

Northeastern Jurisdiction Episcopacy Committee
 Episcopal Candidate Information Form 2016



General Information

Name	LaTrelle Elaine Easterling
Conference Membership	New England
Nominated by	The New England Conference
Years able to serve if elected	20

Work Experience

List all appointments	Pearl Street UMC – 2002-2005; Family Leave – 2005-2007; Old West UMC – 2007-2008; Union UMC – 2008-2012; New England Cabinet – 2012-Present
-----------------------	---

Personal Development

Influential Books & Renewal Study	<i>Good to Great</i> , by Jim Collins; <i>Just Mercy</i> , by Bryan Stevenson; <i>Just Say Yes!</i> By Robert Schnase; <i>Weird Church</i> , by Beth Ann Estock, Paul Nixon
Racial Diversity Training	I am a trained diversity facilitator. I have helped develop curriculum, training, and a training video for the New England Conference.
Language Facility Special Interests	Writing prayers and psalms; Meditation; Spiritual Direction
Self-Care	I take a regular Sabbaths, exercise, and quality time with family.

Personal Assessment

Gifts & Evidence of God's Grace	Dynamic preacher and teacher; Significant organizational competence; Proven leader: Elected Co-chair of BOM; Elected delegate to GC/JC in 2012, 2016; Elected sub-comm. chair at GC 2016; App. to Cabinet in 2012, and selected as Dean in 2016.
Indication of Effectiveness	Leading churches to vitality; Inspiring and nurturing new clergy and lay leadership; Empowering dynamic and innovative ministries within my district; Aligning resources to support significant new church starts within my district.
Area for Further Development	Becoming bi-lingual
Style of Leadership	My leadership style is inquisitive, collaborative and consensus building.

Questions

- Briefly describe the process which lead you to discern the call to the office bishop.
 My pastoral experience, passionate leadership, and prophetic witness were first affirmed by our GC/JC delegation in 2012. Having served effectively in cross-racial and turn-around appointments, I was encouraged by my colleagues to offer myself for wider service. However, through deep discernment, I understood it was not the appropriate time to move forward. After being nominated again in 2016, I went into deep prayer and fasting to further know God's will for my ministry. After hearing God's yes, I also received confirmation through the strong affirmation of my delegation and the endorsement of my Annual Conference.
- 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.

My deep relationship with God through Jesus Christ enables me to compassionately, yet boldly offer inspired, transformational leadership. During this critical juncture in United Methodism, effective leaders must resist acting before they discern a clear movement of the Holy Spirit. I possess the emotional intelligence and self-differentiation to await the Spirit's leading in pursuit of spiritual renewal for the church, social holiness throughout the world, and justice for all people.

Although we are all United Methodists, we do not all share the same theological understandings or scriptural interpretations. Nevertheless, our common love of God, and commitment to Christ's liberating work can bind us together in service and evangelism in the Wesleyan tradition. I am committed to drawing the circle wide. The district I serve is the most diverse in the conference, and I have worked to create safe spaces for fruitful conversations where all voices are heard. Lastly, it is imperative to have the most gifted and effective leaders staffing the critical boards and agencies of the conference. Leader cultivation is a strength I gained through years of human resources experience. Conversely, it is just as important to help individuals discern when they are ineffective. I am comfortable with these sensitive, yet very necessary conversations.

- 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?
The Jesus movement demonstrates that we do not act alone. In our diversity, we are still called to missional solidarity. My social location, inquiring approach, and wealth of experience would bring a necessary perspective to the current College. My critical analysis skills, honed through years as an attorney, would enable me to help the College address complex issues with insightful and innovative solutions.
Faith communities and ministries must be birthed or invigorated according to context and not institutional need or tradition. As a College, I would encourage leading in a way that both models and anticipates ministry to a broad range of theological, cultural, and generational faith expressions. We must be willing to lead through change, resilient enough to regroup after failure, and trusting enough to join God in doing new things across the jurisdiction.
- 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?
Relationship building is the key to all effective ministry initiatives. By being proximate with the unchurched, unaffiliated, and nones, we can develop more relevant ministries. My ministry as Union's lead pastor in Boston's South End, with its decidedly areligious landscape, has borne fruit as the congregation grew spiritually, numerically, and missionally. As the first woman in the congregation's 200-year history, I transcended barriers to collaborate with laity in reaching new souls for Christ. As an episcopal leader, I would continue these effective practices.
Also, our missional efforts must be outwardly focused at every level. We often ask questions centered on our personal comfort or institutional preservation, rather than asking what God would have us do. I have learned from experience that those on the margins often create the most impactful ministries. We must invite clergy and laity to take risks and experience failures in order to be a more invitational church.
- Describe how you would equip the United Methodists of your area for ministry and evangelism in our culture context?
I believe it is imperative to have an expansive view of ministry. Our world is fast-paced, diverse, and fluid. Therefore, transformational leadership requires leaders who are flexible, agile, and comfortable with creative chaos. There must be a willingness to explore new initiatives, risk failure, and challenge existing paradigms while offering the love of God in the present age.