



General/Jurisdictional Conferences 2008 Clergy Nominees Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference

The process for nominating candidates for clergy delegates is outlined in Conference Rule 2.210. Each clergy member was invited to submit five names as nominees (and/or to self-nominate). Persons who received 10 or more nominations, along with those who self-nominated, were invited to respond to any three out of four specific questions (total responses were limited to 200 words). Those who responded are now listed here (in reverse alphabetical order) as clergy nominees.

Name: **Brian Shimer**

Current appointment: **Banks UMC**

a. "What is the most important issue facing the UMC today and how would you address it?"

We have lost the vision of what it means to be the church. Two examples are the judicial council's unjust decision to limit Cote D'Ivoire Methodists to two delegates and the Council of Bishops' task force wanting to break from the overseas church and become our own Central Conference. We need vision not for "us alone" but for the world. Both an issue of justice and theology, we must not "close our doors, minds and hearts" toward the expressions of faith in the overseas church, while embroiling ourselves in spiritual myopia. I would stand for the global church and such an inclusive vision.

b. "What does the UMC need most in order to experience revitalization?"

A deep, real, transforming vital faith in and experience of the Living God through Jesus Christ

c. "What gifts and graces would you bring as a participant around the General Church table?"

I've learned to love those with whom I disagree; to hear what they are speaking. I know how to communicate through the viewpoints and theologies that divide. I desire to see us lay down our weapons against one another, remembering that our battles are not against flesh and blood, and take up the cross Jesus gives us to live lives of dynamic, radical love empowered by a determination to see the light of Christ penetrate the darkness that surrounds us.

Name: **Jeanne G. Knepper**

Current appointment: **University Park UMC, Portland**

a. "What is the most important issue facing the UMC today and how would you address it?"

How to be a global church while retaining and strengthening local outreach. I support making the US one Central Conference among many, retaining the Jurisdictional responsibilities within the US Central Conference, and making the General Conference a truly global gathering that deals primarily with global issues, not US national issues.

b. "What does the UMC need most in order to experience revitalization?"

For 35 years, the UMC has fighting about shutting people out, resulting in the most thoroughly negative publicity imaginable. We need to throw the doors open and become known as a denomination and as local congregations who welcome everyone into a grand adventure of service, soul, and spiritual growth, making the whole idea of becoming a disciple so compelling that it's being talked about in the local coffee shops, bars, and neighborhood gatherings, even as it shapes our communal commitments, a reclaiming of the idea, that we are called to create God's realm, here and now.

c. "What gifts and graces would you bring as a participant around the General Church table?"

I have learned how to stay at table with people who see things differently, how to insist that even those I disagree with are heard, and how to find points of commonality while not masking differences. I am deeply and enthusiastically convinced of the importance and relevance of church in the world.

Name: **Laura Jaquith Bartlett**

Current appointment: **Albany First UMC**

b. "What does the UMC need most in order to experience revitalization?"

Let's stop trying to "save the church." When we redirect our attention from the institution and focus instead on living in solidarity with the poor and the marginalized, reaching out with the good news of Christ's inclusive love, then revitalization will be a grace-filled bonus instead of an elusive goal.

c. "What gifts and graces would you bring as a participant around the General Church table?"

My experience at GC 2004 taught me much about how the system works, and how to function effectively in it. Other pieces (conference secretary, BOM, chairing the Order of Deacons) have given me a deep understanding of the "inner workings" of the UMC, and have helped me make connections across the denomination. As a deacon I would bring diversity to our team, and my experience in music and worship leadership could be an important tool as we seek to stay centered on God for guidance and nurture.

d. "Name an Oregon-Idaho strength or concern which you would carry to General or Jurisdictional Conference?"

One of the ways we face the challenge of our vast geography and diverse theological views in OR-ID is by deliberately staying in relationship with one another as celebrate our connection through Jesus Christ. I believe this is the best hope for unity within our denomination. I would model "relationship-building" within our delegation as well as in my encounters at GC/JC.