

**REV. KENNETHA J. BIGHAM-TSAI**  
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### **PROFILE**

Transformational leader deeply committed to inspiring the growth of the worldwide United Methodist Church as a vehicle for grace, justice and love. Experience in administration, public speaking, and media relations.

- ❖ **COMPASSIONATE JUSTICE SEEKER** whose courageous preaching and prophetic witness have inspired individuals, congregations, and church bodies to live out more fully the call to "...let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." Amos 5:24
- ❖ **STRATEGIC VISION-CASTER** who initiates and articulates a mission, strengthens innovation, and inspires and empowers other leaders to implement change.
- ❖ **INNOVATIVE CHANGE AGENT** who has effectively led local churches, districts, and connectional bodies to greater vitality, building the capacity to adapt and thrive. Reaches across boundaries to build relationships, heal divisions, instill hope and bring understanding from conflict.
- ❖ **FORWARD THINKER** who leads the denomination to grow as a world-wide church. Clear understanding of the globalized nature of local communities and the need to engage a diverse mission field.

### **GENERAL CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

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#### **CONNECTIONAL TABLE**

2012 – Present

#### ***Chief Connectional Ministries Officer*** (2018 – Present)

Provides leadership for the Connectional Table (CT) as it seeks to discern and articulate the vision for the worldwide church and steward the mission, ministries and resources of the denomination in consultation with the Council of Bishops. Works with staff and board members to plan and execute meetings, oversee CT finances, facilitate internal and external communications, and help to shepherd the process of evaluation of the missional effectiveness of the World Service-funded agencies.

- ❖ Facilitated the CT's work to shape legislation for General Conference; traveled the connection, listening to concerns about the future of the worldwide United Methodist Church.
- ❖ Built and nurtured collaborative relationships across the worldwide church including with the COB, GCFA, general agencies, Standing Committee on Central Conference matters and annual conference bodies.
- ❖ Instrumental in designing an innovative process to reallocate the denomination's \$358.6 million budget by mobilizing people to engage a challenge that had no clear or simple solution. Helped shepherd process, building coalitions and brokering relationships that facilitated change.

#### ***Board Member*** (2012 – 2018)

Executive Committee, Chair Leadership Discernment and Community Life (LDCL), Vice-Chair Missional Administration Group on the General Conference, Human Sexuality Task Force, Legislative Writing Team.

- ❖ Led LDCL team to evaluate and support CT staff and shepherd processes for recruiting, deploying and supervising volunteers. Worked with CT members and staff to plan CT meetings and design worship and discernment experiences that were rooted in United Methodist theology and honored the global context of the CT's work.
- ❖ Worked with the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, the Commission on the General Conference, United Methodist Communications and other general church bodies to facilitate CT goals.
- ❖ Designed and facilitated a process that sought to unite highly divergent viewpoints to create a compromise on human sexuality and maintain the unity of The United Methodist Church. The process provided a system of reconciliation and broke down divisions by using worship as a vehicle for grace.

**GENERAL AND JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCES**

**2020 Co-Chair of the Delegation, General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegate** (1<sup>st</sup> Elected Clergy)

**2019 Special Session of the General Conference Delegate**

**2016 Jurisdictional Delegate/General Conference Alternate** (2nd Elected). *Candidate for the Episcopacy* endorsed by West Michigan Annual Conference and the Detroit and West Michigan delegations.

**2012 General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegate** (2nd Elected): *Chair, General Conference Subcommittee of Church & Society II Legislative Committee*. Dealt with reproductive rights, brought people from highly conflicting viewpoints together to listen deeply to one another and develop legislation via consensus.

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP**

Provided leadership for numerous district and annual conference bodies charged with the development and growth of vital ministries within the Michigan area, including:

*Conference Leadership Team ♦ Chair, Board of Church and Society ♦ Board of Ordained Ministry ♦ Conference Board of Trustees ♦ Editorial Board, Worship Arts ♦ Black Clergy of Michigan ♦ Michigan Area BMCR ♦ Grand Rapids District Leadership Council ♦ Board, Justice for Our Neighbors*

**LOCAL CHURCH AND DISTRICT LEADERSHIP**

**LANSING DISTRICT/MICHIGAN CONFERENCE CABINET – Okemos, MI**

2013 – 2018

**Superintendent:** Provided leadership and supervision for 70+ churches and their pastors, serving as chief missional strategist and as conference superintendent in the appointment-making process, working collaboratively with the resident bishop, superintendents and other conference leaders to help realize annual conference goals. Developed a process for assessing the viability of local churches, with more than 40 district churches participating, resulting in creation of a cooperative ministry, a new-church start, the discontinuance of several local churches, eight churches involved in the conference's "Vital Church Initiative," and development of an urban strategy.

**MILWOOD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH – Portage, MI**

2011 – 2013

**Pastor:** Provided pastoral leadership for a congregation in a diverse urban neighborhood, guiding parishioners in faithfulness to the ministries of evangelism, outreach and witness. Restructured the congregation for vitality, creating a vision leadership team that provided focus for ministry efforts and an operations team that streamlined administrative work. Helped equip the congregation to carry out its vision of bringing people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and greater connection to each other.

**UNIVERSITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - E. Lansing, MI**

2006 – 2011

**Pastor:** Provided leadership for a large university congregation. Functioned as sole pastor for the last six months of the appointment. Led the congregation to re-envision its relationship with a Wesley Foundation associated with the church, bringing reconciliation in the relationship and positioning both ministries for greater collaboration.

**OTHER CHURCH AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE**

*BMCR (national) ♦ Austin Presbyterian Theological School Alumni Board ♦ Black Clergywomen of the UMC ♦ Strengthening the Black Church for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century ♦ Presenter at School for Congregational Development, Schools for Christian Mission, UMW District and Annual Conference events, Schools for Pastoral Ministry, NCJ and Michigan AC Commission on Religion and Race events, and ecumenical and interfaith community dialogues.*

**EDUCATION**

**AUSTIN PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY – Austin, TX**

Master of Divinity

**HARVARD UNIVERSITY – Cambridge, MA**

Bachelor of Arts, Sociology