic minority congregations and communities in our conference.

What I have found valuable about serving with the conference committee has been the richness of the fellowship that has been intersectional and cross-cultural around the conference. I've gotten to work with brothers and sisters in Christ from a variety of different settings, rural and urban, across a variety of ethnic and cultural contexts, with our Hispanic brothers and sisters, African-American, and Latino, and Anglo American cross-cultural or multi-ethnic experiences, as well as Asian brothers and sisters in Christ.

It has helped me see and understand and appreciate even more of our United Methodist connection. There are some real and powerful ways that serving together helps us be the hands and feet of Jesus.

- I'm Yolanda Jones Colton pastor of Smith and Pine Mountain UMCs, chair of the fellowship of licensed local pastors and associate members of the North Georgia Conference. I also serve on the Nominations Quality Improvement Team. In order for us to gain more diversity, inclusiveness, and equity in the leadership of in the North Georgia Conference, the nominations quality improvement team has developed an online application process.

We're asking and encouraging clergy, laity and committees to nominate persons that they feel that God is calling to serve on the various boards and committees within our North Georgia Conference. Once all nominees have been contacted and nominations have been received, then a list of the nominees will be sent to the District Superintendens. After that review, in the latter part of March or the first of April, the nominations committee will meet to finalize the list of nominees that have been affirm and are willing to serve.

Before you nominate someone, we ask that you prayerfully consider their spiritual gifts. Are they committed to the local church and are they available to serve? Will this person be a dependable and responsible team member? Ask yourself, is this the type of person that I would desire to have serve in a leadership capacity in my church? If so, then this is the time to nomination them for consideration to serve on the various boards and the committees within the North Georgia Conference.

Why should I serve one might ask. Well, personally I've discovered that in service, I feel recharged as well as spiritually and emotionally fulfilled. And I certainly believe that my life

is more meaningful as a servant of Christ. We thank you in advance for your prayerful consideration.

- [Brian Tillman] The new nomination system is one that allows individuals to self-nominate or to nominate someone else. A new addition to the process is the ability for conference organizations to nominate an individual. For instance, groups like Hispanic Ministries and Black Methodists for Church Renewal can now nominate someone to be considered for a position on a board, like the board of trustees or the board of congregational development, via the same form individuals use to make nominations.

Each individual or group is required to notify the person being nominated before submitting the nomination through the system. If the nominee accepts, then the individual or group nominated will submit the name to the system and the system will require the nominee to accept their nomination electronically.

This new online system will meet the needs and abilities of the overwhelming majority of the annual conference. It is our prayer and the intent of our work to help North Georgia become more inclusive and representative of the wealth of knowledge and experience of the conference.

- Hi, my name is Pamela Carn and I am a member of Central United Methodist Church in Atlanta, the church at the heart of the city with the city at heart. I am very happy to be with you today to talk with you more about the mission and membership of the various groups and committees.

You will find written descriptions of the role and mission of each of these groups or committees on the nominations webpage, www.ngumc.org/2021nominations. In those descriptions, you'll also see an outline of how the members of each group are identified. These descriptions are per our Book of Discipline and our standing rules.

Next, let's discuss candidates for membership.

Most of the membership of committees and boards are identified through our North Georgia Conference nominations process. You may be nominated, or you may self-nominate.

The membership of a few committees and boards is determined in other ways, for example, the role or position you hold on one group may make you a member of another group. If you are the conference lay leader, then by default, you become a member of the consent agenda committee that provides the consent agenda for the annual conference, for instance. You may serve on one committee and may be nominated by the leader of that board or committee to serve on another committee, for example the committee on nominations. That means that you may be conscripted, drafted or "voluntold."

Third, you may be nominated by the Bishop to serve on a particular committee. That nomination is in consultation with other conference leadership. For example, the board of ordained ministry is one of those examples.

Because membership on boards and committees determined the role or position that you may have on boards and committees, we should all carefully consider nominations for all groups and committees. These are the persons after all who will be our conference leadership.

The nominations committee will review and approve all nominations identified through this nominations process. For more information on the descriptions for each of these groups, please visit ngumc.org/2021nominations.

- [Bill Martin] Thank you again for taking the time to watch this video. I hope it's been informative. If you have questions about things that you've heard please contact either Hal Jones, Blair Zant, Melody Brown, or Sam Halverson. Find their contact information at ngumc.org/2021nominations.