

Northeastern Jurisdiction Episcopacy Committee
Episcopal Candidate Information Form 2016



General Information

Name	Kenneth J. Kieffer
Conference Membership	New York Annual Conference
Nominated by	New York Annual Conference, & endorsed by Black Clergywomen's Caucus of NY Ann. Conf.
Years able to serve if elected	12

Work Experience

List all appointments	Stratford UMC, Stratford, CT, Assoc. Pastor (1986-1989) Glendale UMC, Queens, NY, Pastor (1989-1991) East Avenue UMC, East Norwalk, CT, Pastor (1991-2000) First UMC, Greenwich, CT, Pastor (2000-2009) District Superintendent of Connecticut District (2009-present)
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Personal Development

Influential Books & Renewal Study	Toni Morrison's <i>Beloved</i> – this book made me want to be a writer. Ironically, this book also made me want to give up writing! Each sentence is simply a masterpiece. Any future plans for renewal would surely include finishing the book I'm working on.
Racial Diversity Training	I completed the NY Annual Conference training. Additionally, I attended GCORR cross-racial/cross-cultural training event in L.A. in 2011.
Language Facility Special Interests	While I have had 8 years of French, I am proficient and fluent only in English. Special interests in ministry include preaching, disciple-making, and social justice.
Self-Care	I spend the first hour of every day in thought, prayer, reading, and reflection as I try to discern God's plan for me on both a short-term and long-term basis. " <i>Jesus Calling</i> " has been an especially rich resource for me in my daily devotions for 5 years.

Personal Assessment

Gifts & Evidence of God's Grace	Faith-based newspaper columnist for <i>The Greenwich Citizen</i> (2002-2009) Radio host for WGCH's "Keeping the Rumor of God Alive" (2005-2008) Blogger @ meetkenkieffer.blogspot.com Stage 4 cancer survivor (evidence of God's amazing and miraculous grace)
Indication of Effectiveness	At all of my pastoral appointments, spanning 23 years, 100% of apportionments were paid. During my last 2 pastoral appointments, we added more than 100 names to the membership rolls of each of those congregations. My district ranks first in our conference in the percentage of churches with at least one profession of faith in the last year. I was recently endorsed for the episcopacy by my annual conference on the first ballot.
Area for Further Development	I have travelled to 24 different countries on 5 different continents, but I have never resided outside of the U.S. To cover this blind spot, I am working to improve my global IQ.
Style of Leadership	Based on my 12 years as a Chaplain in the U.S. Navy (Reserve), I have formed and fine-tuned a leadership style that begins with modeling. I strive to talk the talk, and walk the walk. So, as pastor, DS, and Dean of the Cabinet, I have never asked folks under my leadership to do anything that I haven't done, or wouldn't do myself. As a DS, I am both Supervisor and Pastor to my pastors. Only when absolutely necessary (pastoral ineffectiveness, just resolutions, e.g.) have I worn the "supervisor" hat. At all other times, the leadership I provided was from a pastoral perspective. This servant leadership style has been as appreciated as it has been effective. Having survived 6 rounds of chemo, and 39 daily radiation treatments, I am now fearless. Lastly, I try not to take myself too seriously. A good sense of humor helps.

Questions

- Briefly describe the process which lead you to discern the call to the office bishop.

I was baptized, confirmed, married, and ordained in the UMC. This is my church - warts and all. Because the UMC means so much to me, I am more than willing to serve it in whatever way God has called and equipped me. This call was recently affirmed, as I was endorsed by my annual conference. My God-given gifts seem to center around leadership, communication, and administration. Since our church is in dire need of spirit-led leaders who possess those particular skills/talents, I feel compelled to answer the call to the episcopacy for such a time as this. "Here I am, Lord. Send me." During my 7 years on the Appointment Cabinet, I have served under 5 different bishops! The varied leadership, management, and appointment styles of each of those episcopal leaders has provided me with a rather unique experience from which to draw. I hope to incorporate the best of each of them.

- The Role of the Bishop in The United Methodist Church is delineated in paragraph 403 of The Book of Discipline. After reading this paragraph, please share how you are called and equipped to fulfill the responsibilities. Please elaborate on ¶ 403.1 and e-f.

One way to guard the faith, order, liturgy, doctrine, and discipline of the UMC is to prayerfully hold each clergy person in the annual conference accountable to the standard of pastoral excellence (not mere competence). Consequently, our connectional covenant is not only kept, but strengthened. Because the UMC has been "family" for me for my entire life, I pray and endeavor to keep it together – not for the preservation of the institution but for the sake of family unity. I am committed to our connection. When I attended the last World Methodist Conference in South Africa, I was struck by how well the once-segregated citizens of that country seemed to work, worship, and play together in peace and harmony. It seems to me that if the people of post-Apartheid South Africa can do it, the people of the post-modern UMC can do it too. I have taken 3 primary vows in my life. – when I was commissioned as an officer in the US Navy, when I was married to Karen, and when I was ordained in the UMC. I have kept each of those vows inviolate for 30 plus years, and I hope that everyone else can and will do the same.

- How would you as a new bishop collaborate with your colleagues on the College of Bishops to be spiritual and missional leaders for the whole jurisdiction so that NEJ better fulfills the mission and ministry of Christ Jesus?

3 words – Imagine No Malaria. I expect that as a new bishop, I would do what one bishop in the NEJ did a couple years ago when he visited our Cabinet Room and inspired and invited our annual conference to accept the challenge to Imagine No Malaria. Because of this collaborative effort, our conference engaged in some significant second-mile giving by raising hundreds of thousands of additional dollars to help save tens of thousands of children's lives. Episcopal collaboration at its best!

- How would you as a new bishop share the good news of Christ Jesus inviting, engaging, connecting with persons in your assigned area who are not currently active in a faith community so that you might become a leader and model for making disciples?

My late father was a fisherman – and a good one at that. His secret for success? "Go to where the fish are." As a bishop, I will go to where the fish are, and ask my clergy and laity to do the same. I will use my experience in radio, TV, newspaper, and blogging to establish and maintain a UMC presence in both traditional and social media in order to better fulfill Jesus' mandate to be fishers of all people.

- Describe how you would equip the United Methodists of your area for ministry and evangelism in our culture context?

I call it "relevangelism" - making disciples by first making the UMC relevant to the unchurched. Thanks to our perceived irrelevance, the mission field has never been larger. Thanks to Facebook and Twitter and the like, reaching the mission field has never been easier. John Wesley would be envious!