

## Why I Said Yes: A Call to Faithful Advocacy Toward General Conference 2028

By: Tricia Davis

When I was asked to serve as the Legislative **Chair** for the NFAMLP, and to help lead the work of drafting legislation for General Conference 2028, my answer was “yes”—not because the work would be easy, but because it is holy.

**Commented [WP1]:** For whom? Your Conference, your Conference fellowship, the NFMALP? Or all the above?

Over the past several years, I have had the privilege of serving alongside Associate Members and Licensed Local Pastors who faithfully preach, teach, administer the sacraments, and shepherd congregations across Indiana and beyond. Many of these pastors serve in rural, urban, mission, and multi-point settings. They answer God’s call with courage and sacrifice—yet the congregations they serve remain underrepresented in the decision-making life of the church.

At the 2025 Indiana Annual Conference, we took an important step by overwhelmingly passing a Resolution of Appreciation for Associate Members and Licensed Local Pastors, acknowledging both their faithfulness and the inequity that exists in our current voting structure. That moment made something clear to me: appreciation must lead to action.

Saying yes to this role means committing to a longer journey—one that moves from gratitude to advocacy, and from advocacy to concrete legislative change. Indiana is now working in collaboration with the National Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors and other conferences across the connection to prepare legislation for General Conference 2028 that would extend rights to Associate Members and Local Pastors that we have never had before. Two of the topics we are discerning and exploring are retaining sacramental rights after retirements and having full voting rights at our respective Annual Conferences, including constitutional amendments.

This work is not about power or position. It is about representation. It is about ensuring that every congregation—especially those served by local pastors—has a voice in shaping the future of the church. It is about aligning our polity with our theology **that** all who are called, appointed, and serving faithfully are integral to the life and mission of **The United Methodist Church**.

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The legislative roadmap before us is intentional and prayerful:

- **2025** named and celebrated faithful ministry.
- **2026** calls our Annual Conferences to formally support the drafting of legislation.
- **2027** prepares NFAMLP (in partnership with other agencies such as GBHEM and United Methodist Rural Advocates) to submit legislation to

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General Conference, and our Annual Conferences to submit petitions in support of the legislation.

- **2028** offers the wider church an opportunity to act for equity and justice.

I said yes because I believe God is already at work in this movement. I said yes because I have seen the fruit of ministry led by Associate Members and Local Pastors. And I said yes because the church is strongest when every part of the body is seen, heard, and valued.

I invite you to pray for this work, to stay informed, and to walk with us as Indiana continues to lead with faith, courage, and conviction—trusting that together, we can help shape a more just and representative future for the church we love.

In Faith, with Hope and Love...

*Tricia Davis*