

## Oregon-Idaho Conference Lay Leader Nomination Form

Please complete this form to be considered as a candidate for election as the next lay leader of the Oregon-Idaho Conference. Information about the position is listed below.

*If you choose to print the blank form to write on, please add extra space as needed for your answers before you print.*

Name: Sarah Richard

Local Church: First Hillsboro United Methodist

District: Cascadia

Occupation: Middle School Humanities Teacher

*Bishop Elaine JW Stanovsky has set forward the following strategic priorities of the Greater Northwest Episcopal Area: Fighting COVID-19 by adapting ministries to keep our communities safe; dismantling racism by becoming anti-racist and creating beloved community; discerning the future of The UMC by understanding and deepening our relationships across the connection now and into the future; responding in love to the need for year-round disaster response in our communities; uplifting the work of Innovation and Vitality by deepening our inclusion, innovation and multiplication work; and being a fully inclusive United Methodist Church by embracing the idea that that we are the place Where Love Lives.*

*With that in mind ...*

What gifts and graces would you bring to this position to move these strategic priorities forward among the laity in the Oregon-Idaho Conference?

As a teacher, I am dedicated to continuing to learn as much as I can about a wide variety of issues. This dedication to learning is continued into the other areas of my life. To that end, I have taken classes to help me become anti-racist, both as a teacher and as a church leader. I feel called to be a servant leader and am passionate about speaking about difficult topics and having difficult conversations with people to help us all grow. I served as a part of the committee to get my church to be a reconciling congregation. Discussing the need for a specific welcoming statement helped more people understand the need for people to be explicitly welcomed into our church and into our denomination.

Prayer and then action is a regular statement in my household. We pray and then we act to make the changes we want to see in the world and to make the changes God calls us to make. I am also taking classes to become a certified lay servant. I loved the first one I completed earlier this year and have long list of books I want to read this summer. Education is very important to me and I see it as a way to bring people together. We need to learn from each other to understand one another.

Understanding the needs of others will help us tailor ministries that will meet their needs, especially during this pandemic. The skills we are learning and the adaptations we have made, will continue to serve the needs of our communities as we respond to future disasters. Rethinking ways of doing things and not being so confined by how we have done things in the past will keep us equipped to respond to the ever-changing needs of our communities.

What other relevant experience in the UMC would you bring to this position?

I had the privilege to serve as the lay leader of my congregation for the past four years. I was also chair of our single board during the same time period. Our pastor went on sabbatical during my tenure and numerous complications arose while he was out of the country. I needed to be able to make decisions quickly, to listen to concerns from staff and congregants, and work with district and conference leadership to solve issues. It was a trying time for the support staff and for myself but it helped clarify the calling I feel to serve not only my local church but also the church as a whole.

Before our pastor went on sabbatical, I was part of the team that planned for and applied for a Lily Grant to make the sabbatical time even more of a period of renewal for our pastor and our congregation. This process required numerous hours of planning for how the congregation would experience the renewal process. Playing a vital role in drafting the application, planning a summer's worth of speakers, preachers, and activities for the congregation allowed me to experience a new level of lay leadership. Speaking to the laity on a regular basis was very fulfilling as was listening to all of our guest speakers and preachers.

I have also served as one of my church's representatives to Annual Conference for the last four years. This has given me the opportunity to learn more about the administration side of the church and taught me exactly how important the laity is in the life of the UMC as a whole. Seeing how the UMC functions at the higher levels is fascinating, even in the more tedious moments, because that work is vital to our ability to serve our communities in bigger and better ways.

*What other relevant experience in your community would you bring to this role?*

I am an active member of the Washington County community. My children attend our local elementary school and I can see the amazing things that come from such a diverse neighborhood school. I see that diversity bringing much needed change to Hillsboro and the

county as a whole. I regularly contact my elected officials to communicate how important it is that we create policies that serve our entire community and that we need to celebrate the beauty of our diversity. My family has participated in a number of protests within our community to stand up for Black Lives, racial justice, immigrant justice, and social justice.

*Do you have any specific goals or dreams for the work of the laity in the Oregon-Idaho Conference?*

I want to do everything I can to make the UMC the fully inclusive church I know it can be. I want the Oregon-Idaho conference to be a community partner for all people living, working, and/or traveling through our geographical area. I want the conference to listen to local communities and ask, "How can we help?" I dream of a conference that doesn't hide behind church walls but that is even more active in the streets, demanding justice for all people and serving the needs of all people. A conference that builds a bigger table so that all may have a seat, even at the highest levels.

