

**Walter "Skip" Strickland**  
**Candidate for Episcopal Nominee to the Western Jurisdictional Conference.**



**Service Record**

- Ordained Deacon Pacific Northwest Annual Conference 1979,
  - Appointed to attend school, Iliff School of Theology.
- Ordained Elder Rocky Mountain Conference 1981.
- Appointments in Rocky Mountain Conference include
  - Associate, FUMC Longmont CO;
  - Pastor, Pagosa Springs CO;
  - Pastor, Wilson UMC (a new church plant), Colorado Springs, CO;
  - Associate, Broomfield UMC, Broomfield, CO;
  - Pastor, Cortez UMC and Director of the San Juan Cooperative Parish, Cortez CO;
  - Pastor, Mountain View UMC, Boulder CO;
  - Director of Mission and Ministry, Rocky Mountain Conference;
  - District Superintendent of the Peaks and Plains District.

**Statement:**

Thank you to those who lifted my name up to be considered as a nominee for the episcopal election process at the 2016 Western Jurisdictional Conference. I humbly accepted their invitation to participate. They believed a lifetime of participation and service at all levels of the United Methodist Church qualifies me for consideration as an episcopal nominee. I started at age 16 on the Spokane District Youth Leadership Team and for 47 years have held leadership, staff, clergy positions in the local church, district, conference, jurisdictional, general Church level. When it comes to being a United Methodist, I am a lifer and love serving my denomination. I have been a clergy member for 27 years serving as a local pastor in small, medium and large churches located in rural, mountain and urban settings. For another 10 years I have served as a conference staff member including serving as the Director of Connectional Ministries, Congregational Development and Communications. The last four years as a member of the Rocky Mountain Conference Cabinet. Through these experiences I have a broad understanding of the mission and ministry of the United Methodist Church and have spent a great deal of time watching other episcopal leaders at work.

Here are some of my values, beliefs and visions for episcopal service:

I believe that:

- The United Methodist Church is a grand global Christian experiment that seeks to share with a diverse pool of people an invitation to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the opportunity to grow as a disciple, and to practice this relationship through ministries of service and justice.
- The future renewal of the ministry within the UMC will be led by lay members and take place within Local Church or congregational setting. The local church or fresh expressions of it, will continue to change and adapt. The ministry of the local church will respond to the settings context for ministry. Bishops will need to develop partnerships with lay leaders and challenge congregations to move beyond their walls to join with neighbors to form communities that are healthy and whole.
- Within church polity space needs to be created to allow leaders to explore opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurial endeavors.
- Bishops need to care for the flock assigned to them to supervise, deploy and support. They need to help maintain standards of safety for lay and clergy, deal with the challenges of clergy and church supervision, lead with a non-anxious presence in an ever more anxious church, wisely deploy clergy leaders, support clergy education and training, and support sustainable clergy salaries and benefits.
- The denomination and conference structure needs to become more nimble and responsive to the ever changing landscape for ministry opportunities.
- Leaders, lay and clergy, need to discover their own capacity for imagination and innovation, in order to bridge the gap between growing numbers of people who do not hear the church as a voice of “Good News.”
- I believe that I need to practice servant leadership, in which my primary role it to say, “Hey look at you,” and not, “hey look at me.”
- Bishops will need to lead the effort to connect to a world disillusioned by the ministry of the church. They will need to be able to be a visionary leader, and while maintaining the old foundations of the church, willing to let some things die, so that new birth with an ever evolving structure will be able to come alive. They will need to help church members realize that the religious landscape has already changed. Bishops will need to help guide conference members on the journey into the unknown mission field that surrounds them.
- Young leaders of the church will serve as pioneers on behalf of the whole church.
- I believe we need to keep opening our doors to all people, and truly be the church of open hearts, minds doors.
- The United Methodist Church needs to honor and encourage diversity of all kinds. We must keep our churches in rural and small town communities where they often serve as the only version of Christian theology that is moderate and grace based. We need to be in ministry with the ever expanding ethnic and culturally diverse communities that now make up our ministry neighborhoods. We need to increase the diversity of our leadership in the local church and the denomination.
- Episcopal leaders need to serve as animators, which means to help bring something to life. They need to be leaders who challenge people to reconnect to God and participate in the church that God is bringing to life.
- Bishops need to help lead Global awareness of human suffering, disaster response, health and life giving partnerships, and ministries with the poor.

- Bishops need to serve as spiritual leaders who lead through personal example discipleship through spiritual formation, community service, justice ministries and social witness.

From the time I was young I have felt a call to and passion for keeping the work of the church alive and growing. If it is discerned that my energy and skills can assist in accomplishing this as an episcopal leader, great, and if not, I will continue to serve my Lord, family and whatever ministry I am appointed to with passion and commitment.