Delegate Reflection
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When I picture a United Methodist church, the image that comes to mind is a Bedford limestone building with a tall, brown-shingled bell steeple and a cornfield behind it. The church is Hanover United Methodist Church—the church I was baptized in, came to faith in, and preached my first sermon in (the sermon was a whopping 3 1/2 minutes long! I was about 14 years old at the time). It’s the church that will always be home for me, no matter which church I am currently pastoring, and even if there comes a day when that Bedford limestone building no longer stands.

What I love about General Conference is that it is a gathering of United Methodist followers of Jesus Christ, each with our own image that comes to mind when we think of a United Methodist Church. The pictures in our minds may be very different, but the idea is the same: a place where a community gathers for worship, where people are baptized and come to faith, where ministries are developed and testimonies are shared.

My first General Conference was in 2016, which was not an easy first exposure to United Methodist global gatherings. It was clear that not only did we all not have the same mental image of a United Methodist church, we were also not all of one mind about what the United Methodist Church of the future would look like. Three years later, at the Special-Called Session of General Conference in St. Louis, that became even more apparent.

What does it mean to me to be a delegate to General and Jurisdictional Conferences in 2020? It means walking with the denomination I call home during one of the most difficult hours of this generation. It means being a witness and a voice at a moment in history that my grandchildren will ask me about someday. And it means doing my part to see that the church I love has a future that my grandchildren will be grateful to be part of someday.