

# Conference Lay Leader Nominee

**Name:** Falisha Hola **Local Church:** First Tongan of Seattle



## Please list your experience for this position.

- 2014 - 2019: Seattle/Sea-Tac District Youth Voting Rep at Annual Conference
- 2014 - 2019: Conference Council on Youth Ministries - served as Seattle District Representative, Engagement Coordinator, and President
- 2018: Western Jurisdiction Representative for Global Young People's Convocation
- 2019: Speaker at YOUTH 2019
- 2019 - 2024: Jurisdictional and General Conference Reserve Delegate
- Young Person, Connectional Table
- Lay Member, Episcopacy Committee
- Conference Council on Young Adult Ministries

## What is your vision for lay ministry in the Pacific Northwest Conference?

In the midst of our evolving Church, it is more important than ever that we foster intentional collaboration and execution. I envision connection, cultivating connection between leadership and laity to establish shared values and goals. I believe in community and building communities to foster connections to achieve these goals. We have more in common than we may believe; creating shared spaces and meaningful relationships allows us to be more inclusive, equitable, and accountable to one another. Building these connections and fostering community can create a sustainable future, one that future generations can appreciate and work with. I hope to bring a new perspective and create spaces that laity and leaders feel drawn to!

## How will your gifts align with this vision and the needs of lay ministry in the Pacific Northwest Conference?

I hold a unique perspective and background; for those who know me in our conference, there are folks who have seen me grow up in front of their eyes. I've been involved in the conference since middle school and am now 23 years old. In the many spaces that I've been in the Church, I have been an advocate for young people and BIPOC communities. Being introduced to the conference space, it was clear to me that I stood out. I grew up in a Tongan-speaking church and wasn't familiar with the structure of the conference. Since then, I've found it important to stay involved and be an advocate. How do we reach out to communities that aren't in these spaces? How do we create accessible and safe spaces? And how do we get communities involved? I truly believe my experiences and identity can bring forth a new, refreshing perspective.

## With the M.I.L.E., Bishop Cedrick Bridgeforth offered a vision for ministry in the Greater Northwest Area. How do you see the 'L' - Lay Ministry Enhancement - being implemented and what role could conference lay leadership play in it?

The empowerment of laity is at the core of Lay Ministry Enhancement. How do we provide laity with the confidence to speak up and be in positions of leadership? I believe that the conference has made strides in creating resources and different spaces to allow for this. One way that I believe we can continue to build on this is by considering how accessible these resources are to congregations, what barriers exist that the conference can address, and how we foster trust with laity. The biggest piece that will be important for conference lay leadership is how we listen intentionally, accept accountability, and approach the different perspectives that will come.

The beauty of the Church is the diverse perspectives that we come across while embracing our shared love for God. Building meaningful connections and fostering community can make a difference in how we encourage laity to be confident and active.