Portrait

Bishop Harald Rückert

Bishop of the United Methodist Church in Germany as from 12 May 2017

Harald Rückert was elected Bishop of the United Methodist Church (UMC) in Germany at the Central Conference of the German UMC in March 2017 in Hamburg. He was born in 1958 in Nuremberg where he grew up. After passing his university entrance examinations, he studied Food Technology at the TUM School of Life Sciences Weihenstephan in Munich, before finding his way to the pastoral ministry of the United Methodist Church.

After a twelve-month internship with the South Germany Annual Conference in Munich-Enhuberstrasse (now the Erlöserkirche), he studied Theology from 1980 to 1984 at the UMC Theological Seminary in Reutlingen (now Reutlingen School of Theology). Harald Rückert gained his first experience as a pastor in local church ministry for the UMC from 1984 to 1988 in the Hof-Stammbach circuit, in north eastern Bavaria. He was also ordained during this period (1986). From 1988 onwards, he worked for 12 years as leading pastor in the Schweinfurt-Würzburg circuit in north Bavaria, followed by ten years as Superintendent with responsibility for the Reutlingen District. From 2010 to 2017 he was leading pastor in the Erlöserkirche circuit in Reutlingen.

Since starting his pastoral work in the Hof-Stammbach circuit, where he was responsible for launching the church congregation in Stammbach, Rückert has looked in depth at issues of establishing churches, church leadership and development management. Advanced training courses on the management of social organisations and time management together with staff leadership and mentoring have qualified him to play a major role in developing and running the Church Leadership course. This course model provides probationary pastors in local church ministry with intensive mentoring during their second phase of training after completing their theology degrees. While Superintendent for the Reutlingen District, he also chaired the Committee for New Mission (later: church planting group) for church planting projects and activities involved in establishing new churches, also playing a major role in setting up and organising the Youth Church Karlsruhe.

Besides his work in local church ministry and special ministry, Harald Rückert was also involved in assignments and auxiliary activities in many areas of the UMC and also going over and beyond the UMC:

In the UMC

Since 1992	Member of the Germany Central Conference
Since 1991	Delivering training courses for full-time ministers on church leadership and self-management/burn-out prevention
2006-2010	Setting up and organising the Youth Church Karlsruhe as Chair of the Youth Church Group
2001-2010	Chair of the Committee for for New Mission (later: church planting group)
1991-1997	Developing and delivering the Church Leadership course for probationary pastors

Ecumenical activities

2005-2010	Member of the Board of ACK Baden-Württemberg
2000-2010	Member of the Delegates Assembly of ACK Baden-Württemberg

Interreligious dialogue

Since 2016	Free-church representative for the National ACK on the steering committee for the »Do You Know Who I am?« project (National ACK, Central Council of Jews in Germany and four national Moslem associations)

Institutional Welfare

Since 1987	Member of the Supervisory Board of the Martha-Maria Diaconal Work
2006-2010	Church Council Delegate on the Supervisory Board of the »Diaconal Works« Bethanien and Bethesda
2000-2012	Chairman of »Lebenszentrum Ebhausen e.V.« (after-care facility for people with addiction problems)

International

2016	Advisory member of the General Conference delegated by the Connectional Table
2010-2016	Member of the Connectional Table
2008, 2012	Delegate for the South German Annual Conference to the General Conference
1995	Two months pastoral ministry at the First United Methodist Church, Osceola, Arkansas, USA as part of the exchange programme run by the World Methodist Council

Harald Rückert is married; he and his wife have three grown-up children.