Delegate Reflection – Rev. Jill Howard

Being a delegate to the 2020 General Conference is a mixed bag of emotions. As I filled out my willingness to serve form this time around, after having served in 2016 and 2019, I asked a friend, “Why am I doing this again?!” The response? “Because you’re called to do it.”

I feel honored and privileged to do this work, while at the same time, I confess that I come to the table with a bit of trepidation, knowing that we are in a divisive time within the life of the church. As delegates, we are expected to live and work within that tension, and to bring something life-giving and hopeful out of it. We have our work cut out for us. The road seems long and sometimes fruitless. So why do it?

This work is hard, but necessary. It’s an important way to serve and have our voices heard on a global scale, and remember what it is that makes us United Methodists. In the midst of our divisions, we find beauty, even in the brokenness. In the midst of hard decisions, critical conversations, and even the long days of parliamentary procedure, I have to have hope that Jesus is still at the center of everything we do. Jesus is still Lord, in spite of ourselves, and the church will still be the church regardless of what our human institutions will decide.

As a delegate, I have the opportunity and privilege to come alongside others in this calling and journey- and what an odd and wondrous calling it is! There are times that I need the reminder that we are called for such a time as this. God will use us, if only we are willing!