

Draft

THE CONNECTION

The Life and Order of The United Methodist Church

A new Book of Discipline for the Church

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The Connection

The Life and Order of The United Methodist Church

Renew the life, mission and polity of the church

by

- Keeping the goal of the polity to guide and lead people on a Wesleyan Path
- Focusing on the doctrine, teachings, mission and values of the church
- Simplifying the format, information and processes of the church
- Ensuring the polity serves outcomes and healthy boundaries

*The following is a quick guide to changes in **The Connection**. It will be helpful to read the glossary of terms on page 14 to understand some of the new approaches to a renewed church.*

Helpful tools for understanding *The Connection*

- Executive summary 12
- Glossary of terms 14
- Organizational structure 14
- Key to reading the connection..... 15

Paragraph 500 - The Wesleyan Path 19

Change – Put in one place, two pages, the calling, character, core values, means of grace and membership vows for United Methodists

Rationale – The goal of *The Connection* is to keep United Methodists on a Wesleyan Path. This gathers in one place what is core to be a United Methodist and a reference and guide for all lay and clergy members.

Paragraph 600 - The Mission 21

Change - The mission of the church, one page, continues to be, *make disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the world*. The mission section further elaborates on the mission, describes what is essential to the mission and identifies the core characteristics of the mission – who is a transformational leaders that leads the mission, who is a disciple who carries out the mission, what is a fruitful Wesleyan congregation who make, nurture, send and support disciples and what is a transformed world, the aim of our discipleship.

Rationale – have the mission in one place and describe the core aspects of the mission to guide leaders, congregations and disciples.

Paragraph 700 - How we gather 22

Change – United Methodists are called to holy conferencing. This new section, one page, describes how we gather for holy conferencing and what is expected of us when we conference together.

Rationale – A reminder of the importance of holy conferencing and how we engage in holy conferencing.

Paragraphs 800, 900 and 1000 - The polity of the church 23

Change – an introduction to our polity, one page, that describes the purpose of the polity, keep people on the Wesleyan Path, and the guidelines for changing polity.

1. The constitution 24

Change – Globalize the Constitution and modify to reflect the changes to the new polity.

Rationale – constitution is language that draws us into thinking like a government rather than a church.

Paragraph 900 - The People of The United Methodist Church 34

Change – both laity and clergy are listed under membership. Laity and clergy are equal in their membership and share different roles.

Rationale – Laity on occasion have felt as though their membership is secondary to clergy membership. Both laity and clergy are disciples of Jesus Christ and working collaboratively best grows the mission and effectively leads the church.

1. Lay membership – there are very few changes to the laity section other than ordering, simplifying and clarifying lay membership. Additional changes are outlined in the local church section of *The Connection*.

a. Lay leadership..... 37

Change – There are seven core leadership responsibilities that correspond to the seven core clergy leadership responsibilities.

Rationale – All leadership of the church should be working toward the mission and ministry of the church.

b. Lay orders 39

Change – laity have had orders, and this recognizes the orders. Just as in the clergy section, orders do not give status or authority, but are a role and responsibility that connect people working on similar ministries for fellowship, learning and accountability.

Rationale – orders in the church are not status but responsibility and a way of leaders within the church to connect for fellowship, learning and mutual accountability.

2. Clergy leadership.....	40
a. Seven core responsibilities.....	40
Change – clarity about the core responsibilities of a clergy person and they mirror the core responsibilities of a lay person.	
b. Council of clergy and separation of membership and appointment/employment	41
Change – clergy membership will be in the council of clergy in the connectional church (annual conference) the clergy person serves. Also, the clergy council will be responsible for all membership matters (further defined in the connectional church (annual conference) section. Clergy appointment/employment will be separated from clergy membership and clergy appointment/employment will be overseen by the council on ministry further described in the connectional church section.	
Rationale - just as bishops’ membership is in the council of bishops and laity membership are in a congregation the clergy’s membership shall be in the council of clergy. The separation of membership and appointment/employment to recognize membership is with the clergy and appointment/employment is the responsibility of the church. The council of ministry is fifty percent laity	
c. Clergy orders	41
Change - clergy orders will continue, but they will not be a status but an order for education, fellowship and accountability. Order of elders for instance will be for clergy who itinerate from church to church and order of deacons is for clergy who choose to serve in extension ministries. Clergy will be itinerant and itinerate from church to church or non-itinerant and find their own employment in extension ministries. All former deacons will be full member non-itinerant clergy and have all the rights and responsibilities including celebrating the sacraments of full member ordained clergy.	
Rationale – The deacon and elder orders have created two classes of clergy rather than two callings.	
d. Clergy education.....	42
Change – regional churches (jurisdictions and central conferences) will determine the education required for clergy.	
Rationale – access to education and educational needs can vary indifferent contexts around the world.	
e. How to become a clergy person and elimination of provisional membership	44
Change – clarity and ordering of the process simplifies for candidates and the church what is required and the steps to become a clergy person. Eliminates provisional membership.	
Rational – the process and descriptor in the present Discipline is confusing and discourages clergy. Provisional membership is an added step and better left to connectional churches (annual conferences) to determine process and apprenticeship for clergy	

f. Clergy status51

Change – Four statuses for clergy, itinerant, non-itinerant, retired, leave of absence.

Rationale – lists of statuses add administration and complication.

g. Superintendency52

Change – bishops are listed with the clergy section rather than a separate type of membership. Bishops accountability will be to the council of bishops for general superintending and to the connectional church (annual conference) for residential leadership. This is further described in the connectional church (annual conference) section.

Rationale – bishops are clergy and have responsibility and accountability for general superintending and residential superintending.

h. Seven core responsibilities of a bishop53

Change – bishops have the same seven core responsibilities as lay and clergy leadership.

Rationale – all leaders of the church share in leading toward the health and vitality of the mission and the church.

i. Bishop development and effectiveness56

Change – The connectional church (annual conference) supervises a bishop’s effectiveness and when there are concerns, the annual conference in collaboration with the regional church (jurisdictional conference) episcopacy committee to address effectiveness concerns.

Rational – the connectional church has responsibility for supervising the residential leadership of a bishop and work to develop the bishop’s leadership.

Paragraph 1000 - The Organizations of the Church57

- a. Change – There are four units of organization within The United Methodist Church and their names are changed to more accurately reflect their role description – 1) local church (no name change and meets in a charge conference), 2) Connectional Church (former annual conference that meets in an annual conference session), 3) regional church (former central and jurisdictional conferences and meets in a quadrennial conference), global church (former general conference and meets in a quadrennial global conference). Also, *The Connection* sections the material for each of the four churches - local, connectional, regional and global – into the following:

- Purpose statement
- The organization of the church
- The ministry of the church
- The personnel of the church
- The finances of the church
- The property of the church

Rationale – The names are all called a church rather than their meeting and the names more accurately describe what they are and their role. The organization of the material makes it much easier to locate things and has a logical flow.

1. Local church.....58
In addition to the changes below, an important change is how *The Connection* lists for the local church

a. Board of stewards.....60

Change - Each unit of the church will have a board of stewards. For the local church, the board of stewards will oversee the ministry, personnel, finances and property of the church. It provides for the flexibility to operate as a committee of the whole or with committees in each of the areas of responsibility depending on the size and context of a congregation. The board of stewards also is the legal entity for the congregation. The board of stewards reports to the charge conference.

Rationale – changing the name to stewards more accurately reflects our faith and belief, people are stewards of the resources God has provided to them. It also brings together the complete life and ministry of the church so that planning, organizing, communicating and carrying out ministry for the church is overseen and coordinated by one group.

b. Affiliation and disaffiliation68

Change – there are two paths if a congregation seeks to leave the denomination, affiliation and disaffiliation. Affiliation is for those who want to leave to a new or existing Wesleyan denomination with their property over a two-year period of time. Disaffiliation is a path to leave United Methodism and the Wesleyan movement by paying certain fees.

Rationale – A commitment to help all congregations to thrive in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. It provides a clear and orderly process to send congregations to go and multiply and to organize The United Methodist Church for a renewed and powerful mission.

2. The connectional church70

Change – connectional church is a name change. The connectional church meets in an annual conference. The connectional church has the authority to determine the character and requirements for clergy.

Rationale – context is important in determining leadership to further the mission in areas.

a. Board of stewards.....72

Change - Each unit of the church will have a board of stewards. For the connectional church, the board of stewards will oversee the ministry, personnel, finances and property of the church. It provides for the flexibility to have as many additional committees as it desires depending on the size and context of a connectional church. The board of stewards also is the legal entity for the connectional . The board of stewards shall be 66% laity and represent the diversity of the area. The board of stewards reports to the connectional church annual conference.

Rationale – the present book of discipline requires 30 committees and agencies to be elected and staff. This is a model based on previous needs and a government style of operations. Today we need to function more like a church and operate with the best practices of a large non-profit organization. Being comprised by 66% laity recognizes the number and prominence of laity within the church.

- b. Council of laity 75

Change - primarily a name change, from board to council.

Rationale – the connectional church will operate with one board and other groups will be called councils.

- c. Council of clergy..... 76

Change – clergy membership will be in the council of clergy as bishops are in the council of bishops and laity are in a congregation. The clergy council has authority over membership of clergy persons.

Rationale – clarifies clergy membership and responsibility for membership.

- d. Council of ministry 77

Change – the group that has some of the responsibilities of the former board of ordained ministry. The council of clergy focuses on membership and the council of ministry focuses on appointment/employment. Fifty percent of its membership shall be laity.

Rationale – Membership and appointment/employment are two distinct matters and need to be separated to clarify process and responsibility.

- e. Discernment council 78

Change – a discernment council has been added to handle clergy appointment/employment matters.

Rationale – Provides a group to review cases of appointment/employment.

- f. Chairperson and vice chairperson of the board of stewards 82

Change – The chairperson and vice chairperson shall also serve on the jurisdictional episcopacy committee.

Rationale – These two individuals are brought of the supervision team of the bishop and see the bishops leadership and work related to the entire ministry of the connectional church.

- 3. The regional church..... 84

Change – Name change for central and jurisdictional conferences to regional church that meets in a regional conference. Three or more connectional churches (annual conferences) may align to for a regional church. The regional church has authority to change polity related to clergy, local church and connectional church sections.

Rationale – To be a healthy global church, contextual values and experiences must be honored recognizing more authority must be regionalized.

- a. Board of stewards 86

Change – very little changes for the regional church (central and jurisdictional conferences) and it is recognized that a board of stewards and its work will vary from region to region. The most important work of the board of stewards is a regional apportionment to covenant for benefits for clergy and lay employees and services from general agencies.

Rational – the regionalization of the church around the world gathers connectional churches in groupings that more often align with their contextual realities and experiences.

- b. Discernment council 88

Change – the discernment council is to review and address misconduct by a bishop.

Rationale - misconduct by a bishop is to be reviewed and addressed like all clergy and laity of the church.

- 4. The global church 93

Change – Move more decision to local contexts where there are relationships and recognition that organization, leadership, and outcomes are better decided where there are similar experiences and relationships. Change language from general church to global church which is a better descriptor and recognition of the global church.

Rationale – The United Methodist Church is a very U.S. centric church and most of the work of the global conference (general conference) primarily is U.S. policy. The shift moves the church to be more global in its polity and actions.

- a. Global conference 93

Change - name change from general conference to global conference. Also, the global conference is only to act on things that affect the whole church and not just one portion of the church.

Rationale – the United Methodist Church to be a global church must only focus on what can be implemented in a village in Zimbabwe and New York City, in rural Kentucky and Lagos, Nigeria.

- b. Board of stewards 96

Change - As with each unit of the church, there is a board of stewards to oversee mission, ministry, personnel, finances and property of the church. At least 50% shall be laity, women

and people of African, Asian, Latino decent. At least forty percent of the stewards shall be from Africa, Philippines, Europe and other regions outside the United States.

Rationale – There needs to be one agency that has a comprehensive view of the global church and advocates for mission and ministry of the entire church. If we are going to be inclusive and global, it must start at the top.

c. Discernment council..... 100

Change – the name of the Judicial Council is changed, and its role is modified from indicating right and wrong to adding clarity to what is trying to be achieved and when something is not in harmony with *The Connection*, the steps needed to be taken to achieve the intended goal.

Rationale – the goal of *The Connection* is to help individuals, organizations and the church to be on and stay on a Wesleyan Path. This is a process to help people stay on the Wesleyan Path.

d. Apportionments 105

Change – Move from a global church formula based on local churches to an income model based on a connectional church (annual conference) income. Also reduce the percent of a connectional church percentage.

Rationale – The present Book of Discipline and *The Connection* indicate the global church apportions the connectional church but its based on local church spending. This better aligns with the reality of apportioning connectional churches. Presently connectional churches in the US are giving 25% or more of their apportionment income which diminishes resourcing for congregations and is too large an amount for connectional churches particularly as congregations are consolidating in the U.S.

How is the denominational impasse addressed in the connection?

Change – an affiliation plan that allows congregations and connectional churches (annual conferences) to leave with their property and assets by 2022. It allows connectional churches to group together to form a regional church (jurisdictional and central conferences). *The Connection* provides the opportunity for connectional churches to creatively work with groups of churches that have more progressive or conservative views. No clergy person is forced to officiate a same gender wedding and no congregation is forced to hold same gender weddings. Connectional churches determine the character of those to be ordained and a regional church may add or remove restrictive language to *The Connection*.

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Executive Summary

The Connection

The Life and Polity of The United Methodist Church

Why A New Book of Discipline?

The Book of Discipline has served as the covenanting principles of the Methodist Church since its inception at the Christmas Conference in 1784, and of the United Methodist Church following the merger with the United Brethren Church and Methodist Church in 1968. The creation of *The Connection*, a new Discipline is an audacious proposal in the face of this long history and tradition. It begs the question: *Why is a new Discipline necessary and desirable?*

You probably already know how challenging it can be to read, understand and find things in The current Book of Discipline. It wasn't always this complicated. The Book of Discipline has grown by 2000% since 1828 and an additional 500% since 1960. Already the next general conference has 15% more legislation than the 2016 general conference to consider. These additions are now adding more rules and less innovation and fewer people on the Wesleyan Path, more hierarchy and less local decision making and fewer decisions to follow Jesus Christ. What kind of Discipline do you want?

Would you want a book that was simplified, easy to read, and helps you find what you are looking for and wouldn't require a lawyer, parliamentarian or course in polity to understand it?

Imagine a simpler and clearer book that celebrates our rich Wesleyan theology, history and methods for being the church without watering it down by continually adding procedure and process.

Does it feel like the denomination works for the local church, or does it feel like the congregation exists to work for the denomination?

Imagine a book that sees the congregation as the primary unit for mission, and the denomination as a structure to support congregations.

Do you ever feel like the laity are second-class citizens in the church? That laity don't have authority or can't make decisions that determine ministry and outcome? That the Book of Discipline inhibits leadership and ministry?

Imagine a book that not only says the laity are important but grants laity equal authority in making decisions that affect ministry.

Do you ever feel like you do not understand how the ordination process works? In other organizations where you work or serve, is it hard to understand the staffing, how to get hired, the process for improvement and how the organization addresses conflict?

Imagine a book that makes it easier and clearer to understand how to become a clergy person, how to serve as a clergy person, what is expected of clergy and how to address personnel issues without everything seeming like a trial.

Do you ever feel like the church is more interested in rules than souls, more interested in following the Book of Discipline, than serving others?

Imagine a book that trusts the laity and clergy to work together to figure things out in their context rather than long lists of rules that stifles creativity and innovation and creates frustration.

We all want to support ministry and mission everywhere in the world, but is our apportionment system sustainable?

Imagine a book that creates a clear and sustainable apportionment system to support our mission and ministry.

Do you ever feel like our Wesleyan theology, mission, teachings and values take a back seat to our polity and our rules?

Imagine a book that makes the Wesleyan Path primary and builds more decision making based on our values, theology and mission.

Do you feel our denomination is at an impasse and that people are talking about dividing the denomination rather than building on our strengths and seeing that we are stronger together?

Imagine a book that recognizes we are a denomination with a wide theological middle and together we need diversity of thought, offers alternatives for conservative and progressive leaning people to thrive, AND provides paths that bless those who want to go and multiply without fearing they will lose their property or assets.

Our present Book of Discipline's response to the challenges we face has been to create more policies, more rules and more structure. Rather than solving the problem, it has made it more intractable. As John Wesley feared 250 years ago, we have the form of religion without the power of the Wesleyan movement.

Methodism was the fastest growing denomination in the world from 1875-1925, when we focused more on people in the world than on structure; had fewer rules and policies; when more decisions were made at the point of ministry; and our 'discipline' was mostly about how to stay on the path of discipleship - a path laid out for us by John Wesley.

Jesus faced the same challenge. He witnessed a faith that had become a religion centered on rules, regulations and hierarchy. His response was not to add to the complexity, but rather to say that it comes down to two things: love God and love neighbor (Matthew 22). He brought radical, life-transforming change by teaching and demonstrating God's love in the world. With Christ's model in view, we must ask: *Does the 2016 Book of Discipline help us bring radical, life-transforming change? Does it help us to resolve our deepest challenges? Does it force us to look outward to the people of the world? Is it global in its outlook and application?*

Our answer is no. It is not enough to change a paragraph here or there. The challenge before us is too great. It is time to re-imagine what God has for United Methodism in this new century. It is time to renew the structures of the church and to intentionally clear and light the pathway of discipleship.

The Connection, which will serve as a new Discipline will not resolve everything, of course. It is a manual for being and doing. It must be lived to make a difference. Still, *The Connection* clarifies our mission, our core beliefs and core values. It refocuses the denomination on Wesley's path for faithful discipleship. It refines our structures to allow decision making to occur at the points closest to the actual ministry. It keeps us connected globally as we work hand-in-hand to love God and love neighbor, making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Guiding Questions Used in Preparation of *The Connection*

1. Are the foundations that make United Methodists distinctive retained: grace, connection, holy conferencing, itineracy, the indivisibility of piety and social holiness and ecumenism?
2. Can the polity be applied in all contexts in all nations, communities and congregations?
3. Will *The Connection* help United Methodists stay on Wesley's path for faithful discipleship?
4. Will *The Connection* strengthen lay and clergy leadership to be able to make disciples and grow Fruitful Wesleyan congregations for the transformation of the world? Will it help us thrive?
5. Will this move decision-making closer to where the ministry and work of the church is done?
6. Will it free people for risk-taking, courageous ministry?

Glossary of Terms

NAMES OF CHURCHES

There shall be four units of the church.

- **Local Church** – all the congregations of The United Methodist Church
- **Connectional Church** – the annual conferences
- **Regional Church** – the central and jurisdiction conferences
- **Global Church** – the general conference and general agencies of the church

CLERGY

Clergy will no longer be referred to as elders or deacons but itinerant and non-itinerant clergy

- **Itinerant Clergy** – clergy who itinerate from church to church. Ordained full member itinerant clergy are guaranteed an appointment.
- **Non-Itinerant Clergy** – clergy who choose not to itinerate and find their own appointment/employment and are not guaranteed an appointment.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Each of the four units of the church shall have a governing conference, a board of stewards and councils for the governance and planning, organizing and carrying out the ministry of The United Methodist Church.

- **Governing Conferences** – the local church shall have an annual charge conference, the connectional church shall have an annual conference, the regional church shall have a quadrennial conference and the global church shall have a quadrennial conference.
- **Board of Stewards** – each unit of the church, local, connectional, regional and global churches has a board of Stewards that oversees the ministry/program, personnel, finance and property of the church. The board of stewards shall have committees for each programmatic and administrative area of the church.
- **Councils** – there will be one board, a board of stewards for each of the four units of the church and there will be several councils to assist, guide and carry out the ministries of the church. These councils include the following.
 - **Council of Laity** – advisory to the agencies of the connectional church concerning laity matters and makes decisions concerning lay leadership within the connectional church and recommends certified lay ministry candidates to the council of ministry.
 - **Council of Clergy** – the clergy membership in a connectional church responsible for discerning who shall be members of the clergy.
 - **Council of Ministry** – Reviews and credentials clergy and certified lay ministers of the church.
 - **Discernment Council** – the connectional, regional and global churches shall all discernment councils. The connectional and regional church councils shall review personnel matters and the global discernment council shall review polity matters.

ALIGNMENT AND PATH FOR UNITED METHODISTS – *The Wesleyan Path*

United Methodists have a distinctive Wesleyan way of being the church. The Wesleyan Path builds on the teachings of the church and includes calling, character, values, the *means of grace* and engaging the world by living our membership vows.

Key to Reading *The Connection*

One of the important shifts in *The Connection* is the alignment of language and the simplifying of structure without eliminating important structure and organization. Sometimes there are name changes to add clarity and alignment.

The following are the four units of the church that uses the name church rather than their meeting as a the reference. For instance, annual conference will no longer be the name of the unit but the annual meeting.

- **The Local Church** - the congregations around the world that are the primary mission body where disciples are made, lives are changed, and communities are engaged. Congregations meet in charge/church conferences.
- **Connectional Church** (annual conference) – the primary connectional body that connects the people and congregations to the greater church. The connectional church meets in an annual conference.
- **Regional Church** (central and jurisdictional conferences) – the primary contextualization body where episcopal leadership is discerned and elected, polity is localized, and services are regionalized. The regional church meets in a quadrennial conference.
- **Global Church** (general conference) – the primary body to order the life and polity of the church, to gather and share resources and to free United Methodists for mission around the world. The global church meets in a quadrennial global conference.

The United Methodist Church has two types of membership, laity and clergy. The laity join a congregation and become a member of the global United Methodist Church. There are three types of laity membership.

1. Preparatory member – an individual who is under eighteen years of age and has been baptized.
2. Professing member – a baptized individual who has professed the membership vows of The United Methodist Church.
3. Affiliate member – a lay person who is a member of another United Methodist or Christian congregation but is not living near their home congregation for a period of time and while maintaining their membership in their home church, joins a congregation as an affiliate member to participate in the full life of the congregation.

Clergy are associated with a connectional church and, join the council of clergy of the connectional church. Bishops who are also clergy of the church are members of the council of bishops. There are five types of clergy membership.

1. Full member – a full clergy member of the church has the option of choosing to be itinerant or non-itinerant. Non itinerant clergy serve in extension ministries. All present deacons become non-itinerant full members.
2. Provisional member – is eliminated
3. Associate member – completed course of study or equivalent
4. Affiliate member – serving on loan and credentialed in another denomination
5. Local pastor – licensed to serve a congregation or extension ministry

THE CONNECTION

THE LIFE AND ORDER OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

United Methodists are connectional. The connectional nature of The United Methodist Church is a world-wide network that connects people, congregations and organizations through shared history, mission, values, polity and teachings. *The Connection, The Life and Order of The United Methodist Church* outlines the vision, historical overview, doctrine, teachings, values, mission and polity of the church. Its intent is to **help United Methodists stay on the path to follow Jesus Christ**. It recognizes we are a body of believers composed of many different nations, races, tribes, cultures and theological understandings who work together to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Like Jesus, *The Connection* seeks to honor different journeys and contexts under the great commandment, love God and love your neighbor. *The Connection* seeks to keep the focus, on God and the people in the world and that the church of Jesus Christ exists to love God and serve the people in the world.

Paragraph 100
THE VISION
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

We see a church...
Outward Turning
Disciple Making
Justice Seeking
Life Transforming

We see a church...
Diverse
Inclusive
Multiplying
Wrestling
Becoming

We see a church...
Whose mission and ministry
inspires and captivates the hearts
and minds of new generations of disciples

We are The United Methodist Church -
Continually being shaped by God for
the opportunities and challenges
of these times

Paragraph 200
THE HISTORY
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Same information already in the Book of Discipline

Paragraph 300
THE EPISCOPAL GREETING AND BISHOPS
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Same information to be updated with a new greeting for the next quadrennium

Paragraph 400
THE TEACHINGS
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Doctrine • Ministry with All Christians • Theological Task • Social Principles

Same text already in the Book of Discipline including the social principles except to remove from the social principles the section on human sexuality and refer this section to the council of bishops to review and modify as necessary and recommend to the next Global Conference.

Paragraph 500
THE WESLEYAN PATH
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Calling • Character • Values • The Means of Grace • Engagement

United Methodists have a distinctive Wesleyan way of being the church. The Wesleyan Path builds on the teachings of the church and includes calling, character, values, the *means of grace* and engaging the world by living our membership vows.

Calling

The first calling of every United Methodist, laity and clergy, is to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. As disciples, United Methodists are called to be life-long learners and followers of Jesus Christ who passionately serve God in the church and in the world. Disciples live their baptismal vows and these vows are the standard for evaluating the calling and engagement of any United Methodist.

Character

Every United Methodist, laity and clergy, is to live by the highest standards of faith including but not limited to ethical decision making, care for creation, faithfulness in relationships, ending evil, injustice and oppression and welcoming and including everyone in its ministries and worship. The ethic of a United Methodist is embodied in faithfulness to the scriptures, doctrine, teachings and Wesleyan Way of The United Methodist Church.

The character of a United Methodist is encompassed in Wesleyan three rules – Do no harm, do all the good you can and stay in love with God. These simple rules are profound and transformative when lived every day.

Core Values

Grace - God's grace is sufficient for salvation and is offered to all through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Extending God's grace - Grace is extended through the sacraments of communion and baptism to adults, youth and children, inviting all people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and by practicing the Wesleyan *means of grace*.

The Bible – The Bible is the primary authority and revelation for salvation and holy living, and is interpreted through tradition, reason and experience.

Personal and social holiness – United Methodists grow spiritually and are accountable for witness, service and doing justice in the world.

Connectionalism - United Methodists are connected through a web of congregations and organizations that share a common mission, doctrine, apportioned financial mission support, itineracy, and holy conferencing.

Diversity and Inclusion – United Methodists welcome, include and involve all people in the life of the church guided by the scriptures, doctrine and Wesleyan Way of the church.

Open itineracy – United Methodist bishops and superintendents teach, support and practice open itineracy in making appointments while at the same time recognizing differences among congregations in theology, language spoken, leadership needs and contexts.

The Means of Grace

United Methodists practice the *means of grace*. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, taught that while God's grace is unearned, we are not to be idle waiting to experience grace, rather, we engage in the *means of grace*. God's mystery works in the hearts and thinking of disciples through the *means of grace*, hastening, strengthening and confirming faith so that God's grace pervades in and through disciples. The means of grace are categorized into *works of piety* and *works of mercy*.

Works of Piety

Individual Practices include reading, meditating on and studying the scriptures, prayer, fasting, regularly attending worship, holistic healthy living, and sharing our faith with others.

Communal Practices include regularly share in the sacraments, Christian conferencing (accountability to one another in small groups), and Bible study.

Works of Mercy

Individual Practices include doing good works, visiting the sick, visiting those in prison, feeding the hungry, and giving generously to the needs of others.

Communal Practices include advocating for and seeking justice, ending oppression, injustice and discrimination (for instance Wesley challenged Methodists to end slavery), and addressing the needs of others, particularly the poor, the marginalized, the oppressed, the children, the elderly and vulnerable persons.

Living the Membership Vows

Every United Methodist is called to witness and actively participate in the life of the church as they fulfill their membership vows.

1. Renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of the world, and repent of their sin;
2. Accept the freedom and power God gives them to resist evil, injustice, and oppression;
3. Confess Jesus Christ as Savior, put their whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as their Lord;
4. Remain faithful members of Christ's holy church and serve as Christ's representatives in the world;
5. Be loyal to Christ through The United Methodist Church and do all in their power to strengthen its ministries;
6. Faithfully participate in its ministries by their prayers, their presence, their gifts, their service, and their witness;
7. Receive and profess the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

More specifically, this calls all United Methodists to engage in worship, faith sharing, intentional faith formation through small groups, children and youth ministries, engaging in ministries of witness, mercy and justice in the community and the world, and giving generously to the mission and ministry of the church. These practices were initiated by the disciples of the first century church. (Acts 2:41-47)

Active engagement in the mission and Wesleyan Way of The United Methodist Church keeps United Methodist disciples on the path to loving and serving God. All United Methodists are called to daily live *The Wesleyan Path* creating habits that become part of our nature. United Methodist congregations and organizations are to teach, invite and meaningful and relevant opportunities for people to participate in and practice *The Wesleyan Path*.

Paragraph 600
THE MISSION
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
New Disciples • Fruitful congregations • Transformed world

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to do everything I have commanded you. Look, I will be with you every day until the end of this present age. -Jesus, Matthew 28:19-20, CEB

Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. -Amos 5:24, CEB

The mission of The United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

The goal of the mission of The United Methodist Church is to invite people to follow Jesus Christ and turn the church outward to serve the people in our communities and the world.

Congregations are the primary mission organization of the church because they are in our communities, they make disciples and have the greatest opportunity to transform lives and the world. Therefore, the primary focus and resourcing of The United Methodist Church is to develop transformational leaders who grow and lead fruitful Wesleyan congregations to make disciples and transform the world.

Additional mission organizations that extend the mission and ministry of the church may be organized by a congregation, connectional church, regional church or the global church to supplement or further extend the mission of The United Methodist Church. In each case, as practical, these mission organizations shall work through the connectional church and their congregations.

Who are disciples of Jesus Christ?

Disciples are life-long learners and followers of Jesus Christ who passionately serve God in the church and in the world.

What is world transformation?

A community where lives are changed, hope abounds, diversity is embraced, the spark of the Gospel is ignited, justice is for all and all have the opportunity, knowledge and skills to live to their full God-given potential. (Micah 6:8, Luke 10:27)

What is a fruitful Wesleyan congregation?

A fruitful Wesleyan congregation is a Holy Spirit-led community of passionate disciples who are connectional and Wesleyan in their beliefs and practices that work together to 1) extend radical hospitality and make new and grow all disciples, 2) create inspiring worship, 3) intentionally grow faith through small groups and children and youth ministries, 4) engage in risk taking community witness, mercy and justice mission, and 5) increase generosity and giving to mission. (Acts 2:42-47)

Who is a transformational leader?

A transformational leader, through the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, casts a compelling vision and challenging goals, and whose leadership inspires change and growth.

Paragraph 700

HOW WE GATHER

AS THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Setting time for prayer, discernment, accountability and decision making

United Methodists gather for holy conferencing to discern how God has, is and will lead the church forward. *Holy* is to be set apart for the purposes of God and *conferencing* means gathering to deliberate, discern, discuss, evaluate, be accountable and set direction for the mission and ministry of the church. The following are guidelines for holy conferencing.

- See every person as a person, as a child of God of sacred worth.
- Listen to learn, particularly before speaking.
- Be curious, ask questions to understand another person's hopes and objectives.
- Inquire if you are accurately reflecting the views of others.
- Disagree without being disagreeable.
- Use words that heal rather than hurt.
- Talk about issues rather than people, do not equate people and issues.
- Act together on common agreements.
- Pray, in silence or aloud, before decisions and let prayer interrupt the busy-ness.

United Methodists gather in four primary groups for holy conferencing.

1. Local Church – Congregations are the primary missional unit of The United Methodist Church and they gather in charge or church conferences. Charge and church conferences align congregations with the mission of The United Methodist Church and set direction for ministry of the congregation in the community.
2. Connectional Church - Formally called annual conferences, and annual conference now refers to the annual meeting of the connectional church. The connectional church is comprised of groups of congregations that gather for an annual conference. The connectional church is the primary connectional organization as it connects congregations with the global United Methodist mission and experience. The connectional church gathers for an annual conference session to evaluate the progress of the congregations in the area, and assess, discern and set direction for the mission and ministry in the area and align congregations with the global witness and mission of The United Methodist Church. The connectional church is focused on resourcing and developing leadership to grow fruitful Wesleyan congregations to carry out the mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
3. Regional Church – It is composed of a former central conference or one or more former jurisdictional conferences in the United States or three or more connectional churches that elect bishops and may have a unified pension program and other shared benefits programs, covenant (s) with general church agencies to service their connectional churches. A regional church also has the authority to modify paragraphs 900 and 1000 related to the context of their connectional churches and congregations.
4. Global Church – The entire world-wide United Methodist Church whose delegates gather every four years in a global conference representing the entire United Methodist Church to set the mission, goals, teachings and broad policies for the church.

Paragraphs 900 and 1000
THE POLITY
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The purpose of the polity of the church is to help United Methodists to stay on the path to follow Jesus. The polity therefore **to support disciples of Jesus Christ to grow in their discipleship, to make disciples and to be in the community witnessing, engaging in mercy ministries and working for justice.** United Methodists are a body of believers of many different nations, races, tribes, cultures, and theological understandings all working together to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Like Jesus, the polity seeks to honor different journeys and contexts under the great commandment, love God and love your neighbor. The polity recognizes that too many rules, policies and regulations do not keep people on the Wesleyan Path. The Wesleyan discipleship path is lined with disciples whose hearts and mindsets are committed to be more like Jesus. The polity seeks to keep the focus, like Jesus, on the people in the world. The church of Jesus Christ exists to love God and serve the people of the world. Therefore, the polity and the organization of The United Methodist Church are designed to develop, resource and equip clergy and laity leadership to lead disciples into the community, primarily through congregations to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

The polity of the church emerges out of the vision, mission, values, doctrine, and teachings of the church and is designed to achieve heart and mindset change. The Wesleyan Path of The United Methodist Church guides people while allowing for contextual and cultural differences.

The following questions shall guide the writing of polity for the Global United Methodist Church.

1. Will this help United Methodists stay on the path of following Jesus?
2. Will this move United Methodist disciples, particularly through congregations, into the community to bear witness to Jesus Christ, be merciful in their service, and end evil, injustice and oppression?
3. Will this strengthen lay and clergy leadership to lead the church to make disciples and grow fruitful Wesleyan congregations for the transformation of the world?
4. Will this move decision making closer to where the ministry and work of the church is done?
5. Will this set people free for risk taking courageous ministry or does it only address a problem which constrains or burdens others with bureaucracy?
6. Can this be applied in all contexts, in all nations, communities and congregations? If not, should it be referred to the connectional churches or regional churches.

Paragraph 800
The Constitution
of The United Methodist Church

Changes to the present constitution are highlighted in yellow

Part I
THE CONSTITUTION
PREAMBLE

The church is a community of all true believers under the Lordship of Christ. It is the redeemed and redeeming fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by persons divinely called, and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit the church seeks to provide for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, and the redemption of the world.

The church of Jesus Christ exists in and for the world, and its very dividedness is a hindrance to its mission in that world.

The prayers and intentions of The United Methodist Church and its predecessors, The Methodist Church and The Evangelical United Brethren Church, have been and are for obedience to the will of our Lord that his people be one, in humility for the present brokenness of the Church and in gratitude that opportunities for reunion have been given.

Therefore, The United Methodist Church has adopted and amended the following Constitution.

DIVISION ONE—GENERAL

¶ **1. Article I. Declaration of Union**—The Evangelical United Brethren Church and The Methodist Church have been united into one Church. The United Methodist Church, as thus constituted, is, and shall be, the successor of the two uniting churches.

¶ **2. Article II. Name**—The name of the Church shall be The United Methodist Church. The name of the Church may be translated freely into languages other than English as the General Conference may determine.

¶ **3. Article III. Articles of Religion and the Confession of Faith**—The Articles of Religion and the Confession of Faith of The United Methodist Church are those held by The Methodist Church and The Evangelical United Brethren Church, respectively, at the time of their uniting.

¶ **4. Article IV. Inclusiveness of the Church**—The United Methodist Church is a part of the church universal, which is one Body in Christ. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth. All persons without regard to race, color, gender national origin, status, or economic condition, shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection. In The United Methodist Church no conference or other organizational unit of the Church shall be structured so as to exclude any member or any constituent body of the Church because of race, color, gender national origin, status or economic condition.⁶

¶ **5. Article V. Racial Justice**—The United Methodist Church proclaims the value of each person as a unique child of God and commits itself to the healing and wholeness of all persons. The United Methodist Church recognizes that the sin of racism has been destructive to its unity throughout its history. Racism continues to cause painful division and marginalization. The United Methodist Church shall confront and seek to eliminate racism, whether in organizations or in individuals, in every facet of its life and in society at large. The United Methodist Church shall work collaboratively with others to address concerns that threaten the cause of racial justice at all times and in all places.

¶ 6. **Article VI. Ecumenical Relations**—As part of the church universal, The United Methodist Church believes that the Lord of the church is calling Christians everywhere to strive toward unity; and therefore it will pray, seek, and work for unity at all levels of church life: through world relationships with other Methodist churches and united churches related to The Methodist Church or The Evangelical United Brethren Church, through councils of churches, and through plans of union and covenantal relationships⁸ with churches of Methodist or other denominational traditions.

¶ 7. **Article VII. Title to Properties**—Titles to properties formerly held by The Evangelical United Brethren Church and The Methodist Church shall be held and administered in accordance with the Book of Discipline.¹⁰ Nothing in the Plan of Union at any time after the union is to be construed so as to require any local church or any other property owner of the former The Evangelical United Brethren Church or the former The Methodist Church to alienate or in any way change the title to property contained in its deed or deeds at the time of union and lapse of time.

DIVISION TWO—ORGANIZATION

Section I. Conferences

¶ 8. **Article I.**—There shall be a General Conference for the entire Church with such powers, duties, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth.

¶ 9. **Article II.**—There shall be jurisdictional conferences for the Church in the United States of America, with such powers, duties, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth that may organize geographically, missionally or contextually without discriminating by race and nation. provided that in The United Methodist Church there shall be no jurisdictional or central conference based on any ground other than geographical and regional division.

¶ 10. **Article III.**—There shall be central conferences for the Church outside the United States of America and, if necessary, provisional central conferences, all with such powers, duties, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth.

¶ 11. **Article IV.**—There shall be annual conferences as the fundamental bodies of the Church and, if necessary, provisional annual conferences, with such powers, duties, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth.

¶ 12. **Article V.**—There shall be a charge conference for each congregation church or charge with such powers, duties, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth.

Section II. General Conference

¶ 13. **Article I.**—1. The General Conference shall be composed of not less than 600 nor more than 1,000 delegates, one half of whom shall be clergy and one half lay members, to be elected by the annual conferences. The missionary conferences shall be considered as annual conferences for the purpose of this article.

2. Delegates shall be elected in a fair and open process by the annual conferences. Delegates may be elected by other autonomous Methodist churches if and when the General Conference shall approve concordats with such other autonomous Methodist churches for the mutual election and seating of delegates in each other's legislative conferences.

3. In the case of The Methodist Church in Great Britain, mother church of Methodism, provision shall be made for The United Methodist Church to send two delegates annually to the British Methodist Conference, and The Methodist Church in Great Britain to send four delegates quadrennially to The United Methodist General Conference, the delegates of both conferences having vote and being evenly divided between clergy and laity.

¶ 14. **Article II.**—The General Conference shall meet once in four years at such time and in such place as shall be determined by the General Conference or by its duly authorized committees. The change in the preceding sentence shall become effective at the close of General Conference in 2016.

A special session of the General Conference, possessing the authority and exercising all the powers of the General Conference, may be called by the Council of Bishops, or in such other manner as the General Conference may from time to time prescribe, to meet at such time and in such place as may be

stated in the call. Such special session of the General Conference shall be composed of the delegates to the preceding General Conference or their lawful successors, except that when a particular annual conference or missionary conference shall prefer to have a new election it may do so. The purpose of such special session shall be stated in the call, and only such business shall be transacted as is in harmony with the purpose stated in such call unless the General Conference by a two-thirds vote shall determine that other business may be transacted.

¶ 15. **Article III.**—The General Conference shall fix the ratio of representation in the General, jurisdictional, and central conferences from the annual conferences, missionary conferences, and the provisional annual conferences, computed on a two-factor basis: (1) the number of clergy members of the annual conference and the missionary conference, and (2) the number of professing members in the annual conference and the missionary conference, provided that each annual conference, missionary conference, or provisional annual conference shall be entitled to at least one clergy and one lay delegate in the General Conference and also in the jurisdictional or central conference.

¶ 16. **Article IV.**—The General Conference shall have full legislative power over all matters distinctively connectional as long as the enacted legislation can be applied in every congregation, annual conference and community globally, otherwise that authority shall be restricted to annual conferences and congregation, and in the exercise of this power shall have authority as follows:

1. To define and fix the conditions, privileges, and duties of Church membership, which shall in every case be without reference to race, gender, or status.

2. To define and fix the powers and duties of all clergy, elders, deacons, supply preachers, local preachers, exhorters, deaconesses, and home missionaries.

3. To define and fix the powers and duties of the local church as long as the enacted legislation can be applied in every local church globally and it preserves the right of the congregation to determine building use policies.

4. To define and fix the powers and duties of annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences and missions, and of central and jurisdictional conferences, district conferences, charge conferences, and congregational meetings as long as the enacted legislation can be applied in every conference globally, otherwise that authority shall be restricted to annual conferences and congregation.

5. To provide for the organization, promotion, and administration of the work of the Church around the world, outside the United States of America.

6. To define and fix the powers, duties, and privileges of the episcopacy, as long as the enacted powers, duties and privileges can be applied in every community globally, otherwise that authority shall be negotiated between the bishop and the affected annual conference appropriate committee, to provide a uniform rule for their retirement, and to provide for the discontinuance of a bishop because of inefficiency or unacceptability.

7. To provide and revise the hymnal and ritual of the Church and to regulate all matters relating to the form and mode of worship, subject to the limitations of the first and second Restrictive Rules.

8. To provide a judicial system and a method of judicial procedure for the Church, except as herein otherwise prescribed.

9. To initiate and to direct all connectional enterprises of the Church and may to provide boards for their promotion and administration.

10. To determine and provide for raising and distributing funds necessary to carry on the work of the Church.

11. To fix a uniform basis upon which bishops shall be elected by the central and jurisdictional conferences and to determine the number of bishops that may be elected. by central conferences.

12. To select its presiding officers from the bishops, through a committee, provided that the bishops shall select from their own number the presiding officer of the opening session.

13. To change the number and the boundaries of central and jurisdictional conferences upon the consent of a majority of the annual conferences in each central or jurisdictional conference involved.

1314. To establish such commissions for the general work of the Church as may be deemed advisable and affordable.

1415. To secure the rights and privileges of membership in all agencies, programs, and institutions in The United Methodist Church regardless of race, gender, or status.

1516. To allow the annual conferences to utilize structures unique to their mission as long as they provide for the mission, ministry and administration as described in the annual conference section of the polity, ~~other mandated structures notwithstanding.~~

1617. To enact such other legislation as may be necessary, subject to the limitations and restrictions of the Constitution of the Church.

Section III. Restrictive Rules

¶ 17. **Article I.**—The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our Articles of Religion or establish any new standards or rules of doctrine contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine.

¶ 18. **Article II.**—The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our Confession of Faith.

¶ 19. **Article III.**—The General Conference shall not change or alter any part or rule of our government so as to do away with episcopacy or destroy the plan of our itinerant general superintendency.

¶ 20. **Article IV.**—The General Conference shall not do away with the privileges of our clergy of right to trial by a committee and of an appeal in matters of membership; neither shall it do away with the privileges of our church members in matters of membership of right to trial before the church, or by a committee, and of an appeal.

¶ 21. **Article V.**—The General Conference shall not revoke or change the General Rules of Our United Societies.

¶ 22. **Article VI.**—The General Conference shall not appropriate the net income of the publishing houses, the book concerns, or the Chartered Fund to any purpose other than for the benefit of retired or disabled preachers, their spouses, widows, or widowers, and children or other beneficiaries of the ministerial pension systems.

Section IV. Central and Jurisdictional Conferences

¶ 23. **Article I.**—The central and jurisdictional conferences shall be composed of as many representatives from the annual conferences and missionary conferences as shall be determined by a uniform basis established by the General Conference. ~~provided that no jurisdictional conference shall have fewer than 100 delegates.~~ The missionary conferences shall be considered as annual conferences for the purpose of this article.

¶ 24. **Article II.**—All central and jurisdictional conferences shall have the same status and the same privileges of action within the limits fixed by the Constitution. The ratio of representation of the annual conferences and missionary conferences in the General Conference shall be the same for all jurisdictional conferences.

¶ 25. **Article III.**—The General Conferences shall fix the basis of representation in the central and jurisdictional conferences, provided that the jurisdictional conferences shall be composed of an equal number of clergy and lay delegates to be elected by the annual conferences, the missionary conferences and the provisional annual conferences.

¶ 26. **Article IV.**—Each central and jurisdictional conference shall meet at the time determined by the Council of Bishops or its delegated committee, each central and jurisdictional conference convening on the same dates determined by the council of bishops as the others and at a place selected by the jurisdictional committee on entertainment, appointed by its College of Bishops unless such a committee has been appointed by the preceding jurisdictional conference.

¶ 27. **Article V.**—The central and jurisdictional conferences shall have the following powers and duties and such others as may be conferred by the General Conferences:

1. To promote the evangelistic, educational, missionary, and benevolent interests of the Church and to provide for interests and institutions within their boundaries.
2. To elect bishops and to cooperate in carrying out such plans for their support as may be determined by the General Conference.
3. To establish and constitute **central and** jurisdictional conference boards as auxiliary to the general boards of the Church as the need may appear and to choose their representatives on the general boards in such manner as the General Conference may determine.
4. To determine the boundaries of their annual conferences, provided that there shall be no annual conference with a membership of fewer than fifty clergy in full connection, except by the consent of the General Conference.
5. To make rules and regulations for the administration of the work of the Church within the **central and jurisdictional conference**, subject to such powers as have been or shall be vested in the General Conference.
6. To appoint a committee on appeals to hear and determine the appeal of **clergy a traveling preacher** of that **central or** jurisdiction from the decision of a trial committee.
7. To make such rules and regulations for the administration of the work within their boundaries including such changes and adaptations of the General Discipline as the conditions in the respective areas may require, subject to the powers that have been or shall be vested in the General Conference.

Section V. Central Conferences

¶ 28. Article I.— There shall be central conferences for the work of the Church outside the United States of America with such duties, powers, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth. The number and boundaries of the central conferences shall be determined by the Uniting Conference. Subsequently the General Conference shall have authority to change the number and boundaries of central conferences. The central conferences shall have the duties, powers, and privileges hereinafter set forth.

¶ 29. Article II.— The central conferences shall be composed of as many delegates as shall be determined by a basis established by the General Conference. The delegates shall be clergy and lay in equal numbers.

¶ 30. Article III.— The central conferences shall meet within the year succeeding the meeting of the General Conference at such times and places as shall have been determined by the preceding respective central conferences or by commissions appointed by them or by the General Conference. The date and place of the first meeting succeeding the Uniting Conference shall be fixed by the bishops of the respective central conferences, or in such manner as shall be determined by the General Conference. ¶

31. Article IV.— The central conferences shall have the following powers and duties and such others as may be conferred by the General Conference:

1. To promote the evangelistic, educational, missionary, social concern, and benevolent interests and institutions of the Church within their own boundaries.
2. To elect the bishops for the respective central conferences in number as may be determined from time to time, upon a basis fixed by the General Conference, and to cooperate in carrying out such plans for the support of their bishops as may be determined by the General Conference.
3. To establish and constitute such central conference boards as may be required and to elect their administrative officers.
4. To determine the boundaries of the annual conferences within their respective areas.
5. To make such rules and regulations for the administration of the work within their boundaries including such changes and adaptations of the General Discipline as the conditions in the respective areas may require, subject to the powers that have been or shall be vested in the General Conference.
6. To appoint a judicial court to determine legal questions arising on the rules, regulations, and such revised, adapted, or new sections of the central conference *Discipline* enacted by the central conference.

7. To appoint a committee on appeals to hear and determine the appeal of a traveling preacher of that central conference from the decision of a committee on trial.

Section VI. Annual Conferences

¶ 32. **Article I.**—The annual conference shall be composed of the clergy and lay members serving in and through the particular annual conference. The clergy delegates membership shall consist of the clergy as defined by the general conference. ~~deacons and elders in full connection, provisional members, associate members, and local pastors under appointment.~~ The lay delegates membership shall consist of professing lay members elected by each charge, the diaconal ministers, the active deaconesses, and home missionaries under episcopal appointment within the bounds of the annual conference, the conference president of United Methodist Women, the conference president of United Methodist Men, the conference lay leader, district lay leaders, the conference director of Lay Servant Ministries, conference secretary of Global Ministries (if lay), the president or equivalent officer of the conference young adult organization, the president of the conference youth organization, the chair of the annual conference college student organization, and one young person between the ages of twelve (12) and seventeen (17) and one young person between the ages of eighteen (18) and thirty (30) from each district to be selected in such a manner as may be determined by the annual conference. ~~In the annual conferences of the central conferences, the four-year participation and the two-year membership requirements may be waived by the annual conference for young persons under thirty (30) years of age.~~ Such persons must be professing members of The United Methodist Church and active participants at the time of election. Each charge served by more than one clergy shall be entitled to as many lay members as there are clergy members. The lay delegates members shall have been for the two years next preceding their election members of The United Methodist Church and shall have been active participants in The United Methodist Church for at least four years next preceding their election. ~~These requirement may be waved in new and emerging congregations or annual conferences in their first five years of existence.~~

If the lay delegates membership should number less than the attending clergy delegates members of the annual conference, the annual conference shall, by its own formula, provide for the election of additional lay delegates members to equalize lay and clergy delegates membership of the annual conference.

¶ 33. **Article II.**—The annual conference is the basic body in the Church and as such shall have reserved to it the right to vote on all constitutional amendments and it only shall have the authority to vote on the on the election of clergy and lay delegates to the General and the jurisdictional or central conferences, and it only through its clergy shall have the authority to define clergy character and vote on all matters relating to the character membership, and conference relations of its clergy members, and on ~~The ordination of clergy and such other rights as have not been delegated to the General Conference under the Constitution, with the exception that the lay members may not vote on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy except that the lay members of the conference board of ordained ministry and the committee on investigation may vote on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy, with the further exception that lay members of the district committee on ordained ministry be full participating members of the district committee on ordained ministry with vote.~~ The annual conference through its appropriate agencies shall determine the appointability and ordination of clergy. It shall discharge such duties and exercise such powers as the General Conference under the Constitution may determine.

¶ 34. **Article III.**—The annual conference shall elect clergy and lay delegates to the General Conference and to its jurisdictional or central conference in the manner provided in this section, Articles IV and V. The persons first elected up to the number determined by the ratio for representation in the General Conference shall be representatives in that body. Additional delegates shall be elected to complete the number determined by the ratio for representation in the jurisdictional or central conference, who, together with those first elected as above, shall be delegates in the jurisdictional or central conference. The additional delegates to the jurisdictional or central conference shall in the order of their election be

the reserve delegates to the General Conference. The annual conference shall also elect reserve clergy and lay delegates to the jurisdictional or central conference as it may deem desirable. These reserve clergy and lay delegates to the jurisdictional or central conferences may act as reserve delegates to the General Conference when it is evident that not enough reserve delegates are in attendance at the General Conference.

¶ 35. Article IV.—The clergy delegates to the General Conference and to the jurisdictional or central conference shall be elected from the clergy members in full connection and shall be elected by the clergy members as defined by the general conference. ~~of the annual conference or provisional annual conference who are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, and those provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements and local pastors who have completed course of study or an M. Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election.~~

¶ 36. Article V.—The lay delegates to the General and jurisdictional or central conferences shall be elected by the lay ~~delegates members~~ of the annual conference or provisional annual conference without regard to age, provided such delegates shall have been professing members of The United Methodist Church for at least two years next preceding their election, and shall have been active participants in The United Methodist Church for at least four years next preceding their election, and are members thereof within the annual conference electing them at the time of holding the General and jurisdictional or central conferences.

Section VII. Boundaries

¶ 37. Article I.—The United Methodist Church shall have ~~central and~~ jurisdictional conferences made up as follows:

~~List central conference boundaries here.~~

Northeastern—Bermuda, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, the Virgin Islands, West Virginia.

Southeastern—Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia.

North Central—Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin.

South Central—Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas.

Western—Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming and the territory of the United States in the Pacific region.

¶ 38. Article II.—The work of the Church outside the United States of America may be formed into central conferences, the number and boundaries of which shall be determined by the Uniting Conference, the General Conference having authority subsequently to make changes in the number and boundaries.

¶ 39. Article III.—Changes in the number, names, and boundaries of the jurisdictional conferences may be effected by the General Conference upon the consent of a majority of the annual conferences of each of the jurisdictional conferences involved.

¶ 40. Article IV.—The number, names, and boundaries of the annual conferences and episcopal areas shall be determined by the ~~central and~~ jurisdictional conferences. ~~in the United States of America and by the central conferences outside the United States of America~~ according to the provisions under the respective powers and pursuant to the respective structures of the jurisdictional and the central conferences. ~~The college of bishops shall be consulted and provide input as to the boundaries of episcopal and annual conference boundaries. The authority of jurisdictional and central conferences provided herein is not circumscribed or limited by the authority provided to the College of Bishops to arrange a plan of episcopal supervision.~~

¶ 41. Article V. Transfer of Local Churches—1. A local church may be transferred from one annual conference to another in which it is geographically located upon approval by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting in each of the following:

- a) the charge conference;
- b) the congregational meeting of the local church;
- c) each of the two annual conferences involved.

The vote shall be certified by the secretaries of the specified conferences or meetings to the bishops having supervision of the annual conferences involved, and upon their announcement of the required majorities the transfer shall immediately be effective.

2. The vote on approval of transfer shall be taken by each annual conference at its first session after the matter is submitted to it.

3. Transfers under the provisions of this article shall not be governed or restricted by other provisions of this Constitution relating to changes of boundaries of conferences.

Section VIII. District Conferences

¶ 42. Article I.—There may be organized in an annual conference, district conferences composed of such persons and invested with such powers as the General Conference may determine. Section IX. Charge Conferences

¶ 43. Article I.—There shall be organized in each charge a charge conference composed of such persons and invested with such powers as the General Conference shall provide.

¶ 44. Article II. Election of Church Officers—Unless the General Conference shall order otherwise, the officers of the church or churches constituting a charge shall be elected by the charge conference or by the professing members of said church or churches at a meeting called for that purpose, as may be arranged by the charge conference, unless the election is otherwise required by local church charters or state or provincial law.

DIVISION THREE—EPISCOPAL SUPERVISION

¶ 45. Article I.—There shall be a continuance of an episcopacy in The United Methodist Church of like plan, powers, privileges, and duties as now exist in The Methodist Church and in The Evangelical United Brethren Church in all those matters in which they agree and may be considered identical; and the differences between these historic episcopacies are deemed to be reconciled and harmonized by and in this Plan of Union and Constitution of The United Methodist Church and actions taken pursuant thereto so that a unified superintendency and episcopacy is hereby created and established of, in, and by those who now are and shall be bishops of The United Methodist Church; and the said episcopacy shall further have such powers, privileges, and duties as are herein set forth.

¶ 46. Article II.—The bishops shall be elected by the respective jurisdictional and central conferences and consecrated in the historic manner at such time and place as may be fixed by the General Conference for those elected by the jurisdictions and by each central conference for those elected by such central conference.

¶ 47. Article III.—There shall be a Council of Bishops composed of all the bishops of The United Methodist Church. The council shall meet at least once a year and plan for the general oversight and promotion of the temporal and spiritual interests of the entire Church and for carrying into effect the rules, regulations, and responsibilities prescribed and enjoined by the General Conference and in accord with the provisions set forth in this Plan of Union.

¶ 48. Article IV.—The bishops of each jurisdictional and central conference shall constitute a College of Bishops, and such College of Bishops shall arrange the plan of episcopal supervision of the annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions within their respective territories.

¶ 49. Article V.—The bishops shall have residential and presidential supervision in the jurisdictional or central conferences in which they are elected or to which they are transferred. Bishops may be transferred from one central or jurisdictional conference to another jurisdiction for presidential and residential supervision under the following conditions: (1) The transfer of bishops may be on either of

two bases: (a) a central or jurisdictional conference that receives a bishop by transfer from another jurisdiction may transfer to that conference jurisdiction or to a third jurisdiction conference one of its own bishops eligible for transfer, so that the number transferred in by each conference jurisdiction shall be balanced by the number transferred out; or (b) a central or jurisdictional conference may receive a bishop from another central or jurisdictional conference and not transfer out a member of its own College of Bishops. (2) No bishop shall be transferred unless that bishop shall have specifically consented. (3) No bishop shall be eligible for transfer unless the bishop shall have served one quadrennium in the central or jurisdictional conference that elected the bishop to the episcopacy. (4) All such transfers shall require the approval by a majority vote of the members present and voting of the central or jurisdictional conference committees on episcopacy of the central or jurisdictional conference that are involved. After the above procedures have been followed, the transferring bishop shall become a member of the receiving College of Bishops and shall be subject to residential assignment by that jurisdictional conference.

A bishop may be assigned by the Council of Bishops for presidential service or other temporary service in another jurisdiction than that which elected the bishop, provided that the request is made by a majority of the bishops in the central or jurisdictional conference of the proposed service.

In the case of an emergency in any jurisdiction or central conference through the death or disability of a bishop or other cause, the Council of Bishops may assign a bishop from another jurisdiction or central conference to the work of the said jurisdiction or central conference, with the consent of a majority of the bishops of that jurisdiction or central conference.

¶ 50. Article VI.—The bishops, both active and retired, of The Evangelical United Brethren Church and of The Methodist Church at the time union is consummated shall be bishops of The United Methodist Church. The bishops of The Methodist Church elected by the jurisdictions, the active bishops of The Evangelical United Brethren Church at the time of union, and bishops elected by the jurisdictions of The United Methodist Church shall have life tenure. Each bishop elected by a central conference of The Methodist Church shall have such tenure as the central or jurisdictional conference electing the bishop him shall have determined. The general conference shall determine the committee and process to review the character and effectiveness of bishops. ~~The jurisdictional conference shall elect a standing committee on episcopacy to consist of one clergy and one lay delegate from each annual conference, on nomination of the annual conference delegation. The committee shall review the work of the bishops, pass on their character and official administration, and report to the jurisdictional conference its findings for such action as the conference may deem appropriate within its constitutional warrant of power. The committee shall recommend the assignments of the bishops to their respective residences for final action by the jurisdictional conference.~~

¶ 51. Article VII.—A bishop presiding over an annual, central, or jurisdictional conference shall decide all questions of law coming before the bishop in the regular business of a session, provided that such questions be presented in writing and that the decisions be recorded in the journal of the conference. Such an episcopal decision shall not be authoritative except for the pending case until it shall have been passed upon by the Judicial Council. All decisions of law made by each bishop shall be reported in writing annually, with a syllabus of the same, to the Judicial Council, which shall affirm, modify, or reverse them.

¶ 52. Article VIII.—The bishops of the several jurisdictional and central conferences shall preside in the sessions of their respective conferences.

¶ 53. Article IX.—In each annual conference there shall be one or more district superintendents who shall assist the bishop in the administration of the annual conference and shall have such responsibilities and term of office as the General Conference may determine.

¶ 54. Article X.—The bishops shall appoint, after consultation with the district superintendents, ministers to the charges; and they shall have such responsibilities and authorities as the General Conference shall prescribe.

DIVISION FOUR—THE JUDICIARY

¶ 55. **Article I.**—There shall be a Judicial Council. The General Conference shall determine the number and qualifications of its members, their terms of office, and the method of election and the filling of vacancies.

¶ 56. **Article II.**—The Judicial Council shall have authority:

1. To determine the constitutionality of any act of the General Conference upon an appeal of a majority of the Council of Bishops or one-fifth of the members of the General Conference and to determine the constitutionality of any act of a jurisdictional or central conference upon an appeal of a majority of the bishops of that jurisdictional or central conference or upon the appeal of one-fifth of the members of that jurisdictional or central conference.
2. To hear and determine any appeal from an annual conference concerning legislation or action by the annual conference or its official bodies or an officer of the annual conference a bishop's decision on a question of law made in the annual conference when said appeal has been made by one fifth of that conference present and voting.
3. To pass upon decisions of law made by bishops in annual conferences.
4. To hear and determine the legality of any action taken therein by any General Conference board or jurisdictional or central conference board or body, upon appeal by one-third of the members thereof, or upon request of the Council of Bishops or a majority of the bishops of a jurisdictional or a central conference.
5. To have such other duties and powers as may be conferred upon it by the General Conference.
6. To provide its own methods of organization and procedure.

¶ 57. **Article III.**—All decisions of the Judicial Council shall be final. When the Judicial Council shall declare unconstitutional any act of the General Conference then in session, that decision shall be reported back to that General Conference immediately.

¶ 58. **Article IV.**—The General Conference shall establish for the Church a judicial system that shall guarantee to our clergy a right to trial by a committee and an appeal for matters of membership, and to our members a right to trial before the Church, or by a committee, and an appeal for matters of membership.

DIVISION FIVE—AMENDMENTS

¶ 59. **Article I.**—Amendments to the Constitution shall be made upon a two-thirds majority of the General Conference present and voting and a two-thirds affirmative vote of the aggregate number of members of the several annual conferences present and voting, except in the case of the first and second Restrictive Rules, which shall require a three-fourths majority of all the members of the annual conferences present and voting. The vote, after being completed, shall be canvassed by the Council of Bishops, and the amendment voted upon shall become effective upon their announcement of its having received the required majority.

In the event that the General Conference adopts an amendment to the Constitution, the General Conference may immediately adopt enabling legislation for such amendment which shall be contingent on ratification of the amendment by the required two-thirds affirmative vote of the aggregate number of members of the several annual conferences present and voting, and effective once the Council of Bishops, operating as a canvasser of votes, announces that the amendment has been passed. In the same manner, an annual conference may approve legislation in anticipation of such a change in the Discipline and/or Constitution that would likewise become effective upon the effective date of said disciplinary change or Constitutional Amendment.

¶ 60. **Article II.**—Amendments to the Constitution may originate in either the General Conference or the annual conferences.

¶ 61. **Article III.**—A jurisdictional or central conference may by a majority vote propose changes in the Constitution of the Church, and such proposed changes shall be submitted to the next General Conference. If the General Conference adopts the measure by a two-thirds vote, it shall be submitted to the annual conferences according to the provision for amendments.

Paragraph 900
THE PEOPLE
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Called to Grow, Serve, and Lead

The people of The United Methodist Church...

Christ-Centered
Outward Turning
Disciple Making
Justice Seeking
Life Transforming

The people of The United Methodist Church...

Diverse
Inclusive
Multiplying
Wrestling
Becoming

The people of The United Methodist Church...

Whose mission and ministry
inspires and captivates the hearts
and minds of new generations of disciples

The people of The United Methodist Church -

Continually being shaped by
God for the challenges and
opportunities of these times

Who are disciples of Jesus Christ?

Disciples are life-long learners and followers of Jesus Christ who passionately serve God in the church and in the world.

Who is a transformational leader?

A transformational leader is one who, under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, casts a compelling vision and challenging goals, and whose leadership inspires change and produces growth.

What is a fruitful Wesleyan congregation?

A fruitful Wesleyan congregation is a community of passionate disciples led by the Holy Spirit who are connectional and Wesleyan in their beliefs and practices and who work together to 1) extend radical hospitality, 2) make new disciples, 3) create inspiring worship, 4) intentionally cultivate faith through small groups and children and youth ministries, 5) engage in risk-taking community witness, mercy and justice mission, and 6) increase generosity and giving to mission. (Acts 2:42-47)

What is world transformation?

A community of love where lives are changed, hope abounds, diversity is embraced, the Gospel comes alive, justice prevails for all and everyone has the opportunity, knowledge and skills to live to their full God-given potential. (Micah 6:8, Luke 10:27)

Called to Be Disciples

Disciples are life-long learners and followers of Jesus Christ who passionately serve God in the church and in the world.

The first calling of all laity and clergy is to be disciples of Jesus Christ who make disciples and who are in the community witnessing, engaging in ministries of mercy, and working for justice. The first century disciples of Jesus Christ, as described in Acts 2:41-47 and practiced in the early Methodist movement, regularly engaged in spiritual disciplines that included: worship, witnessing, participation in small groups, mercy and justice ministries, and giving generously to the ministries and mission of the church.

Called to Practice The Wesleyan Path

United Methodists have a distinctive Wesleyan way of being the church and individual members of it. All United Methodists are called to follow *The Wesleyan Path* as it is found in paragraph 600.

MEMBERSHIP

There are two types of membership within The United Methodist Church, lay and clergy. Lay membership is in a congregation. Clergy membership is in a council of clergy, or for bishops in the council of bishops. While each have distinctive roles, responsibilities and authority, laity and clergy are disciples of Jesus Christ and are called to work together to serve and lead the church into the community by making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

LAY MEMBERSHIP

The laity of the church are called by God to servant leadership in and through the church. They are called to build up the body of Christ and to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ in the world through ministries of witness, mercy and justice for the transformation of the world.

The United Methodist Church recognizes that in some regions of the world, people are faithful attendees and participants in the ministry and mission of the congregation but do not always join a congregation. While the following paragraphs describe church membership, congregations are to value and include the gifts and involvement of those who contribute to the life and ministry of the church without joining.

Any layperson who has demonstrated commitment to Christ by attending, praying, giving, serving and witnessing in and through a congregation for at least a year may serve in any of its ministries, committees and teams, and may serve in leadership roles except for the following: as a member of the board of stewards, as a lay delegate to the connectional church conference, or as a voting member at charge/church conferences.

Laity join the church through a congregation. They may serve in and through the congregation and/or ministries that extend the church into the community and the world. When a person joins a congregation, they become a part of the global United Methodist Church and the world-wide body of Christian believers.

The leadership of the church at all levels, both lay and clergy, is called to teach, model and affirm the role of the laity in the mission and leadership of the church. The Wesleyan movement and The United Methodist Church have been strongest and most fruitful when laity are called, developed, sent and

supported to serve the church and lead it into the community. The primary role of pastors is to nurture the laity to:

- Encounter God through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and to continually grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ.
- Discover and experience their purpose, calling and gifts for their life.
- Live their baptismal and membership vows and to serve others in the community and world.

There are three different lay memberships in The United Methodist Church, baptized, professing and affiliate members.

Baptized Members

Baptized members are children and adults who have received the sacrament of baptism and are associated with the congregation but have not joined the church by professing the membership vows. Baptism is the sacrament of initiation and incorporation into the Body of Christ. The ritual for baptism is found in The United Methodist Book of Worship. Congregations are to continue to engage with baptized members through ministries that nurture their relationship with Jesus Christ and connect them to ministry in the church, the community, and the world. When appropriate, the congregation should encourage them to profess the membership vows of the United Methodist Church.

All children are encouraged to be baptized. The United Methodist Church affirms infant baptism as a sign of God's grace and recognizes that children are members of the family of God. Pastors are to encourage infant baptism through teaching and preaching. Pastors are not to withhold baptism of an infant whose parent(s) request baptism and are followers of Jesus Christ and active in the church.

Professing Members

Baptized members may join the congregation as professing members as early as twelve years old or whenever the pastor determines a person has the spiritual maturity to understand and practice the membership vows. Prior to joining as a professing member, a congregation shall provide learning and faith development experiences so that new professing members understand what it means to be a Christian in the Wesleyan tradition. These include but are not limited to: a) what it means to make a commitment to Jesus Christ, b) the essentials of the Christian faith and how United Methodists use scripture, tradition, reason and experience to make life decisions, c) The Wesleyan Path, d) the history of the church and in particular The United Methodist Church, e) the gift and responsibilities of membership, and f) service in the world through the church. In the case of persons whose disabilities prevent them from reciting the vows, a legal guardian who is also a baptized member may recite the appropriate vows on that person's behalf.

Professing members make a commitment to put God first in their lives as they profess the following vows of baptism and membership:

1. Renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of the world, and repent of their sin;
2. Accept the freedom and power God gives them to resist evil, injustice, and oppression;
3. Confess Jesus Christ as their Savior, put their whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as their Lord;
4. Remain faithful members of Christ's holy church and serve as Christ's representatives in the world;
5. Be loyal to Christ through The United Methodist Church and do all in their power to strengthen its ministries;
6. Faithfully participate in its ministries by their prayers, their presence, their gifts, their service, and their witness;

7. Receive and profess the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

Affiliate Members

Affiliate lay members are those who have membership in another United Methodist congregation or in another Christian denomination who, for a period of time, will not live near the church where their membership resides and who seek to affiliate with a United Methodist congregation near them. A college student, an individual transferred for a temporary work assignment, or a person caring for an aging parent are some examples of people who may seek affiliate membership. An affiliate member may fully participate in the ministries and organizational life of the congregation.

Membership Involvement

An individual, after appropriate preparation and commitment to the Wesleyan Path and the baptismal/membership vows, may not be denied membership, baptism or holy communion.

An individual may only hold membership in one congregation or denomination, except for affiliate members.

Baptized, professing and affiliate members may serve as leaders of a congregation. Professing members may serve as leaders in the connectional, regional and global churches within The United Methodist Church. Only professing members may vote at charge and church conferences.

Members may have their membership transferred to another United Methodist congregation or a congregation of another denomination upon consent of the member and written request from the receiving congregation.

Members may transfer from other United Methodist congregations or Christian churches when the prospective member requests to join by transfer. The pastor or designated individual from the congregation will write and request the transfer of membership from the sending church. Congregations are encouraged to provide an orientation to membership in The United Methodist Church for individuals joining by transfer, particularly those joining from other denominations.

Members may be removed from church membership if: the individual requests to be removed, the member dies, or the charge/church conference votes to remove the individual for inactivity and lack of participation in the life and ministry of the church.

In any concern of calling, character, values and active participation of a member, the congregation is to first counsel with the member about returning to the path of discipleship and The Wesleyan Path. If, after repeated attempts and counsel with the individual, they do not change and reengage faithfully in The Wesleyan Path and recommit to live their baptismal/membership vows, then the individual may be removed from membership upon the vote of the charge or church conference. An individual who has been removed for character or moral issues, not lack of participation, may appeal their removal from membership to the discernment council of the connectional church (paragraph 1000). Discontinuing membership should not be taken lightly and must be done in consultation with the district superintendent.

Lay Leadership Development – Seven Core Responsibilities of Lay Leadership

Laities are called to be transformational leaders in the church and the world, and in partnership with clergy, to make and grow disciples, and to develop fruitful Wesleyan congregations for the transformation of the world.

Laity lead ministries to build up the congregation, ministries that serve the community and ministries that oversee the administrative life of the congregation. In partnership with clergy, laity have the following core responsibilities as they lead in the congregation.

1. Deepen the spirituality and faith of disciples so that the laity are working together to continually renew and nurture their faith and the mission of the church in the world.
2. Cast a vision for making disciples and growing fruitful Wesleyan congregations or extension ministries that transform the world so that goals are established and achieved, and the mission is advanced.
3. Increase disciples' knowledge and understanding of the scriptures, theology, church, mission and ministry through the teaching ministry of the church so that disciples live faithfully and teach others the faith.
4. Lead disciples into the world to witness, act justly and show mercy so that transformation is occurring in the people of the community and world.
5. Develop leaders within the congregation or extension ministries so that leaders continue to grow in their ability to lead the mission and ministry of the church.
6. Unify the church through The United Methodist Church's doctrine, Wesleyan Path, the teachings and heritage of the church and common mission so that people work together for the witness, mission and ministry of the church in the world.
7. Lead the organizational life of a congregation so that the congregation is organized to fulfill the mission, grow the congregation, meet the budget, and complete administrative tasks on time and accurately.

The connectional church is to establish a program for the ongoing development of laity in the areas of servant ministry and leadership for service in the congregation, the community and throughout the whole church. The program is to include, but is not limited to:

1. Lay Servant Ministry – Laity are called to serve in and through the congregation, the community and in the world. Lay Servant Ministries include but are not limited to visitation, community outreach, worship leadership and support, teaching Sunday school and Bible study, working with children and youth, lay speaking and other outreach and nurture ministries. As an integral part of the Lay Servant Ministry program, in addition to skills for fruitful ministry, the training is to provide biblical and theological foundation for ministry, intercultural competence, how to be in ministry “with” and not “for” people, how to include children, youth and young adults in ministry, how to work in partnership with the pastor(s) and how to be in collaboration with other ministries, groups and leaders of the church. At least 50% of the workshop leaders for the Lay Servant Ministries program are to be laity. A certification program may be developed, or the current certification program may be used. In any case, the mission of the church and the needs, context, focus and goals of the connectional church are to be incorporated into the program.
2. Lay Leadership Ministry – Laity are called to lead the administrative ministry in the congregation, community and throughout the church. As a part of this program, leadership qualities and skills are to be taught in addition to skills for a particular leadership ministry. The program is to include biblical and theological foundation for the ministry, intercultural competence, how to be in ministry “with” and not “to” people, how to include children, youth and young adults in the ministry, how to work in collaboration with other ministries, groups and leaders of the church. At least 50% of the workshop leaders are to be laity. A certification program may be developed, or existing United Methodist certification programs may be used. Either way, the mission of the church and the needs, context, focus and goals of the connectional church are to be incorporated into the program.
3. Certified Lay Minister – The certified lay minister is an individual who may assist the clergy in serving a congregation or may be assigned by a district superintendent to serve a congregation

when a clergy person is not available. A lay minister or pastoral associate may perform pastoral duties under the supervision of a clergy person or district superintendent, except for celebrating and consecrating communion, baptizing individuals and presiding at weddings. A lay minister is certified when the individual has been: a) endorsed by the pastor of the congregation; b) endorsed by the congregation's board of stewards or the board's designated committee; c) endorsed by the board of lay advisors or its designated committee, d) endorsed by the district superintendent; and has e) completed the certified lay minister training or local pastor school. A connectional church may add requirements to meet the needs of its ministry context. The training material may be United Methodist material already in existence or it may be adapted and modified by a connectional church so that it aligns with their context, priorities and United Methodist doctrine, teachings, Wesleyan Path and polity. A certified lay minister may serve in a pastoral associate or pastoral role for as long as the district superintendent determines. Each year a certified lay minister must participate in a continuing education program as approved by the pastor or the district superintendent.

Within the congregation there shall be the following lay leadership positions.

1. **The chairperson of the board of stewards** shall be a professing member of the congregation. In consultation and collaboration with the lead pastor, the chairperson organizes the work of the board of stewards and leads its meetings, and keeps the congregation informed of the local church's mission and ministry, particularly regarding vision, goals, progress, challenges and opportunities for the congregation to engage in the ministries of the church at its different levels. The chairperson, in consultation with the board of stewards or the personnel committee, supports, evaluates and provides the lead pastor with feedback about the pastor's leadership and performance. The lead pastor in consultation with the board of stewards evaluates or oversees the evaluation of other staff. The chairperson of the board shall also serve as the lay leader of the congregation.
2. **The delegate to the connectional church conference session** shall be a professing member of the congregation. A delegate attends annual conference sessions and reports to the congregation the outcome of each connectional conference session. A delegate to the connectional church conference session shall serve as an ex-officio member of the board of stewards and is counted as part of the 6-24 members of the board of stewards. There shall be one lay delegate to connectional conference for each clergy person appointed to the congregation. If there is more than one lay delegate from the congregation to the annual conference session, the congregation's nomination committee will determine which lay member will be the ex-officio member to the board of stewards. Other lay delegates may be elected to the board of stewards, but it is not required.
3. **The treasurer** shall be a member of the board of stewards. The treasurer serves as the treasurer of all congregational funds except those which pertain to groups not elected by the charge/church conference. The treasurer shall be bonded where applicable and prepare monthly financial statements and pay bills. There may also be one or more assistant treasurers. The board of stewards or the personnel committee is to assign someone unrelated to the treasurer to make deposits and receive and review bank statements.
4. **The financial secretary** shall be a member of and report to the congregation's finance committee and shall oversee the recording of individual donations and review bank statements of the congregation and perform all other responsibilities as assigned by the finance committee.
5. **The secretary of the board of stewards** shall be elected by the board to take and record the minutes of board of stewards, as well as charge conference and church conference meetings.

Lay Orders

Laity may be called to a lifetime of service and mission to the church and community. For this purpose, groups of laypersons may create orders in which the laity may participate. Lay orders may be organized

within a connectional church, regional church, nationally or globally for spiritual development, service, learning, fellowship and connection through a common ministry commitment. An example of such an order is the Office of the Deaconess and Home Missioner of the United Methodist Women in the United States and its comparable laity offices in other regions. The lay orders self-organize, have no authority or special privileges from the church and are not given status through *The Connection*.

CLERGY MEMBERSHIP

Clergy are called by God and affirmed by the community to serve and lead the mission of the church: *to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world*. **This requires transformational spiritual leadership that grows fruitful Wesleyan congregations and turns the church outward to be in ministry with the people in the community and the world.**

For a description of the terms disciple, fruitful Wesleyan congregation, transformational leader, and transformed world, refer to Paragraph 600 regarding the mission of The United Methodist Church.

The Seven Core Responsibilities of a Clergy Person

Clergy leadership is essential for the health and fruitfulness of congregations and for the entire church to advance the mission. The priority of every clergy person is to partner with the laity to call and nurture disciples to discover, understand and live their calling to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. This requires leadership that turns the church outward to be in ministry with the people in the community and the world.

The seven core responsibilities of a clergy person are to:

1. Deepen the spirituality and faith of disciples so that they are working together to continually renew and nurture their faith and the mission of the church in the world.
2. Cast a vision for making disciples and growing fruitful Wesleyan congregations and extension ministries that transform the world so that bold and courageous goals are established and achieved, and the mission is advanced.
3. Increase the knowledge and understanding of the scriptures, theology, and church mission and ministry through the teaching ministry of the church, so that disciples live faithfully and fruitfully and teach others the faith.
4. Lead disciples into the world to witness, show mercy, and act justly so that transformation is occurring in the people of the community and the world.
5. Develop leaders within the congregation or extension ministries so that leaders continue to grow in their proficiency to lead the mission and ministry of the church.
6. Unify the church through The United Methodist Church's doctrine, Wesleyan Path, the teachings and heritage of the church and common mission so that people work together for the witness, mission and ministry of the church in the world.
7. Work with the laity to organize the life of a congregation to effectively fulfill the mission, grow the congregation, meet the budget, and complete all administrative tasks with excellence.

All clergy under appointment by the bishop and supervision by the district superintendents are called to proclaim and teach the Gospel, celebrate the sacraments, officiate at weddings, conduct funerals, serve the people in the community, and order the mission, ministry and administration of a congregation so that it can be fruitful in fulfilling the mission of the church. Clergy in extension ministry lead by extending the mission and witness of the church into the community and the world.

Clergy Membership – Council of Clergy

There are four different clergy memberships in The United Methodist Church: full membership, associate membership, affiliate membership, and local pastor membership. The clergy become members of the council of clergy in the connectional church where the clergy person is serving. Bishops are ordained clergy members who are consecrated for episcopal leadership. A bishop's membership is transferred to and resides with the council of bishops upon their election and consecration as a bishop. There shall be a chairperson of the council of clergy, an ordained full member elected by the clergy, who shall convene and chair the clergy membership meetings. All other offices and committees of the council shall be organized by the clergy membership of the connectional church.

The clergy membership has authority and responsibility to determine the qualities, character and proficiency of its members based on the doctrine, teachings, Wesleyan Path, mission and polity of The United Methodist Church. The clergy members are to evaluate and approve candidates for membership by a two-thirds vote. When a clergy person is approved for membership in the council of clergy, it makes them available for an appointment by the bishop. The clergy membership is also responsible for the discontinuance of clergy membership as established by their policies and process in accordance with the doctrine, teachings, Wesleyan Path and polity of The United Methodist Church.

Clergy Orders

The clergy membership, or groups of clergy persons may create orders in which clergy may participate for spiritual growth, learning, fellowship and connection, through a shared ministry commitment. Orders may be organized at the connectional, regional and/or global church levels. The clergy orders self-organize, have no authority or special privileges from the church and are not given status through *The Connection*.

Itinerant and Non-Itinerant Clergy

Within the clergy membership in The United Methodist Church, there are itinerant and non-itinerant clergy.

Itinerant clergy are those appointed by the bishop to serve a congregation, a connectional church, regional church or a general agency position. If there is any question about whether an appointment is an itinerant or non-itinerant appointment, the bishop, in consultation with the cabinet, shall determine the category. An itinerant clergy person may declare themselves non-itinerant by making a written statement to the council of ordained ministry and may serve in any of the following settings including, but not limited to, parachurch, ecumenical, interreligious, or social service organizations, regional church, central church or general agency positions. All itinerant clergy, after consultation with the district superintendent, shall itinerate as appointed by the bishop. Ordained itinerant clergy are entitled to an appointment unless their membership is discontinued by the council of clergy, or the council of ordained ministry and the cabinet recommend to the bishop that the clergy person not continue in an itinerant appointment.

Non-itinerant clergy serve beyond a congregation to extend the mission and the witness of the church into the community and the world through an extension ministry appointment. Non-itinerant clergy are responsible for finding their own extension ministry position. An extension ministry setting must be approved by the cabinet and the council of ordained ministry of the connectional church before the bishop can appoint a non-itinerant clergy person. A clergy person desiring an appointment to serve in extension ministry is to consult with their district superintendent prior to any interviews related to the potential appointment.

On occasion, a congregation may create a staff position for a specialized ministry, other than the lead or associate pastor, and indicate that it is a non-itinerant position to the district superintendent. All non-itinerant clergy serving in extension ministry must also have a relationship with a United Methodist congregation. The terms of that relationship are to be negotiated each year between the non-itinerant clergy person and the pastor of the congregation, in consultation with the district superintendent. Such a relationship may be paid or volunteer.

The bishop may not require or unduly influence a non-itinerant clergy person to take an itinerant appointment. A non-itinerant clergy person has the right to refuse any appointment by the bishop without effect upon the clergy person's service or status.

All current ordained deacons of the church are full members and considered non-itinerant members serving to extend the mission of the church with all of the rights and privileges of all ordained full member clergy.

A clergy person who chooses a non-itinerant ministry is not guaranteed an appointment. Non-itinerant clergy may request an itinerant appointment, but an itinerant appointment is not guaranteed. The appointment of a non-itinerant clergy person to an itinerant appointment is at the discretion of the bishop in consultation with the cabinet based on the needs and mission of the church. The change of status from a non-itinerant clergy person who requests to be an itinerant clergy person and guaranteed an appointment must be approved by the council of ordained ministry. From time to time, a non-itinerant clergy person may serve as an interim pastor of a congregation without changing their status. Current full member elders of the church who are in extension ministries have until December 31, 2020 to declare if they are itinerant or non-itinerant clergy.

A clergy person may be appointed by the bishop to a $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ or full time appointment. A clergy person is appointed to a congregation(s) and/or extension ministry one appointment year at a time. All clergy appointed by the bishop to a congregation are entitled to minimum equitable compensation as set by the connectional church, regardless of whether the clergy person is itinerant or non-itinerant.

Clergy Education

The education of clergy is an important value and a benchmark for evaluating clergy potential and effectiveness. The Master of Divinity degree has been the standard for education for full member clergy. In some regions of the world, education is not easily accessible, particularly the Master of Divinity degree due to several factors, including distance from a school and cost. Also, there are other equivalent degrees or ministry experiences that may offer part or all the necessary education and understanding to serve well as a full member clergy person in the United Methodist Church.

Recognizing that education and knowledge are important to clergy service, and that contextual realities and needs of the mission must be taken into consideration, the required education for a clergy person will be decided by the regional church. Within each regional church, there shall be a team to discern clergy educational requirements. The team shall consist of a lay person from each of the councils on ordained ministry, the chairpersons of the councils of clergy, the presidents/deans of United Methodist seminaries (as available), and the residential bishops or their designees. Every quadrennium, this team is to be convened by the president of the college of bishops of the regional church to:

1. Determine the appropriate education for clergy persons and evaluate the effectiveness of the educational guidelines.
2. Set the educational requirements for full members, associate members and local pastors including any differences in educational requirements for itinerant and non-itinerant clergy.
3. Identify continual education requirements for the growth and development of clergy

4. Identify which non-United Methodist seminaries are approved for clergy to attend to fulfill their educational requirements and continual education.

Regional churches in the same nation or geographic area of the world may decide to align their decisions on these matters to create common educational standards.

Appointments of Clergy

All clergy under appointment by the bishop have the authority to celebrate the sacraments and officiate at weddings and funerals within their appointment setting. Authority is extended to ordained full member clergy, including those who are retired, to also celebrate the sacraments and officiate weddings and funerals beyond their appointment setting.

Sacraments – Clergy are to teach and prepare the congregation to receive the sacraments, including children. Anyone who is committed to the baptismal vows shall be baptized. In the case of a child, a parent(s) who is committed to the baptismal vows may take the vows on the child's behalf.

Weddings – Clergy may officiate at all weddings permitted by secular law. Clergy are to prepare couples seeking to marry.

Process to Become a Clergy Person

To serve as a clergy person of The United Methodist Church, an individual must pursue one of four membership paths: 1) full membership, 2) associate membership, 3) affiliate membership, or 4) local pastor.

The United Methodist Church has used a process for assessing clergy for membership that the councils of clergy may use or modify to determine clergy membership. The clergy membership of the connectional church has the authority and responsibility to assess a candidate's fitness and readiness for clergy membership based on spiritual maturity, calling, leadership, proficiencies, service, track record, education, and experience.

Attributes of a Clergy Person

An individual seeking to be a clergy person in The United Methodist Church should have the following attributes:

1. A deep and abiding faith in God.
2. A passion to invite people into a relationship with Jesus Christ and a calling to lead disciples to grow in faith and engage in ministry in the world so that disciples are making disciples and engaging in witness, mercy, and justice ministries.
3. The Biblical understanding and proficiency to preach and teach the scriptures so that disciples grow in their faith, develop an understanding for how the Bible was shaped into the canon, and learn how to interpret and apply the Bible for daily living using tradition, reason and experience.
4. The theological understanding and proficiency to preach and teach Wesleyan theology that includes but is not limited to grace, salvation, justification, sanctification, the sacraments, and personal and social holiness.
5. The understanding and proficiency to teach the history of Christianity, United Methodist history and Christian ethics.
6. The practical understanding and application of preaching, worship, mission, pastoral care, church administration and United Methodist polity.

7. Demonstrated leadership competencies and experience that lead people to make faithful and fruitful progress toward mission and ministry goals.
8. The proficiency to teach and organize the church to practice and carry out the *Wesleyan Path*.
9. Demonstrated emotional intelligence including but not limited to self-awareness, awareness of the social environment, ability to manage one's own emotions, and ability to facilitate group conversations so that people feel heard and valued.
10. An understanding of intercultural competence and a demonstrated proficiency to lead, preach and teach so that the congregation becomes more interculturally competent and works to end racism, prejudice and privilege.
11. A proficiency to communicate effectively so that people are inspired, understand the mission and direction of the church, and can apply biblical and theological understanding to their daily living.
12. The proficiency to effectively carry out the seven core responsibilities of a clergy person listed above.

Six Steps for Clergy Membership

The steps for clergy membership in the United Methodist Church are: 1) sponsorship 2) candidacy, 3) preparation for ministry, 4) examination for membership, 5) approval for membership, and 6) credentialing. These steps shall be used to identify and support individuals with the potential, calling, knowledge, proficiencies and experience to lead with excellence and further the mission of the church.

1. Sponsorship – Required for full, associate and local pastor membership.

The first step to becoming a clergy person in the United Methodist Church is for a congregation to discern, endorse and sponsor an individual for candidacy for the ministry. When an individual who has been a member of a United Methodist congregation for two or more years seeks to become a candidate for the ministry, the pastor of the sponsoring congregation will ask the district superintendent to provide the current standards on character, proficiency and faith sought in clergy as defined by the connectional council of clergy and cabinet. The charge or church conference may endorse an individual for candidacy upon discernment and assessment by the congregation's board of stewards or the appropriate committee designated by the board of stewards. The board or appropriate committee shall discern if the individual has the calling, spiritual maturity, emotional intelligence, intercultural competence, work ethic, aptitude for ministry and potential to serve effectively as a clergy person. Upon endorsement, it is the responsibility of the endorsed individual to learn and understand the candidacy process for ministry established by the connectional council of clergy. The congregation is to continue to sponsor the candidate through prayers, financial support (at a level that is appropriate for the congregation), encouragement and accountability to follow through with their responsibilities.

An individual who has not been a member for two or more years of a United Methodist congregation may become a candidate if the individual is in a program of theological education approved by the regional church and has served in a United Methodist student appointment or field placement for a minimum of two years. This individual may be endorsed and sponsored by the United Methodist field placement, or the congregation where the student is appointed. Each of these entities are also to sponsor the candidate through prayers, financial support, encouragement and accountability for the candidate to follow through with responsibilities of candidacy and membership.

The congregation or organization that is endorsing the individual is to write to the chairperson of the council of clergy and indicate the name of the endorsed individual, the qualities and

abilities of the individual, the growth areas, why the endorsing body believes the proposed candidate is called and will serve with excellence, and how the congregation or endorsing body or individual will sponsor and support the individual during the process.

Outcome – A congregation or appropriate organization has discerned and endorsed an individual whom they have discerned and evaluated to have the calling, emotional intelligence, intercultural competence, work ethic, character, proficiency, and potential to lead a congregation or extension ministry to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

2. **Candidacy** – Required for full, associate and local pastor membership.

Candidacy is a time for an individual to explore their calling and the role, competencies, education, knowledge, responsibilities, and work ethic required to be an effective and fruitful clergy person. The connectional church council of clergy shall develop a candidacy process that meets the context and needs of the region. Once a candidate is sponsored, the individual shall contact the district superintendent for information about how to proceed in the candidacy process. Candidates shall be assigned a mentor by the district superintendent to aid in their process of discernment. In order to move forward, a sponsored candidate must be approved by a majority vote of the council of clergy or the appropriate committee designated by the council of clergy where the candidate is sponsored. The candidacy process may take 6-18 months.

Outcome – An individual has explored their calling and the role, competencies, education, knowledge, responsibilities, and work ethic required to be an effective and fruitful clergy person, and the individual has made a decision to continue or discontinue their candidacy.

3. **Preparation for ministry and credentialing** - Required for full, associate, affiliate, and local pastor membership

Preparation for Full Membership

- a. Educational requirements are set by the regional church team. This may include a Master of Divinity degree from a United Methodist seminary or an approved seminary or equivalent education and degree(s).
- b. Two years of internships/field education/pastoring in a congregation or extension ministry and a track record of highly effective service and accomplishment.
- c. A track record that demonstrates the attributes of a clergy person.

Preparation for Associate Membership

- a. Educational requirements are set by the regional church team. This may include completion of the course of study program with a United Methodist seminary or a Master or Bachelor's Degree in religious studies (or equivalent) from a United Methodist affiliated seminary, college, or university. Associate members are to have a deep and abiding faith, be competent to lead and carry out ministry with knowledge and understanding in the areas of the Bible, theology, leadership, preaching, worship, mission, United Methodist polity, history and theology, church history, ethics and organizing people and ministry to grow fruitful Wesleyan congregations/extension ministries to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
- b. Four years of service as a local pastor and a track record of highly effective service and accomplishment.
- c. A track record that demonstrates the attributes of a clergy person.

Preparation for Affiliate Membership

- a. An affiliate member is credentialed in another denomination. Educational requirements are set by the regional church team. The educational requirements may include a Master of Divinity degree from a United Methodist seminary or an approved seminary or equivalent education and degree(s).
- b. Two years of internships, field education or pastoring a congregation or extension ministry.
- c. A track record that demonstrates the attributes of a clergy person.
- d. An affiliate member must participate in a learning and covenant group with other affiliate members led by a district superintendent or a person appointed by the cabinet for 18 months to learn about The Wesleyan Path; the mission, goals and structure of the United Methodist Church; the attributes of United Methodist clergy; and the effective administration of a United Methodist congregation.
- e. An affiliate member may request to become a full member after satisfactory participation in a learning and covenant group and two years of service in a United Methodist congregation with demonstrable results in leading the congregation to progress toward the United Methodist mission, fruitful congregations' goals and competency in understanding, communicating and leading Wesleyan theology and polity.

Preparation for Local Pastor Membership

- a. Educational requirements are set by the regional church team. A local pastor is to have completed local pastor's licensing school.
- b. Two years as a lay person serving and leading in a United Methodist congregation or extension ministry or pastor in another denomination.
- c. A track record of exhibiting the attributes of a clergy person.
- d. Demonstrate leadership competencies and experience that leads people to be faithful and fruitful in progress toward mission and ministry goals.
- e. Once approved for membership, the local pastor must continue to take courses to complete the course of study or a seminary master's degree within 5 years for full time local pastors and 10 years for part time local pastors.

Outcome – Candidates are prepared to serve well in ministry and are ready to interview successfully for clergy membership.

4. **Examination for membership** – required for full, associate, affiliate, and local pastor membership. The clergy membership may use or modify processes used in the past for examining candidates for ministry or develop new process based on the context and needs of the connectional church.

Candidates are to be examined for their knowledge and proficiency to lead and organize a congregation or extension ministry to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Understanding transformational leadership, understanding the marks of a fruitful Wesleyan congregation, and understanding how to engage disciples in ministry with the community and the world are critical to this ministry, particularly for itinerant clergy. At a minimum, candidates are to be examined for the following.

- a. A deep and abiding faith in God.
- b. A passion to invite people into a relationship with Jesus and a calling to lead disciples to grow in faith and engage in ministry in the world so that disciples are making disciples and engaging in witness, mercy and justice ministries.

- c. The Biblical understanding and proficiency to preach and teach the scriptures so that disciples grow in their faith, develop an understanding for how the Bible was shaped into the canon, and learn how to interpret and apply the Bible for daily living using tradition, reason and experience.
- d. The theological understanding and proficiency to preach and teach Wesleyan theology that includes but is not limited to grace, salvation, justification, sanctification, the sacraments and personal and social holiness.
- e. The understanding and proficiency to teach the history of Christianity, United Methodist history and Christian ethics.
- f. The practical understanding and application of preaching, worship, mission, pastoral care, church administration and United Methodist polity.
- g. Demonstrated leadership competencies and experience, particularly transformational leadership that leads people to make faithful and fruitful progress toward mission and ministry goals.
- h. The proficiency to teach and organize the church to practice and carry out the *Wesleyan Path*.
- i. Demonstrated emotional intelligence including but limited to self-awareness, awareness and understanding of the social environment, and ability to manage one's own emotions and facilitate group conversations so that people feel heard and valued.
- j. An understanding of intercultural competence and how to lead, preach and teach so that the congregation becomes more interculturally competent and works to end racism, prejudice and privilege.
- k. A proficiency to communicate effectively so that people are inspired, understand the mission and direction of the church and can apply biblical and theological understanding to their daily living.
- l. A proficiency to effectively carry out the seven responsibilities of a clergy person listed above.

Candidates are to be interviewed by the full council of clergy or sub committees of the clergy membership to determine if a candidate meets the necessary knowledge, understanding, competency, and proficiencies of the Bible, theology, and practice of ministry so that the congregation grows in faith, is organized so that ministry, mission and goals progress and the congregation is growing.

Outcome – The clergy with the best potential to lead the church to health and fruitfulness are identified and gifted clergy who need more time are encouraged and supported to continue growing in their potential and proficiency. Clergy who do not demonstrate the gifts and potential necessary to lead the church toward health and fruitfulness are discontinued.

5. Approval for membership – required for full, associate, affiliate, and local pastor membership

A candidate is approved for membership by a two-thirds vote of the clergy membership. Upon approval, the new member receives a certificate of membership, is available for an appointment by the bishop and is entitled to the following.

- a. *Non-ordained full members* - may vote on all legislation in clergy membership meetings and annual conference sessions except for changes to the principles and organization of The United Methodist Church. Full members may be elected or appointed to all organizations of the connectional church except those bodies that require only ordained full members. A full member is available for an appointment.

- The council of clergy shall recommend to the connectional church council of ordained ministry candidates for ordination.
- b. *Associate members* - may vote on all legislation in clergy membership meetings and annual conference sessions except for matters of clergy membership and election of global conference and regional conference delegates. Associate members may be elected or appointed to all organizations of the connectional church except the board of stewards of the connectional church. An associate member is available for an appointment. The clergy membership shall recommend to the connectional church council of ordained ministry all newly approved associate members for consecration.
 - c. *Affiliate members* - may vote on all legislation in clergy membership meetings and annual conference sessions except for matters of clergy membership, election of global conference and regional conference delegates and changes to the principles and organization of The United Methodist Church. Affiliate members may be elected or appointed to all organizations of the connectional church except an organization that requires ordained full members. An affiliate member is available for an appointment. When an affiliate member completes requirements for full membership, 2/3's of the clergy membership present and voting may elect the affiliate member to become a full member of the council of clergy. The clergy membership shall recommend to the council of ordained ministry recognition of the orders of all approved affiliate members.
 - f. *Local pastor members* - may vote on all legislation in clergy membership meetings and annual conference sessions except for matters of clergy membership. Local pastor members may be elected or appointed to all organizations of the connectional church except those organizations that require an ordained full member. Local pastor members are not eligible for election as delegates to the Regional or General Church Conferences. A local pastor member is available for an appointment. The clergy membership shall recommend to the connectional church council of ordained ministry all newly approved local pastor members for licensing and anointing.

A clergy person may not hold membership in two different denominations except as an affiliate member.

Outcome – The council of clergy commits to support new clergy in their growth and development as a member of the clergy and the council gains excellent clergy leaders who have the rights, privileges, and duties of clergy membership.

6. Credentialing

While the council of clergy alone is responsible for membership, the connectional church is responsible for credentialing clergy for service through its council of ordained ministry which is comprised of laity and clergy.

- a. Full member ordination – the council of ordained ministry shall review all candidates for ordination. The council of ordained ministry may require a period of apprenticeship prior to ordination. Candidates approved by the council of ordained ministry shall be ordained at the next connectional church annual conference session. Ordained itinerant clergy are guaranteed an appointment. Ordained full member clergy shall assist the superintendents and bishop in ordering the mission and ministry of the church. The full member may vote on all legislation in clergy membership meetings and annual conference sessions. The ordained full member is available for election as a delegate to the global conference and regional conference

and may be elected or appointed to all organizations within the church except for lay positions within the congregation and other lay ministries throughout the church. The ordained full member may serve on the board of stewards of the connectional church.

- b. Associate member consecration – the council of ordained ministry shall review all candidates for consecration and shall vote on each candidate for a license to serve in ministry and consecration. Approved candidates shall receive a license to serve as an associate member and be consecrated at the next connectional church annual conference session and are eligible for appointment.
- c. Affiliate member recognition of orders – the council of ordained ministry shall review all candidates for recognition of orders and shall vote on each candidate for recognition. Approved candidates shall receive a license to serve as an ordained full member and have their orders recognized at the next connectional church annual conference as a full member of The United Methodist Church and itinerant members shall be guaranteed an appointment.
- d. Local pastor member licensing – the council of ordained ministry shall review all candidates for licensing and shall vote on each candidate for licensing. Approved candidates shall receive a local pastors' license and be anointed at the next connectional church annual conference session and eligible for appointment.

Clergy continue as clergy persons as long as they are a member of the council of clergy. Local pastors and affiliate members only continue as clergy persons for the time they are under appointment by the bishop.

Decisions regarding membership and credentialing may be appealed to the connectional conference discernment council. The ruling of the discernment council shall be final.

Outcome – The connectional church has transformational clergy leadership who are serving with excellence and leading the mission forward as they work in collaboration with the laity to make disciples and grow fruitful Wesleyan congregations for the transformation of the world.

Transfer of Membership

United Methodist clergy may transfer their membership from one connectional church council of clergy to another with the approval of the receiving clergy membership. Clergy who desire to transfer their membership must send their request for transfer to the chairpersons of the council of clergy in both the sending and receiving conferences. The clergy member is to request a letter of recommendation be sent from their present council of clergy chairperson to the chairperson of the receiving council of clergy chairperson. The clergy membership in the receiving conference must approve the transfer by a two-thirds vote. The clergy membership may require a two-year on loan appointment before transferring the clergy person's membership. The transfer of membership does not guarantee an appointment for the clergy person, including an ordained full member. If a new ordained full member clergy person seeks a guaranteed appointment, once the member has been approved by the receiving clergy membership, the clergy member must request of the council of ordained ministry to have guaranteed appointment status. If the council of ordained ministry approves the request, it recommends the clergy person to the board of stewards for approval. Approval by the board of stewards grants guaranteed appointment status.

Clergy Development and Effectiveness

Clergy are to initiate a yearly self-directed learning and development plan to improve their leadership proficiency. Particular attention shall be paid to meeting the seven core responsibilities with excellence

and engaging in transformational leadership that makes disciples of Jesus Christ, grows fruitful Wesleyan congregations and transforms the world. The plan is to be developed in consultation with the congregation's board of stewards or appropriate committee and shared with the district superintendent. Clergy who have healthy leadership strive to learn, grow and improve their leadership. Also, in a changing church and world, it is necessary for all clergy to keep pace with changes, new ideas and innovation.

All clergy are encouraged to participate in continuing education to strengthen transformational leadership in order to lead the church to make disciples of Jesus Christ and grow fruitful Wesleyan congregations to transform the world. If a clergy person is not progressing as needed, the superintendent may require particular continuing education and other actions to enhance their proficiency and fruitfulness.

When clergy are not excelling in one or more of the areas of the seven core responsibilities or other expectations of the clergy person, the district superintendent or their designee in consultation with the congregation's board of stewards or appropriate committee, shall develop an improvement plan with goals and benchmarks. This may be initiated by the clergy person, or the board of stewards' chairperson or the district superintendent.

To assist clergy in understanding how well they are leading, a yearly evaluation shall be led by the congregation's board of stewards' chairperson in consultation with the board or appropriate committee. The evaluation is to assess the pastor's progress in the seven areas of responsibility and any other areas identified. It shall be sent to the district superintendent. The cabinet and council of ordained ministry together are to develop an evaluation to be used by the congregations and train the chairpersons of congregations' board of stewards on how to use the evaluation.

If after appropriate evaluations a non-full member clergy person is not effectively leading the core responsibilities of a clergy person or leading a congregation (s) toward health and vitality, and the congregation's board of stewards or the district superintendent ask for an appointment change, the bishop and cabinet are to assess if the member should be reappointed, and if so, under what conditions the clergy person is to be reappointed. These conditions are to be communicated to the clergy person and the chairperson of the council of ordained ministry and placed in the clergy person's file. All attempts shall be made to assist clergy to return to a path of faithful and fruitful service. If there are not sufficient demonstrable results, for the good of the mission of the church, the bishop should not reappoint a clergy person who does not have a guaranteed appointment. There is no action necessary by the clergy membership. The clergy person may continue as a member of the clergy except local pastors and affiliate members who must be under appointment by the bishop in order to be a clergy member of the council of clergy. Affiliate and local pastor members who are not appointed by the bishop are to turn in their license. Associate and non-ordained full member clergy persons may find an extension ministry or work on the issues identified in order to return to itinerant ministry.

If after appropriate evaluations an ordained full member clergy person is not leading well and the congregation's board of stewards or the district superintendent ask for an appointment change, the bishop and cabinet are to assess if the full member should be reappointed, and if so, under what conditions the clergy person is to be reappointed. These conditions are to be communicated to the clergy person, the chairperson of the council of ordained ministry and placed in the clergy person's file. All attempts shall be made to assist clergy to return to a path of faithful and fruitful service. If there are not sufficient demonstrable results, the district superintendent shall refer the matter to the council of ordained ministry. If at least 90 days before the end of the appointment year, the council concurs with the superintendent, the council may recommend to the board of stewards to discontinue the full member in an appointment. If the board of stewards concurs, the decision shall be documented by the

superintendent and placed in the clergy person's file. There is no action necessary by the clergy membership. The clergy person may continue as a full member of the clergy and classified as a non-itinerant full member. The clergy person may find an extension ministry or work on the issues raised to return to itinerant ministry.

Clergy Status

Clergy are to be categorized in one of the following statuses.

1. Itinerant – The clergy person is serving in an itinerant appointment and not retired.
2. Non-itinerant – The clergy person is serving in an extension ministry unless it is an itinerant extension ministry and the individual is not retired.
3. Retired – A clergy person may choose the retired relationship at any point in their career before reaching the mandatory retirement age. The mandatory retirement age is 72 years of age by the first day of a new appointment year. A bishop's retirement age is 72 and a bishop must retire if they will be 72 years old before the day of a new assignment or reassignment. Any retirement benefits start at the date and age determined by the retirement provider. Only clergy who are full members or associate members continue as members of the council of clergy after their retirement, thereby granting them the ability to attend and vote at connectional church conference sessions and council of clergy meetings.
4. Leave of absence – A leave of absence status is assigned in any of the following.
 - a. A clergy person requested from the bishop not to be appointed for a period of time and is not retired.
 - b. The discernment council recommends a leave of absence for the clergy person and the clergy person has not appealed the recommendation within 30 days.
 - c. The recommendation of the discernment council is appealed to the council of ordained ministry and it concurs with the discernment council.

A clergy person on leave of absence who is a full member or associate member may attend and vote at clergy membership meetings and connectional church annual conference sessions but may not serve as a global conference or regional conference delegate or serve on the board of stewards in a congregation, connectional church, regional church or global church.

A clergy person on leave of absence is not entitled to compensation and benefits from the connectional church while on leave of absence unless otherwise required by law or connectional church policy. If a clergy person on leave of absence requests an appointment from the bishop and there were issues to be addressed while on leave of absence and those issues were addressed, the bishop may appoint the individual upon the approval of the council of ordained ministry and when an appointment is available. If the clergy person is a full member of the church and requests an appointment six months or more prior to the start of new appointments, the bishop shall appoint the clergy person no later than the start of the regular appointment year. Otherwise the bishop may wait until the next appointment cycle.

If the issues were not fully addressed as determined by the bishop and the council of ordained ministry, the clergy person shall continue on leave of absence until the issues are addressed.

Clergy Misconduct

The process for alleged misconduct by a clergy person involves two separate and distinct paths – 1) appointment and 2) membership. Appointment concerns the employment with The United Methodist Church and is separate from the matter of membership. A clergy person's membership resides with the connectional church's council of clergy just as lay membership resides with a congregation and a bishop's membership resides with the council of bishops. If there are concerns about a clergy person's

membership, those concerns are to be referred by the district superintendent to the council of clergy who under their policies and procedures are to review the issues and make any determination about membership. This process is further detailed in the 1000 Organization connectional church section of *The Connection*.

Categories of Misconduct

The United Methodist Church believes that grace and redemption are available to all people through Jesus Christ, but it also recognizes the need for appropriate accountability when harm has been done. A clergy person who has:

1. harmed children, youth or adults in any one or more of the following ways - spiritually, physically, emotionally, or sexually in or outside the church,
2. has used their leadership and position to further their personal aims or desires in relationships,
3. been unfaithful in their family relationships,
4. committed financial malfeasance,
5. engaged in conduct unbecoming of a clergy person,
6. undermined the ministry of another clergy person or the church,
7. engaged in harassment, or
8. discriminated against another based upon race, gender, color, national origin, status, ability, or economic condition

is to have their discipleship and leadership reviewed. Where appropriate the clergy person shall be removed from an appointment until the issues are addressed and the church can be assured that the individual will not engage in the same behavior again. A connectional church may further elaborate and give specificity in their policies to any of the misconduct listed above.

The process and organizations to handle clergy misconduct may be found in the 1000 paragraph under connectional church organization.

The Superintendency

The purpose of superintending in The United Methodist church is to organize and equip the church for fruitful mission and ministry in the world. Bishops are the general superintendents of the church and, together through the council of bishops, lead the United Methodist Church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Bishops shall be ordained full members of the United Methodist Church. A bishop's membership is transferred to and resides with the council of bishops upon their election and consecration as a bishop.

Bishops serve together as the council of bishops, which is comprised of the residential and retired bishops of the United Methodist Church. Only residential bishops have a vote within the council of bishops. The council of bishops organizes its ministry, policies and work. In collaboration with the General Board of Stewards of The United Methodist Church, the council of bishops recommends to the global conference the organizational structure of the global church. The global conference shall approve the basic organization of the global church.

Bishops within a regional church serve together as the college of bishops. The college of bishops is comprised of the residential and retired bishops of the region. Only the residential bishops have a vote within the college. Together, the college of bishops encourage, support and hold each other accountable for faithful and fruitful ministry, particularly related to the core responsibilities of a bishop. The residential bishops are to work together for learning and leadership development, to discern strategies for the regional church, and to identify common connectional church strategies for developing leadership, appointing clergy, and growing fruitful Wesleyan congregations.

District superintendents extend the role of superintending within a connectional church. District Superintendents shall be ordained full members of the United Methodist Church. The normal term for a district superintendent shall be up to six years, but this may be extended to no more than up to eight years at the discretion of the bishop, in consultation with the cabinet and the district where the superintendent is assigned. No superintendent shall serve for more than eight years in any consecutive eleven years. No clergy person shall serve as district superintendent for more than twelve years in total.

District superintendents of a connectional church make up the cabinet and, together with the bishop, they:

1. Oversee the spiritual and temporal ministry of the connectional church
2. Lead to grow and deepen faith, discipleship and leadership of the people within the region.
3. Serve as the chief missional strategists and catalysts for transformation, development and growth of the church within the region.
4. Develop transformational spiritual leaders, nurturing fruitful Wesleyan congregations
5. Start new faith communities and congregations, identifying new leaders who inspire new, younger and more diverse people into a relationship with Jesus Christ and into vibrant discipleship.
6. Identify new mission opportunities in the community.

The connectional church is to identify effective ways to focus the time of the bishop and district superintendents on these critical missional areas.

Core Leadership Responsibilities of Bishops

Bishops work together as the council of bishops and regional colleges of bishops to lead The United Methodist Church into the world to bear witness of the saving grace of Jesus Christ. This includes but is not limited to calling the church to repentance and engage the church in witness, mercy ministries and prophetic justice that transforms lives, communities and the world.

Bishops, under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, work in collaboration with the council of bishops, the regional college of bishops, and their superintendents, to transform and grow the church through the following core leadership responsibilities.

1. Deepen spiritual renewal and nurture the faith of the church so that the church and the world are continually renewed by the saving power of Jesus Christ.

In collaboration with the cabinet and connectional church board of stewards, bishops discern the core spiritual needs of the connectional church and the people within the region. By their example, teaching and influence, they nurture the church spiritually and bear witness to God's saving grace, mercy and justice in the region and the world.

Bishops also work together through the regional college of bishops and the global council of bishops, to discern the spiritual needs within The United Methodist Church and the world and collectively lead to renew and nurture faith in the church and the world.

2. Cast a vision for making disciples and growing fruitful Wesleyan congregations for the transformation of the world.

A bishop works with the cabinet, the connectional board of stewards, and the college of bishops to develop goals, strategies and action plans to move forward the vision and mission of the church within the area of the connectional church.

Bishops also work together, through the council of bishops, to cast a vision for the mission and witness of The United Methodist Church in the world. The council of bishops, in collaboration with the General Board of Stewards of The United Methodist Church, discerns goals and, with the general board, presents the goals and how the bishops and board will lead the church to impact lives, communities and the world.

3. Increase lay and clergy disciples' knowledge and understanding of the scriptures, theology, church, mission and ministry through the teaching ministry of the church. The teachings of the church are contained in the Doctrinal Standards, Theological Task, Ministry of All Christians, Social Principles and The Wesleyan Path of The United Methodist Church.

The bishops are to collaborate with practical and scholarly theologians of the church to develop or modify the theological teachings of The United Methodist Church.. Bishops shall use these teachings to develop a common understanding of the theology, ecclesiology and missiology of the church. The council of bishops shall present recommended teachings for the church to the global conference which shall either affirm the teaching by a two-thirds vote, choose not to affirm the teaching, or refer the teaching back to the bishops with specific instructions about further work to be done. The global church may receive teachings from other sources and shall refer them to the council of bishops for review, study and presentation to the global conference.

Bishops and district superintendents will use these teachings in their ministry in the region and as they serve together globally to teach and ground the church in faith for carrying out its mission and ministry.

4. Turn the church outward into the world to witness, show mercy and act justly so that transformation is occurring in the people of the community and world.

Community and world transformation happen wherever lives are changing, hope abounds, diversity is embraced, the Gospel comes alive, and all have the opportunity, knowledge and proficiencies to live to their full God-given potential. (Micah 6:8, Luke 10:27)

A bishop works with the cabinet and connectional church board of stewards to develop missional and witness goals, strategies and action plans for the area and leads the connectional church to engage in the community and the world to effectively achieve them.

Bishops work together, through the council of bishops, and in collaboration with the general board of stewards and other general agencies to lead the mission and witness of The United Methodist Church in the world. The council of bishops, in collaboration with the general church board of stewards, will discern and present missional goals to the global conference for adoption each quadrennium. The council of bishops and the board of stewards will make a quadrennial report to the global conference on the missional accomplishments, the challenges encountered, learnings, and new goals and strategies for the next quadrennium.

5. Develop leaders in the connectional church so that lay and clergy leaders are leading congregations and extension ministries with excellence to increase disciple making and the health and fruitfulness of congregations for the transformation of the world.

Connectional churches have their greatest impact by developing leaders who lead congregations and community ministries that further the mission of The United Methodist Church. Bishops will lead the cabinet and connectional church staff to discern goals and strategies to develop

transformational lay and clergy leaders who lead in the church, in the community and the world with excellence.

6. Unify the church through shared mission, values, doctrine, teaching and heritage.

Bishops and district superintendents call, teach, encourage and lead the church to be unified as the church lives and carries out its shared mission, values, doctrine, theological task, teachings and heritage in the world.

Bishops seek the broader Christian unity of the world-wide church by working collaboratively with the ecumenical leaders in their region. The council of bishops, through its ecumenical officer(s) and staff, connects and serves with the world-wide Christian church and its leaders. The bishops shall also work with other faith traditions to affirm the one Creator of all and the need to bear witness that religion should not divide us but can unify through common commitments such as being good stewards of creation, loving mercy, seeking peace and doing justice in the name of God.

7. Lead the organizational life of the United Methodist Church so that the church, particularly through the connectional church, is organized and equipped to fulfill the mission, recruit and develop transformational leaders, grow congregational health and fruitfulness, meet the budget, and complete administrative tasks on time and accurately.

- a. The bishop works with and through the cabinet to supervise clergy and congregations, organize and align congregations and appoint clergy to make new and nurture existing disciples, grow the health and fruitfulness of congregations and transform the world by furthering the mission and witness of the church in communities and the world. Cabinets are to establish a consultation process to be used when aligning congregations and making appointments.
- b. Bishops and their cabinets in collaboration with the connectional church board of stewards set the boundaries and parameters of districts, align congregations to form charges and appoint clergy to congregations.
- c. The bishop works with the cabinet and the connectional church board of stewards to set the organizational structure of the connectional church and districts. The connectional board of stewards recommends the organizational structure to the connectional church conference.

Outcome – the leadership of bishops and cabinets will organize, align and equip connectional churches to develop courageous transformational leaders and fruitful Wesleyan congregations that accomplish the following outcomes.

- a. Increase the number of new disciples and deepen the faith and community engagement of present disciples.
- b. Increase the diversity of the church and grow a younger church
- c. Increase the quality and number of fruitful Wesleyan congregations.
- d. Turn the church outward toward the community and world for stronger United Methodist witness, more compassionate ministries of mercy, and more work for justice to end tribalism/racism, oppression, marginalization of people, and abuse of God's creation and people.

Regionally and globally, the council of bishops and the colleges of bishops will accomplish the following outcomes.

- a. Renew the church spiritually.
- b. Inspire the church to be courageous in serving God in the world.

- c. Unify the church for the mission in the midst of diversity - including but not limited to nationality, ethnicity, tribe, race, language, ministry, culture, theology and experiences across many different contexts and cultures.

Bishops' Development and Effectiveness

Bishops are evaluated by the connectional board of stewards based on their core responsibilities and expected outcomes and other areas identified as critical to the life of the connectional church. The evaluation developed by the regional episcopacy committee shall be conducted at least once a year, by the executive committee of the connectional board of steward, in consultation with the board. The evaluation will be shared with the bishop, the connectional church personnel committee, and the regional church episcopacy committee. Based on the evaluation, the bishop, the executive committee of the connectional board of stewards and the chairperson of the regional episcopacy committee shall create a development plan that builds on strengths and addresses areas for growth by setting clear and measurable goals and benchmarks. The executive committee of the connectional board of stewards shall meet regularly with the bishop to provide feedback and review progress, learnings and challenges, and shall make progress reports to the regional episcopacy committee.

Bishops are ordained full members of the church and are responsible and accountable to the mission like all clergy. Bishops may be discontinued as a bishop if the council of bishops discontinues their membership according to the policies and processes of the council of bishops or if the bishop is not re-elected by the regional church conference.

If after four years of service as a bishop, or sooner if necessary, the connectional church board of stewards, or the regional church episcopacy committee, or the college of bishops believe the bishop is not meeting the core responsibilities and outcomes expected of bishops, the chairs of the connectional church board of stewards and the chairperson of the regional church episcopacy committee and the president of the college of bishops or their designees will meet to assess the issues and work with the bishop to develop an improvement plan that includes clear and measurable goals and benchmarks. If after a year of the assessment there has not been sufficient growth and development, the group will invite the bishop to retire or return to service in a congregation or extension ministry. If the bishop seeks to continue to serve as a bishop, then the bishop will stand for reelection at the next regional conference. If the bishop is re-elected, the bishop will continue to serve as a bishop and shall continue working on the improvement plan until sufficient growth and development is achieved. If the bishop is not re-elected, the bishop will return to service as an itinerant or non-itinerant clergy person or choose to retire. If discontinued, their membership returns to the connectional conference from which they were elected.

Bishop Misconduct

Bishops are clergy and shall be held to the same standards as other itinerant and non-itinerant clergy concerning character and morality. The misconduct identified under clergy misconduct above is applicable to bishops as well. The council of bishops may further elaborate and give specificity in their policies to any of the misconduct listed in the clergy misconduct section.

The process for handling misconduct by a bishop is found in the 1000 regional church section.

Bishops may be discontinued as a bishop if the council of bishops discontinues their membership according to the policies and processes of the council of bishops. If a bishop's membership is terminated by the council of bishops, the bishop is no longer a clergy person in The United Methodist Church.

Paragraph 1000
**THE ORGANIZATIONS
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

The organizations of The United Methodist Church are...

Christ-Centered
Outward Turning
Disciple Making
Justice Seeking
Life Transforming

The organizations of The United Methodist Church are...

Diverse
Inclusive
Multiplying
Wrestling
Becoming

The organizations of The United Methodist Church...

Whose mission and ministry
inspires and captivates the hearts
and minds of new generations of disciples

and is

Continually being shaped by
God for the challenges and
opportunities of these times

The United Methodist Church is organized into four units.

1. Local church - The United Methodist congregations around the world that meet annually in a charge or church conference to align leadership, program, and budget with the mission of The United Methodist Church.
2. Connectional church - A group of United Methodist congregations that meet in a connectional conference to align resources, personnel, goals, strategies, and budget to resource congregations to carry out the mission of The United Methodist Church.
3. Regional church – A group of United Methodist connectional churches that meet every four years to elect bishops, contextualize The Connection, act on resolutions related to the area covered by the regional church, approve benefit programs for clergy and lay employees in the regional church, and covenant for services with general agencies to resource connectional churches and address missional needs within the regional church.
4. Global church – All of the United Methodist congregations and organizations from around the world working collaboratively to make disciples for the transformation of the world. The global church gathers every four years in a global conference to affirm the theology, values, mission, goals, and global policies of The United Methodist Church.

THE LOCAL CHURCH

The local church consists of all of the United Methodist congregations around the world. The congregation is the primary agent of mission in the church. Individually and collectively, congregations carry out the mission of The United Methodist Church. United Methodist congregations are also part of the Christian church universal, which is composed of all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

PURPOSE

Congregations exist for the worship and praise of the Triune God and to nurture disciples who turn outward to connect and engage with the people in the community in order to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, congregations help people to accept and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to live daily as followers of Jesus.

Congregations also partner with other congregations and organizations in their community, the connectional church and the global church for fruitful local, connectional and global mission that transforms lives and communities.

Transformational leaders and fruitful Wesleyan congregations are essential to the mission. Therefore, The United Methodist Church shall be organized and led to strengthen the leadership and health and fruitfulness of congregations to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. *For a description of the terms disciple, fruitful Wesleyan congregation, transformational leader, and transformed world, refer to Paragraph 600 regarding the mission of The United Methodist Church.*

ORGANIZATION

Congregations have the authority to organize their ministry based on their size and context to effectively fulfill the mission of The United Methodist Church.

Congregations shall have the following bodies and may add to this basic structure with the approval of the charge and church conference and the knowledge of the district superintendent.

Charge and Church Conferences

The ministry of congregations shall be governed by a charge conference or church conference. A charge conference is the board of stewards of the congregation, and all United Methodist clergy, active and retired who are under appointment or associated with the congregation, presided over by the district superintendent or by an ordained full member assigned by the district superintendent. Alternatively, the district superintendent, in consultation with the pastor, may convene a church conference, which includes all the professing members of the congregation. The pastor, any other clergy appointed to the congregation, and retired and extension ministry clergy associated with the congregation shall be ex-officio members of the charge or church conference with voice but not vote.

The charge and church conferences have the following responsibilities.

1. Elect the board of stewards of the congregation, its officers, and committee members.
2. Set and evaluate the vision and broad goals for the congregation to achieve the mission.
3. Set and evaluate the budget to achieve the mission and ministry.

4. Set compensation for all clergy persons appointed to the congregation according to the policies of the connectional church and in consultation with the district superintendent.
5. Endorse and sponsor candidates for ministry.
6. Approve construction projects, property purchases and sales, and property leases of a year or more.
7. Set policies for endowments and approve new endowments.

A district superintendent, or the superintendent's designee, convenes and presides at charge and church conferences. These may be convened individually with each charge or church, or the superintendent may convene groups of charges or churches to have their conferences together. The superintendent, in consultation with the pastor, shall set the date, time, and location for the charge or church conference.

The district superintendent, in consultation with the pastor and the chairperson of the board of stewards, may call a special charge or church conference to conduct only the business related to the stated call for the special conference.

Notification for a charge or church conference must be given at least 10 days prior to the meeting. The quorum for a charge conference shall be 50% of the members of the congregation's board of stewards plus one. The quorum for a church conference shall be the professing members who are present for a duly called church conference.

A charge or church conference, with the approval of the district superintendent, may be convened electronically and votes may be taken electronically.

A charge or church conference shall be conducted in the language of the majority of the people gathered, with adequate provision being made for translations.

The charge or church conference shall operate in accordance with the doctrine, teachings, Wesleyan Path and polity of The United Methodist Church.

Outcome – The congregation is focused on the mission, a budget is set to focus on the mission and to achieve the goals and priorities of the congregation, and new leaders are cultivated to serve in and through the congregation and the connectional church.

Nominations Committee

The nominations committee plans and implements policies and practices to identify persons within the congregation that reflect the diversity of the congregation and possess the gifts, skills and experience to effectively lead the mission and ministry of the congregation.

The nominations committee shall be composed of 3-9 professing members of the congregation elected by the charge or church conference. The number of members of the committee shall be determined by the charge or church conference. The pastor and the chair of the board of stewards shall serve as co-chairpersons of the committee. The committee shall nominate the following officers and members;

1. The members of the board of stewards
2. The officers of the board of stewards, including but not limited to the chairperson, secretary and treasurer.
3. The financial secretary, who shall be a member of the finance committee and one of the 7-18 members of the board of stewards. The financial secretary must be unrelated to the treasurer.
4. The chairpersons of any of the committees of the board of stewards, who shall also be one of the 7-18 members of the board of stewards.

5. Committee members in addition to board of stewards members who also serve on the various committees.

In order to secure experience and stability, the nominations committee is to develop a policy to rotate leadership so that new people are participating in the organizational life of the congregation.

Outcome – A gifted and engaged team of leaders who are leading the congregation to make disciples of Jesus Christ and grow to be a fruitful Wesleyan congregation for the transformation of the world. There is a rotation of leaders in place that continues to bring new gifted leaders into the leadership team.

Board of Stewards

A congregation shall have a board of stewards. The board of stewards shall have 7-18 members, as determined and elected by the charge or church conference and shall represent the diversity of the congregation. The lead pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the board of stewards with voice but not vote and may attend all committee meetings. The lead pastor is included as one of the 7-18 members.

Other staff may attend board of stewards meetings as invited or by policy of the stewards and attend committee meetings as assigned by the appointed lead pastor.

The chairperson of the board of stewards in consultation with the pastor shall set the date, time, and location for board meetings. The board of stewards shall meet at least four times a year. Notification for meetings of the board of stewards shall be given at least 5 days prior to the meeting. A quorum for any meeting shall be 50% of the members plus one. A board of stewards meeting may be convened electronically and may also take a vote by mail and email ballot.

The board of stewards shall have the following responsibilities.

1. Establish and evaluate a plan for how the congregation will connect and engage with the people in the community to make disciples of Jesus Christ to transform the world.
2. Establish a plan and allocate resources to grow the vitality of the congregation.
3. Establish and oversee personnel policies for hiring, supporting, developing and compensating staff.
4. Develop and oversee a safe sanctuary policy to protect young people and adults from physical, emotional, and sexual abuse.
5. Allocate the appropriate resources to maintain the property and, in consultation with the lead pastor, establish property and building usage policies, including wedding policies.
6. Oversee the finances and administration of the congregation.
7. Determine the appropriate committees, teams and task forces to carry out the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church in the local community.
8. Ensure there is appropriate oversight of the ministry, finances, property and personnel functions of the congregation.
9. Create a plan and strategies to develop leaders within the congregation.
10. Determine additional committees to carry out the work of the board of stewards in addition to the committees listed below.
11. In consultation with the lead pastor, appoint stewards to committees, teams and task forces. Members who are not part of the board of stewards are to be elected by the charge or church conference.
12. Review misconduct by a lay member and determine an individual's membership in the event of misconduct. The procedures are listed below under the heading lay member misconduct.

It is recommended that members of the board of stewards and its committees be elected to a four-year term and four classes so that ideally not more than 25% of the members leave or join the board or its committees in the same year. Members of the board of stewards must be re-nominated by the nominations committee and reelected by the charge or church conference after completing their term. No member of the board of stewards may serve more than three consecutive terms. It is recommended that the chairperson of the board of stewards and other officers be elected every two years.

It is recommended that the board of stewards have committees depending on the size of the congregation and its ministries. If it does not have committees, the following work and ministries shall remain the responsibility of the board of stewards. The committees are to report to the board of stewards except for the nominations committee which reports to the charge or church conference.

Executive Committee – comprised of the officers of the board of stewards, and the committee chairpersons of the board of stewards to evaluate the leadership and ministry of the pastor, review and approve the pastor's goals, affirm what is going well, recommend actions, direction and improvement for leading the seven core responsibilities of a clergy person.

The executive committee shall develop a congregational profile that is approved by the board of stewards as part of the consultation process with the cabinet for pastoral appointments. The executive committee shall meet with any newly appointed pastor prior to an appointment being finalized by the bishop as part of the consultation process.

Outcome – The pastor understands the hopes and needs of the congregation, is leading the congregation well and the congregation is progressing toward its vision, mission, and goals.

Ministry – One or more ministry teams, comprised of at-large members and members of the board of stewards, that plan and implement ministries that make and grow disciples, develop worship that draws people to God and attracts new worshipers, organizes small group (class meeting) ministries, engages the congregation in ministries of witness, justice and mercy.

Outcome – New disciples of Jesus Christ are being made, disciples are growing in their faith, the congregation is engaged with its community through ministries of witness, mercy and justice and the congregation is growing as a fruitful Wesleyan congregation.

Personnel – a team of 6-9 people, comprised of at-large members and members of the board of stewards, that plans and implements ministries, policies and practices that develop paid and volunteer leadership, including personnel policies and safe sanctuary policies. Policies must be recommended to and affirmed by the board of stewards. The Personnel team also hires, oversees, evaluates all staff, and recommends compensation for all paid staff to the board of stewards. For the evaluation of pastoral staff, the connectional church is to provide the evaluation procedures.

The committee and the officers of the board of stewards shall meet with any newly appointed pastor prior to any appointment being finalized by the bishop as part of the consultation process.

Outcome – The paid staff are fairly compensated, growing in their abilities, and are clear about their expectations. They are evaluated and given feedback so that they, along with the elected leadership, may continue to lead the congregation to make and grow disciples of Jesus Christ and grow a fruitful Wesleyan congregation and so that the congregation is turning outward to the community to connect with its neighbors through ministries of witness, mercy and justice.

Finance – a team of 6-9 members comprised of at-large members and members of the board of stewards, that,

1. plans and implements ministries, policies and practices that cultivate giving and financial resources for the ministry and administration of the congregation,
2. ensure offerings are counted weekly by two or more people that are not from the same family,
3. ensure that giving is accurately recorded and reported,
4. recommend the budget to the board of stewards and manage the approved budget,
5. prepare financial statements and reports for the regular meetings of the board of stewards,
6. ensure that bank statements are reviewed by someone other than the treasurer,
7. ensure that the financial books are reviewed by someone outside the congregation annually,
8. collaborate with the pastor to ensure statistical reports are completed and accurate by February 15 of each year,
9. develop and regularly communicate a program of wills and bequests, and
10. invest the funds of the congregation.

Funds of the congregation are to be invested wisely and with social responsibility so that they continue to grow assets for mission and ministry. Socially responsible investing includes but is not limited to refraining from investing in companies that produce or sell weapons of war and companies that profit from addictive substances or activities (alcohol, gambling, and tobacco). It includes investing in companies engaged in social justice, environmental sustainability, alternative energy production, and clean technology efforts. Congregations are to consider investing through the connectional church foundation where such foundations operate.

Outcome – people are giving generously to the mission, ministry. Administration is fully funded including 100% apportionment giving. All bills are paid fully and on time, and there is transparency, accurate accounting, and socially responsible investing of all the funds and finances of the congregation.

Property – a team of 6-9 members comprised of at-large members and members of the board of stewards, that,

1. plans and implements ministries, policies and practices that assess and address all property needs,
2. develops a plan to address any deferred maintenance,
3. tours the parsonage(s) annually and recommends to the board of stewards a plan and budget to address needs identified,
4. recommends property use policies to the board of stewards,
5. ensures the property is adequately insured,
6. reviews and recommends to the board of stewards all leases and capital projects,
7. ensures that the trust clause is included in any deeds of the congregation.

Outcome – the property is welcoming and available for community ministry and is enhancing and supporting the mission and ministry of the congregation.

The board of stewards and its committees shall operate in accordance with The United Methodist Church's doctrine, teachings, Wesleyan Path and polity.

Outcome of the Board of Stewards – the congregation is engaged with the people in the community and is offering worship that inspires and attracts new people. New disciples are being made, and all disciples are involved in small groups (class meetings), growing in their faith, engaged in hands-on community ministry, and giving generously to the mission and ministry of the church.

Lay Member Misconduct

The United Methodist Church believes that grace and redemption are available to all people through Jesus Christ, but it also recognizes the need for appropriate accountability when harm has been done. There is a significant difference between misconduct and a conflict between two or more people. Conflict is when two or more people do not agree about something. *Misconduct is an unethical act that rises to the level of the offenses described below where an individual has been harmed because of the behavior.*

A person is to have their leadership and membership reviewed, if the person has:

1. harmed children, youth or adults in any one or more of the following ways - spiritually, physically, emotionally, or sexually in or outside the church,
2. has used their leadership and position to further their personal aims or desires in relationships,
3. been unfaithful in their family relationships,
4. committed financial malfeasance,
5. engaged in conduct unbecoming of a lay person in the United Methodist Church,
6. engaged in harassment, or
7. discriminated against another based upon race, gender, color, national origin, status, ability, or economic condition.

When appropriate, the person shall be removed from leadership until the issues are addressed and the church can be assured that the individual will not engage in the same behavior again. A connectional church may further elaborate and give specificity in their policies to any of the misconduct listed above.

The following process is to be used to handle misconduct, not simply a dispute, grievance or conflict between two or more persons. The connectional church shall provide protocols for handling congregational conflict.

When an allegation of misconduct has been made in writing and presented to the chairperson of the board of stewards or the pastor,

1. The chairperson of the board of stewards is to contact the district superintendent who shall identify someone to research the allegations and determine if the allegations have merit. They shall also identify the specific reference to misconduct in The Connection that applies or the policies of the connectional church that apply to the situation.
2. If the allegations have merit, the district superintendent is to identify five persons from the board of stewards as a review committee to hear the matter and review an individual's membership. If a secular law has been violated, the individual is to be reported to secular authorities.
3. The review committee shall invite the individual who is bringing the allegation and the accused individual to appear before the committee. Each individual may bring one other person with knowledge about the matter, but in no instance shall it be their attorney. The committee may request the district superintendent to provide a representative for the church.
4. The committee may request written material prior to its meeting according to the guidelines it establishes.
5. The committee will inform those appearing before the committee at least 30 days in advance of the committee's meeting the process that will be followed and the particular areas of focus during the gathering.
6. Any written materials to be used during the committee's review of the matter will be provided 30 days prior to the meeting to all parties and to the members of the review committee.

The review committee shall use the guidelines for holy conferencing found in paragraph 700 of The Connection and any other guidelines it establishes. It shall base its decision on The Connection of The United Methodist Church, the teachings of the church, the polity of the church and the policies of the connectional church. The committee has 60 days to complete its work and recommendations once a case has been referred to them.

The review committee meetings are not open to the public. The committee may make their recommendations public when it believes transparency is warranted.

Review Committee Decision Options

After appropriate inquiry, the review committee shall identify one of the following paths with specific dates by which time items are to be completed.

1. Dismiss the matter. The individual may continue in their membership and any roles within the congregation.
2. The committee identifies a set of requirements to repair the harm done to individuals and/or the church. The individual member may continue as a member and in any role within the congregation. The council sets a timeline with specific dates as to when the requirements are to be completed and how the lay member is to demonstrate that the requirements are completed.
3. The committee identifies a set of requirements to repair the harm done to individuals and/or the church. The lay member is discontinued as a member in a United Methodist congregation. A report is sent to the district superintendent. If at any point the lay person would like to be considered for membership in the future, the individual shall have completed all of the requirements, demonstrated that they are not at risk to do future harm, and begin the process of becoming a lay member again. Any lay person who has been discontinued as a lay member must have the permission of the district superintendent to begin the process of lay membership again.

The cabinet shall assign a trained individual or team to work with any party that has been harmed as a result of the misconduct in order to offer support during the process so that the party understands the process, is aware of help that is available, and has access to resources to aid in healing.

A lay person may appeal the decision of the review committee within 30 days to the connectional conference council of laity who shall also conduct a review of the matter. Nine members of the council of laity must be present for a review of the case. If the council of laity concurs with the review committee, there is no further appeal. The council of laity has 30 days to hear the appeal and may modify the decision as it determines. The decision of the council of laity is final.

MINISTRY

The ministry of the congregation shall be organized to accomplish the mission of The United Methodist Church – to make disciples of Jesus Christ to transform the world. Its ministry shall focus on supporting disciples to grow in their faith and connect and engage with the people in the community for ministries of witness, mercy and justice. Transformational congregational leadership is essential to the fruitfulness of a Wesleyan congregation.

A transformational leader, through the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, casts a compelling vision and challenging goals, and is one whose leadership inspires change and growth.

The board of stewards shall establish the strategies and goals for congregations to do the following:

1. Make new disciples.
2. Create inspiring worship that connects with and attracts people from the community.
3. Deepen the faith of disciples and increase the number of disciples in small groups (class meetings) and develop the faith of students through children and youth ministries.
4. Engage disciples in risk-taking hands-on mission and works of justice and advocacy, and increase the number of disciples engaged in such ministry.
5. Increase money given to mission and prioritize 100% apportionment giving as the first mission giving of the congregation.
6. Develop lay leadership to carry out the ministries of the congregation.
7. Administer the life of the congregation, personnel, finance and property effectively and with excellence.

Congregations that have difficulty carrying out their ministry, goals, property maintenance or financial obligations are to evaluate their challenges and adjust ministry goals and budget to achieve them. A congregation that continues to encounter challenges shall work with the district superintendent or the superintendent's designee to assess the challenges and set a realistic path forward.

A congregation with 15 or fewer people in worship that sets a path for health and fruitfulness, and yet continues to struggle in carrying out its ministry and meeting its goals, and is not meeting financial and property obligations, shall assess its future and either discontinue or merge with another congregation unless the cabinet determines the congregation should continue for strategic reasons.

Congregations with more than 15 people in worship that are not meeting any one or more of the following objectives: making new disciples, engaging in ministry and mission in their community, paying their bills, maintaining their building (s), or giving 100% of their apportionments are to be reviewed by a process established by the connectional church board of stewards to consider their viability for effective mission and ministry. A plan may be established for congregational renewal. The connectional church board of stewards may recommend to the connectional church annual conference session to discontinue congregations that are not making progress toward the minimal expectations of a congregation – to make new disciples, engage in ministries with the community, pay its bills, address building maintenance and give 100% of apportionments.

District superintendents, in consultation with congregations and the cabinet, may align congregations into cooperative ministries such as circuits or parishes in order to strengthen congregational ministry and better serve the community. These alignments may take a variety of forms and include two or more congregations. The district superintendent or the superintendent's designee will work with the congregations to develop the purpose, organization, ministry, shared governance, personnel, and finance and administration for the cooperative ministry.

PERSONNEL

Depending on the size of the congregation and missional needs, the board of stewards may create a committee that reports to the board of stewards to oversee personnel matters including the leadership and evaluation of the pastor and the hiring and evaluation of any additional staff needed to carry out the mission and ministry of the congregation. The congregation shall have personnel policies that guide paid and volunteer personnel decisions.

The connectional church shall provide best practices for personnel policies that give attention to different sized congregations and staffing.

The following are the volunteer and paid personnel of a congregation. A congregation may add to these positions to fulfill the mission.

Chairperson of the Board of Stewards

The chairperson of the board of stewards, who shall be a professing member of the congregation, in consultation and collaboration with the lead pastor organizes the work of the board of stewards and leads its meetings. The chairperson in consultation and collaboration with the pastor keeps the congregation informed of the local church's mission and ministry, particularly regarding vision, goals, progress, challenges and how the congregation can engage in the ministries of the church at all levels. As a member of the Executive Committee, the chairperson participates in the evaluation of the lead pastor. The lead pastor in consultation with the board of stewards evaluates or oversees the evaluation of other staff. The chairperson of the board shall also serve as the lay leader of the congregation.

Delegate to the Connectional Church Conference

The delegate to the connectional church annual conference session, who shall be a professing member of the congregation, attends annual conference sessions and reports to the congregation the outcome of each annual conference session. The delegate to the connectional church annual conference session shall serve as an ex-officio member of the board of stewards and is counted as part of the 7-18 members of the board of stewards. There shall be one lay delegate to the connectional conference for each appointed clergy person to the congregation. If there is more than one lay delegate from the congregation to the connectional conference, the congregation's nomination process will determine which lay member will be the ex-officio member to the board of stewards. Other lay delegates may be elected to the board of stewards, but it is not required.

Treasurer

The treasurer shall be a member of the board of stewards and serve as the treasurer of all congregational funds except those funds which pertain to groups that are not elected by the charge or church conference. The treasurer shall be bonded and prepare monthly financial statements and pay bills. There may also be one or more assistant treasurers. The board of stewards or the personnel committee is to assign someone not related to the treasurer or assistant treasurers to make deposits and receive and review bank statements.

Financial Secretary

The financial secretary shall be a member of the finance committee and shall oversee the recording of individual donations and review bank statements of the congregation and all other responsibilities as assigned by the finance committee.

Secretary

A secretary of the board of stewards shall be elected by the board to take and record the minutes of the board of stewards, charge conference and church conference meetings. Other duties may be assigned such as membership secretary for the congregation.

Clergy

The bishop appoints clergy persons which include the lead pastor and any associate pastors to the congregation. The priority of the appointed clergy person(s) is to call and nurture disciples to discover, understand and live their calling to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. This requires clergy to lead the congregation to turn outward to be in ministry with the people in the community and the world. The district superintendent is the supervisor of appointed clergy. Day-to-day oversight of a clergy person's leadership is conducted through the board of stewards or the committee assigned to this work and the chairperson of the board of stewards.

The core responsibilities of the lead pastor are to:

1. Deepen the spirituality and faith of the lay disciples so that the laity are working together to continually renew and nurture their faith and the mission of the church in the world.
2. Cast a vision for making disciples and growing fruitful Wesleyan congregations to transform the world so that goals are established and achieved, and the mission is advanced.
3. Grow the teaching ministry of the church to increase disciples' knowledge and understanding of the scriptures, theology, church, mission and ministry.
4. Lead disciples into the world to witness, act justly and show mercy so that transformation is occurring in the people of the community and world.
5. Develop leaders within the congregation or extension ministries so that leaders continue to grow in their ability to lead the mission and ministry of the church.
6. Unify the church through common values, doctrine, heritage, witness and mission so that people work together for witness, mission and ministry in the community and world.
7. Organize the life of the church to fulfill the mission, grow congregational vitality, meet the budget, and complete administrative tasks on time and accurately.

The bishop, for missional or pastoral reasons, may appoint an interim clergy person; and with the cabinet, align the congregation to be on a charge with another congregation; assign a student pastor; assign a certified lay minister, or appoint a clergy person on loan from another denomination to serve the congregation.

The board of stewards is to encourage and support clergy to schedule one full day off per week. Full time appointed clergy persons are entitled to the following paid benefits from the congregation in any given year.

1. Four weeks of vacation including Sundays.
2. Twelve weeks of maternity or paternity leave.
3. Up to six weeks every six years for study and renewal for full time clergy. The study and renewal leave is to be approved by the district superintendent in consultation with the board of stewards. A clergy person may take the six weeks at the same time or divide the weeks over several years. The request for study and renewal leave must identify the learning that will be accomplished and how this will forward the mission of the congregation.
4. Six sick days and three personal days.
5. Two weeks of paid family leave to care for a spouse, child, parent(s) or sibling(s).
6. As provided through the connectional church or regional church, a pension and benefit program.

Part time clergy benefits are to be established by the policies and procedures of the connectional church.

A full-time itinerant clergy person after 10 years under appointment may take an uncompensated sabbatical leave for up to one year with the guarantee of being appointed to a congregation at the start of the next appointment season. The board of stewards may provide compensation during the sabbatical, but it is not required. The pastor may return to the same appointment if the congregation's board of stewards and the superintendent agree prior to the sabbatical. The congregation is responsible for the salary and benefits of an interim pastor. A sabbatical must be requested six months prior to the start of a new appointment year or in rare cases the cabinet and congregation's board of stewards may approve a sabbatical requested in less than six months.

Non-itinerant clergy are subject to the compensation policies of their employers. When a non-itinerant clergy person is employed by a local church, the compensation and benefits must conform to the minimum standards established by The Connection and/or the connectional conference standards.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The finances and administration of the congregation shall be overseen by the board of stewards. The board may work through a finance committee to assist with its work.

The responsibilities for the finance committee are listed with the board of stewards' committees.

PROPERTY

All personal and real property of the congregation is held in trust for The United Methodist Church. This phrase is to be incorporated in the deed(s) of all real estate and buildings purchased and owned by the congregation or donated to the congregation. The trust clause is to be acknowledged by the board of stewards each year in the charge/church conference report to the connectional church.

The property of a United Methodist congregation should be welcoming, available to the community, and used to further the mission of The United Methodist Church. The congregation's board of stewards in consultation with the lead pastor may set building use policies including building use for weddings.

Before a congregation purchases, sells or leases its real estate and building(s), or constructs a building or addition, or renovates existing property in excess of a dollar amount set by the connectional church board of stewards, the congregation must follow the approval process set by the connectional church board of stewards. At a minimum it shall include the approval of the cabinet and any staff person designated by the connectional church board of stewards.

The connectional church board of stewards may establish a property committee to review property requests from congregations. The property committee may have subcommittees for individual districts or groups of districts. All proceeds from the sale of property are to be used for capital projects. The congregation may invest the proceeds from the sale of the property and use the proceeds for ministry as long as it does not decrease the initial amount of money. Any use other than property and capital expenditures must be approved by the cabinet. Any congregation that ceases to exist or disaffiliates with The United Methodist Church forfeits all real and personal property to the connectional church except when the processes for disaffiliation or affiliation are followed.

Affiliation and Disaffiliation

Congregations may decide to affiliate with another or new Wesleyan denomination or disaffiliate without joining an existing or new Wesleyan denomination. At this time in the life of The United Methodist Church, we recognize that blessing and multiplying may be best for the church. The following are the guidelines for affiliation and disaffiliation.

A congregation that decides to affiliate with another Wesleyan denomination with all real and personal property may do so through the annual conference sessions of 2021 - 2023 if the following conditions are met.

1. The denomination is found on a current list of Wesleyan denominations approved by the global conference. New denominations may be approved between global conferences by the council of bishops and General Board of stewards of The United Methodist Church.
2. The Wesleyan denomination has at least 150 congregations and 100 clergy full members or equivalent.
3. The denomination participates in Wespeth and ensures its clergy pensions are paid in full or, if they are not a part of Wespeth, the affiliating congregation is to pay their pension liability to the connectional church prior to affiliation with another Wesleyan denomination.

4. The congregation affiliates with all assets and liabilities and the Wesleyan denomination guarantees the debt will be paid to creditors.
5. The denomination has the following characteristics.
 - a. Salvation by grace as a core belief.
 - b. Embraces ethnic diversity.
 - c. Has a bishop(s) who appoints clergy to congregations and a polity that treats men and women as equal in appointing clergy and all aspects of leadership within the church.
 - d. Apportions congregations and connectional bodies for mission and ministry.
 - e. Utilizes a trust clause. For the first eight years following affiliation, if a congregation discontinues, merges or leaves to be independent or join with another denomination, the real and personal property shall revert to the connectional United Methodist Church it once belonged to and after eight years to the new denomination it joined. The trust clause is triggered if the congregation decides to leave the new denomination, or it merges with another congregation, or it discontinues worship, or discontinues as a congregation.
6. The bishop/head of communion of the receiving denomination is to send a letter to the bishop of the connectional church in which the congregation presently resides outlining the denomination's polity, specifically identifying where in the polity items 2-5 are satisfied.
7. A vote of 75% by the professing members of the congregation approves affiliation with another denomination at a duly called and announced church conference presided by the district superintendent. The affiliation legislation to be voted on shall be approved by the district superintendent and shall contain items 1-6.
8. The connectional church board of stewards shall review all the materials and if everything is in order, the stewards shall vote to approve the congregation affiliating with another denomination.
9. A majority vote by the connectional church at its annual conference session is the final approval for affiliation of a congregation with another Wesleyan denomination.
10. A congregation that affiliates with a Wesleyan denomination has no claim on personal or real property of the denomination or the connectional church except for its real and personal property. A grant allocated through the global church conference (general conference) guidelines may be given to the formation of a new Wesleyan denomination that may benefit a congregation indirectly that affiliates with a Wesleyan denomination.
11. A clergy person who affiliates with an existing or new denomination or on their own has no claim on personal or real property or other benefits of the denomination or the connectional church except for their pension.

A congregation that decides to disaffiliate with The United Methodist Church and not join with another Wesleyan denomination because of theological reasons and take all real and personal property must complete the following approvals and payments before disaffiliation and the changing of the deed.

1. The connectional church board of stewards will set the financial amount for settlement that will include:
 - a. Any debt owed to the connectional church or any United Methodist entity must be paid in full.
 - b. The pension and health liability as calculated by Wespath and the connectional church.
 - c. Any apportionments and billables owed to the connectional church for the current and previous year.
 - d. An amount set by the connectional board of stewards for all real and personal property.
 - e. If there is a cemetery and the congregation is not assuming ownership of the cemetery after disaffiliation, an amount for the perpetual care of the cemetery calculated by the connectional board of stewards.

- f. Any other fees and charges set by the connectional board of stewards.
2. A theological rationale shall be drafted by the leadership of the congregation that indicates where and how the congregation's theology is different than The Connection of The United Methodist Church or the policies and practices of a connectional church. This will be reviewed and approved by the board of stewards of the congregation and the cabinet.
3. A vote of 66% by the professing members of the congregation at a duly called and announced church conference presided over by the district superintendent using the actual disaffiliation legislation that has been approved by the district superintendent and includes the above items.
4. A majority vote by the connectional church at its annual conference session.
5. A congregation that disaffiliates with The United Methodist Church has no claim on personal or real property of the denomination or the connectional church except the personal and real property that is part of the agreement.
6. A clergy person who disaffiliates with The United Methodist Church and/or leaves with a non-United Methodist or Wesleyan congregation has no claim on personal or real property or other benefits of the denomination or the connectional church except for their pension.

THE CONNECTIONAL CHURCH

A connectional church is a group of congregations that are connected for developing and carrying out the mission of the church, and for superintending congregations, laity and clergy in the area served by the connectional church. The connectional church is the primary connectional body responsible for developing leaders and congregations to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world and to connect congregations with the larger global mission of The United Methodist Church. The norm for a connectional church is to have 100 congregations or more, but because of context, geography and mission, there may be fewer congregations. The size and boundaries of connectional churches are determined by the regional church in consultation with the leaders from the region.

Because the connectional church is the primary connectional body, the regional church and global church and their agencies shall be organized to support and resource the connectional church to assist congregations in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

PURPOSE

The connectional church exists to resource congregations to develop and shape disciples to turn outward to the community and connect with the people in the community to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. An essential priority for the connectional church is the development of transformational leaders and fruitful Wesleyan congregations.

For a description of the terms disciple, fruitful Wesleyan congregation, transformational leader, and transformed world, refer to Paragraph 600 regarding the mission of The United Methodist Church.

The connectional church also assesses the urgent spiritual and missional needs of the people and communities within the area served by the connectional church and organizes ministries and strategies to meet the larger spiritual and missional needs within the area.

A connectional church may be called The United Methodist Church of (name of region) and/or The United Methodists of (name of region).

ORGANIZATION

The connectional church may be organized into districts for superintending clergy and congregations. Districts may be aligned geographically. On occasion, congregations may align across district boundaries into larger parishes or groupings for missional and contextual purposes. The board of stewards of participating congregations must approve the participation of their congregation. If congregations in adjacent connectional conferences wish to be part of the same larger parish or grouping based on missional needs or context in order to better serve the mission of The United Methodist Church, they must seek the approval of the bishops and cabinets in each conference. The participating bishops will assign a superintendent to work with the congregations and clergy that work across conference boundaries. The participating congregations and clergy in such a parish or grouping shall retain their membership with their current connectional church.

The following are the organizations of the connectional church.

Connectional Church Conference

The connectional church convenes annually in a conference session to set the vision, mission, goals, and budget for carrying out the mission of The United Methodist Church within the boundaries of the connectional church area. The annual conference session may consider legislation and resolutions related to the connectional church.

The delegates to the annual conference session shall be all of the members of the council of clergy, the lay delegates from congregations and equalizing lay delegates. Equalizing lay delegates are added to achieve a balance of clergy and lay voting at an annual conference session. The equalizing lay delegates shall be appointed by the connectional church nominating committee. Because all clergy delegates do not attend the connectional church annual conference session due to health and travel distance, the number of equalizing lay delegates is to be determined by the average registration of clergy delegates of the previous two annual conference sessions. At no time shall the registration and participation of the clergy be more than the registration of the laity. Included in the equalizing laity delegates shall be deaconesses and home missionaries from the connectional church, the connectional presidents of United Methodist Women and Men, the connectional board of stewards, and at least one youth and one young adult delegate representing each district within the connectional conference.

A special connectional church conference session may be called by a two-thirds vote of the board of stewards at the request of two-thirds of the cabinet, including the bishop. The date, time, location, and agenda for a connectional conference session shall be set together by the cabinet and board of stewards in consultation with the bishop. Legislation for the connectional conference may be submitted by a delegate or group of delegates to the connectional conference. Others who would like to submit legislation are encouraged to work through the clergy and elected lay delegates to submit legislation. If a United Methodist individual or congregation cannot identify a lay or clergy delegate to submit the legislation, it may be submitted directly and will be considered after all other legislation submitted by delegates has been voted on.

The rules of order of the connectional conference shall be developed and amended by the connectional conference session upon recommendation of the board of stewards or a committee assigned by the board of stewards to do the work.

Nominations Committee

The connectional church shall have a nominations committee of 6-18 members elected by the connectional church conference. The number of members shall be determined by the connectional

church conference. The committee assesses the gifts, abilities and experience of laity and clergy to nominate individuals who represent the diversity of the connectional church and will lead with excellence. The chairperson of the council of laity shall serve as the chair of the committee. The bishop or the bishop's designee shall serve as an ex-officio member of the nominations committee with voice, but not vote. The nominations committee shall recommend to the connectional church annual conference session the terms and classes of all elected individuals. The committee shall nominate, and the connectional church membership shall elect, the following officers and members:

1. The members of the board of stewards
2. The officers of the board of stewards, including but not limited to the chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary and chief financial officer/treasurer. The chief financial officer/treasurer, a paid position, shall be hired by the board of stewards' and nominated by the nominations committee
3. Committee members and chairpersons of any committees of the connectional church or board of stewards. Members of the board of stewards shall serve on the committees of the board of stewards in addition to those elected by the connectional church conference
4. The discernment council
5. The council of ministry and its chairperson
6. The chancellor who shall be identified by the officers of the board of stewards and the bishop.

In order to secure experience and stability, the nominations committee is to develop a policy to rotate leadership so that new people are participating in the organizational life of the connectional church.

Outcome – A gifted, engaged and diverse team of clergy and laity leaders are leading the connectional church to accomplish the vision, mission and goals of the United Methodist Church in the region.

Board of Stewards

A connectional church shall have a board of stewards of 12-23 members, of which at least 66% shall be laity. Clergy members of the board of stewards are to be ordained full members. At least one-half of the board of stewards is to be women and the board of stewards is to represent the diversity of the conference including at least 15% being adults between the ages of 18 and 35. The connectional church annual conference shall determine the number of and elect the members of the board of stewards. The bishop shall be an ex-officio member with voice but not vote and included as one of the 12-23 members of the board of stewards.

The board of stewards oversees the mission, ministry, personnel, property, finances and administration of the connectional church. The board of stewards is responsible for the following.

1. Develop a plan to equip the lay and clergy leadership to lead congregations to make disciples and grow fruitful Wesleyan congregations for the transformation of the world.
2. In consultation with the cabinet, assess the strengths, challenges and opportunities within congregations and set a plan and goals to nurture the health and fruitfulness of the congregation including connecting with the people in the community to make disciples and engage in transformational mission.
3. In consultation with the cabinet, identify and launch new faith communities, congregations and mission organizations to strengthen and expand the mission.
4. In collaboration with the bishop, assess and set a plan and goals to address the spiritual and missional needs of the connectional church area working through congregations, mission organizations, districts, ecumenical and interfaith partners, community and region-wide organizations.
5. In consultation with the bishop, identify global mission partnerships with other connectional churches.

6. Identify and implement strategies and goals to grow the connectional church younger and more diverse.
7. Develop the intercultural competence of the lay and clergy leadership and the disciples within the connectional church and work to end tribalism, xenophobia, racism, privilege and oppression.
8. Assess the needs of immigrants and identify how the connectional church and congregations will be in ministry with immigrants.
9. Prepare for and provide relief and recovery following disasters.
10. Encourage local, connectional, national and global volunteer mission teams to serve where invited by other connectional churches.
11. Oversee the personnel, finance and administration and property of the connectional church.
12. Engage legal counsel as necessary to defend the connectional church or initiate legal action to safeguard the connectional church in any matter including but not limited to property, ministry, finances and administration.

The board of stewards shall determine the appropriate committees and teams to carry out the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church in the region. The board of stewards in consultation with the nominations committee, shall appoint its members to committees of the board. When there is an opening on the board or any of its committees between annual conference sessions, the board of stewards appoints committee members who must then be nominated and elected at the next annual conference session. The board of stewards and its committees are to represent the diversity of the region.

Committees

The board of stewards shall have the following committees in addition to any others it may deem necessary to carry out the ministry and mission of the connectional church.

Executive Committee – comprised of the officers of the board of stewards, the committee chairpersons of the board of stewards and the bishop to evaluate the leadership and ministry of the bishop, review and approve the bishop’s goals, affirm what is going well, recommend actions, directions and improvement for leading the seven core responsibilities of a bishop. The executive committee shall conduct the annual review of the bishop developed by the regional episcopacy committee and shall participate in the creation of a development plan for the bishop, and shall receive regular progress reports from the bishop on the completion of the development plan.

The committee shall develop a connectional church profile that is approved by the board of stewards as part of the consultation process with the regional episcopacy committee for assignment of bishops.

Outcome – The bishop understands the hopes and needs of the connectional church, is leading well and the connectional church is progressing toward its vision, ministry and goals.

Ministry Committee(s) – one or more committees of 6-12 members for each committee including any board of stewards’ members that with the approval of the board of stewards plan and implement ministries to support congregations to develop transformational leaders to lead the congregation to make disciples of Jesus Christ and grow fruitful Wesleyan congregations for the transformation of the world. The board of stewards’ ministry committees shall also plan for the following ministry through congregations or by the connectional church.

1. Ministries to develop transformational leaders and fruitful Wesleyan congregations.
2. Ministries to engage the church in social witness and action.
3. Ministries to engage the church in local and global mission, including disaster response.
4. Ministries to make and grow disciples.

5. Ministries with ecumenical and interfaith partners.
6. Ministries to develop the faith and leadership of young people and students, particularly on college campuses.
7. Ministries to address tribalism, racism, oppression and privilege.
8. Ministries that develop the role and status of women.
9. Ministries of communications.
10. Ministries that preserve and archive history.

Outcome – New disciples of Jesus Christ are being made, disciples are growing in their faith, transformational leadership is recruited and equipped, fruitful Wesleyan congregations are growing and new ones are being started and congregations and the connectional church is engaged with its community through ministries of witness, mercy and justice.

Personnel – a group of 6-12 members including any board of stewards’ members that with the approval of the board of stewards plans and implements ministries, policies and practices that develop paid staff and volunteer leadership, create policies to hire, compensate and oversee staff, implement safe sanctuary policies, and establishes procedures to evaluate staff. The personnel committee shall also review clergy compensation and recommend equitable compensation for clergy each year to be approved by the connectional church conference.

Outcome – The paid staff are fairly compensated, growing in their abilities, are clear about their expectations and are evaluated and given feedback so that they along with the elected leadership continue to lead the connectional church and its congregations to make and grow disciples of Jesus Christ and grow fruitful Wesleyan congregations, and congregations turning outward to the community to connect with their neighbors through ministries of witness, mercy and justice.

Finance – a group of 6-12 members including any board of stewards’ members that with the approval of the board of stewards plans and implements ministries, policies and practices to grow giving and financial resources for the ministry and administration of the connectional church, ensure giving is accurately recorded and reported, ensure the finances are audited each year, recommend the budget to the board of stewards and manage the approved budget, in collaboration with the personnel committee recommend staff compensation to the board of stewards, prepare financial statements and reports for the regular meetings of the board of stewards, ensure there are safeguards for counting money and writing checks, ensure that bank statements are reviewed by someone other than the treasurer, collaborate.

Funds of the connectional church are to be invested wisely and with social responsibility so that they continue to grow assets for mission and ministry. Socially responsible investing includes but is not limited to refraining from investing in companies that produce or sell weapons of war or companies that perpetuate addictive behaviors (alcohol, gambling, and tobacco). Socially responsible investing seeks out companies engaged in social justice, environmental sustainability, and alternative energy or clean technology efforts. Congregations are to consider investing through the connectional church foundation where such foundations operate.

Outcome –the mission, ministry and administration is fully funded including 100% apportionment giving to the global and regional church and all bills are paid fully and on time, and there is transparency and accurate accounting of all the funds and finances of the connectional church.

Property – a group of 6-12 members including any board of stewards' members that with the approval of the board of stewards plans and implements ministries, policies and practices that assess and address all property needs, develop a plan to address any deferred maintenance, annually tour the parsonage(s) and recommend to the board of stewards a plan and budget to address issues, establish and recommend property use policies, ensure the property is adequately insured, review and recommend to the board of stewards all leases and capital projects, and ensure that the trust clause is included in any deeds of the congregation. It reviews property requests from congregations and may have subcommittees for individual districts or groups of districts.

Outcome – the property glorifies God, is welcoming, is available for community ministry and is enhancing and supporting the mission and ministry of the congregation.

The connectional church annual conference session and the board of stewards operate in accordance with The United Methodist Church's doctrine, teachings, theological task, Wesleyan Path and framework for organizing a connectional church (all of these are found in The Connection of The United Methodist Church). The boundaries and member churches of a connectional church are set by the regional church at the regional church conference.

One or more connectional churches form an episcopal area that is overseen by a bishop. Connectional churches that form an episcopal area are to proportion the costs of a bishop using a formula agreed upon by the boards of stewards for each participating connectional church.

Cabinet

The cabinet is composed of the district superintendents appointed by the bishop to serve the connectional church. The normal term for a district superintendent shall be up to six years, but this may be extended to no more than up to eight years at the discretion of the bishop, in consultation with the cabinet and the district where the superintendent is assigned. No superintendent shall serve for more than eight years consecutively. No clergy person shall serve as district superintendent for more than twelve years in total. There may also be an area cabinet comprised of the cabinets of two or more connectional churches in the same episcopal area to better facilitate strategic mission and appointment making.

The cabinet is an extension of the ministry and leadership of the bishop. Together, the bishop and the cabinet are the chief mission strategists for the connectional church and its districts. Superintendents oversee one or more districts and together with the bishop superintend the connectional church's clergy and congregations to accomplish the mission.

While the bishop makes appointments, the cabinet's role is essential in providing clarity about the spiritual, ministry, leadership and organizational needs of congregations, clergy and the communities. A process of consultation with congregations and clergy, and a means to assess the community shall be developed by the cabinet, promoted within the connectional church and utilized prior to a clergy person being appointed to a congregation and community.

Council of Laity

There shall be a council of laity who advises the bishop, cabinet, and board of stewards about lay leadership development and lay life in the connectional church and congregations. This advice is to be incorporated as appropriate in the practices and procedures of the bishop, cabinet and board of stewards, particularly as it relates to the development and deployment of laity for ministry. The board shall consist of 12 members, all nominated by the nominations committee and elected by lay delegates of the connectional church conference. The lay leader shall be the chair of the council of laity.

The council of laity shall be responsible for the following.

1. Review strategies for lay leadership development programs and ensure the programs are in alignment with developing lay transformational leaders, making disciples, growing fruitful Wesleyan congregations and community and world transformation.
2. Ensure that at least 50% of those leading laity training are laity.
3. Appoint equalizing delegates to the connectional church annual conference session.
4. Review and recommend anyone who seeks to be a certified lay minister.
5. Hear appeals of a lay member from a congregation who has been removed from membership for misconduct. The council of laity is to hear the appeal to determine if any procedural issues were not followed that affected the outcome of the vote by the charge conference. If there were procedural issues, the case is to be heard by another charge conference identified by the district superintendent.

Council of Clergy

The clergy in a connectional church shall be members of the council of clergy. Bishops are ordained clergy members who are consecrated for episcopal leadership. A bishop's membership is transferred to and resides with the council of bishops upon their election and consecration as a bishop. There shall be a chairperson of the council of clergy, an ordained full member elected by the clergy, who shall convene and chair the clergy membership meetings. All other offices and committees of the council shall be organized by the clergy membership of the connectional church.

The clergy membership has authority and responsibility to determine the qualities, character and proficiency of its members based on the doctrine, teachings, Wesleyan Path, mission and polity of The United Methodist Church. The clergy members are to evaluate and approve candidates for membership by a two-thirds vote. When a clergy person is approved for membership in the council of clergy, it makes them available for an appointment by the bishop. The clergy membership is also responsible for the discontinuance of clergy membership as established by their policies and process in accordance with the doctrine, teachings, Wesleyan Path and polity of The United Methodist Church.

Each council of clergy is to elect a clergy relations committee of 30 clergy members of which 9 are to be drawn by lot to hear matters related to clergy misconduct. Any of the 9 members who have a conflict of interest are recused and additional names are to be drawn by lot. The 9 clergy relations committee members who hear a case are to decide the clergy person's membership status when there are allegations of misconduct. At least 7 of the 9 clergy who hear the case must agree to the decision. If seven cannot agree either to continue or terminate clergy membership, the matter is to be reheard by a different group of clergy. The decision of the clergy relations committee is final unless the clergy person appeals the decision within 30 days.

The clergy council shall have an appeals committee of 12 clergy members of which at least 9 are to review any appeal to determine if there were procedural issues. If there were procedural issues that affected the decision, the matter is to be referred to a new hearing with different clergy members to rehear the case. If there were not sufficient procedural issues to alter the outcome, the decision of the clergy relations committee shall stand.

When there are not enough clergy persons to complete the process in a connectional church, clergy from a neighboring connectional church may assist to fulfill the process.

The decision of the clergy relations committee is final unless appealed within 30 days. The council of clergy has the sole authority to govern clergy membership.

Council of Ministry

There shall be a council of ministry to review and credential clergy members and review and approve candidates for certified lay ministry. They shall recommend to the board of stewards ordained full member clergy for guaranteed appointment.

The council shall be comprised of 16 - 20 individuals, half laity and half ordained clergy from the connectional church nominated by the nominations committee and elected by the connectional church conference. A council member serves a four-year term and may serve up to three terms upon reelection after completion of each term. The members shall be divided into four classes so that generally no more than three members leave or join the council in any given year. A member's term begins at the same time each newly elected connectional church office holder begins.

While the council of clergy reviews candidates for membership based on understanding the Bible, theology, leadership, ethics, the practice of ministry and polity, the council of ministry focuses instead on ability to lead and grow a congregation or extension ministry, application of ministry and a cultural fit with the mission and Wesleyan Path.

Once a candidate has been approved by the council of clergy, the council of ministry reviews candidates for ministry, and may approve:

1. Full members for ordination
2. Affiliate members for recognition of orders
3. Associate members for consecration
4. Local pastor members for anointing
5. Certified lay ministers for licensing.

Approved candidates will be recommended to the board of stewards for licensing. The criteria for guaranteed appointment shall be set by the board of stewards in consultation with the cabinet, council of laity and the officers of the clergy council. For full member itinerant clergy, licensing is a guarantee of appointment. An individual who is not approved has 30 days to appeal to the discernment council for a review of the process. The discernment council has authority to ensure the process was followed but not to review the character or ability of an individual.

The council of ministry also reviews the guaranteed status of itinerant ordained clergy members when after evaluations, a full member's effectiveness is in question in regards to but not limited to making disciples of Jesus Christ, growing a fruitful Wesleyan congregation, engaging the congregation in community ministry and leading the congregation to sustainability. When there is a concern raised about the leadership of a clergy person by the congregational board of steward's chairperson and/or the district superintendent, the clergy person is to develop an improvement plan. When the plan is agreed to by the chairperson of the board of stewards and the district superintendent, the plan and requirements are to be placed in the clergy person's file. The goal is for everyone to work together to assist the clergy person to return to a path of faithful and fruitful ministry.

If there are not sufficient demonstrable results determined by the board of stewards' chairperson and/or the district superintendent, the district superintendent shall refer the matter to the council of ministry. If at least 90 days before the end of the appointment year, the council concurs with the cabinet and/or congregation, the council can recommend to the bishop to discontinue the clergy person in an itinerant appointment at the end of the appointment year. The bishop must appoint the full member unless the recommendation by the council is not to appoint the full member. The decision shall be documented by the superintendent and placed in the clergy person's file. There is no action necessary by the clergy membership. The clergy person may continue as a full member of the clergy. The clergy person may find an extension ministry or work on the issues raised during the process in order to return

to itinerant ministry. The council of ministry must recommend to the connectional church board of stewards approval for the return of a full member to itinerant ministry.

The council of ministry reviews and approves candidates for certified lay ministry who have been approved and recommended by the council of laity for licensing. Certified lay ministers continue to be licensed as long as the district superintendent continues to assign the lay person to a congregation in consultation with the pastor.

Discernment Council and Addressing Clergy Misconduct

The connectional church shall have a discernment council to review matters where there is an allegation of character or ethical misconduct by a clergy person. A clergy person's appointment or employment and a clergy person's membership in the council of clergy are two distinct and different matters. The discernment council reviews a clergy person's appointment and employment within The United Methodist Church. The council of clergy is responsible for the clergy person's membership.

The purpose of the discernment council is to review an allegation forwarded by the district superintendent. The council is to help clergy pursue a path of faithful Christian discipleship and identify a just resolution. A just resolution focuses on repairing harm to people and communities, achieving accountability by making things right in so far as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. The discernment council is to hear from people in their own words and to make a decision for how the person(s) and/or church may stay on the path of following Jesus Christ and serving in The United Methodist Church.

The council shall be comprised of 12 United Methodists, 6 laity and 6 ordained clergy members nominated by the nominations committee and elected by the connectional church conference. Fifty percent of the council shall be women and the council shall represent the diversity of the region. A council member serves a four-year term and may serve up to three terms upon re-election after completion of each term. The members shall be organized into four classes so that ideally no more than three members leave or join the council in any given year. The members' term begins at the same time each newly elected connectional church office holder begins. The council shall choose their convener and set the practices for spiritual discernment that seek Godly wisdom and just resolution. Nine members at any duly called meeting shall represent a quorum. Those appointed to the discernment council shall have a deep faith, ability to listen and discern, intercultural competence and a deep love for God, people and the church.

Misconduct Affecting the Appointment of A Clergy Person

The United Methodist Church believes that grace and redemption are available to all people through Jesus Christ, but it also recognizes the need for appropriate accountability when harm has been done. A clergy person who has:

1. harmed children, youth or adults in any one or more of the following ways - spiritually, physically, emotionally, or sexually in or outside the church,
2. has used their leadership and position to further their personal aims or desires in relationships,
3. been unfaithful in their family relationships,
4. committed financial malfeasance,
5. engaged in conduct unbecoming of a clergy person,
6. undermined the ministry of another clergy person or the church,
7. engaged in harassment, or
8. discriminated against another based upon race, gender, color, national origin, status, ability, or economic condition,

is to have their discipleship and leadership reviewed. Where appropriate the clergy person shall be removed from an appointment until the issues are addressed and the church can be assured that the individual will not engage in the same behavior again. A connectional church may further elaborate and give specificity in their policies to any of the misconduct listed above.

The process for alleged misconduct by a clergy person involves two separate and distinct paths – 1) appointment and 2) membership. Appointment concerns relate to employment with The United Methodist Church, and is separate from the matter of membership. A clergy person's membership resides with the connectional church's council of clergy just as laity membership resides with a congregation and a bishop's membership resides with the council of bishops. If there are concerns about a clergy person's membership, those concerns are to be referred by the district superintendent to the council of clergy who under their policies and procedures are to review the issues and make any determination about membership.

When an allegation of misconduct has been made in writing, the district superintendent is to notify the bishop, and the bishop and cabinet shall identify someone to research the allegations to determine if the allegations have merit and identify where the specific misconduct is cited in The Connection or the policies of the connectional church. If the allegations have merit, the district superintendent is to refer the matter to the discernment council. If a secular law has been violated, the individual is to be reported to secular authorities.

The discernment council shall invite the individual who is bringing the matter before the council and the accused individual to appear before it. Each individual may bring one other person with knowledge about the matter but in no instance shall it be their attorney. The council may request the bishop to provide a representative for the church.

The discernment council may request written material prior to its gathering according to the guidelines it establishes. The council will inform those appearing before the council at least 30 days in advance of the council's meeting the process that will be followed and the particular areas of focus during the gathering. Any written materials to be used during the council's review of the matter will be provided 30 days prior to the meeting to all parties and for the members of the council. The council shall use the guidelines for holy conferencing found in paragraph 700 of The Connection and any other guidelines it establishes. It shall base its decision on The Connection of The United Methodist Church, the teachings of the church, the polity of the church and the policies of the connectional church. The council has 70 days to complete its work and recommendations once a case has been referred to them.

The council of ministry may suspend an individual with pay and benefits if the council of ministry believes it is in the best interest of individuals and/or the church for the individual to be suspended. The district superintendent and/or the chairperson of the board of stewards may request a suspension.

Discernment council meetings are not open to the public. The council may make their recommendations public when it believes transparency is warranted.

Discernment Council Decision Options

After appropriate inquiry, the discernment council shall identify one of following paths with specific dates of when items are to be completed.

1. Dismiss the matter and the individual may continue in their current role. If it is a clergy person, the clergy person may continue in the current appointment or be reappointed by the bishop.
2. The council is to identify a set of requirements to repair the harm done to individuals and/or the church. The clergy person may continue in their current appointment or be reappointed by the bishop while the clergy person fulfills the requirements. The council is to set a timeline with

specific dates as to when the requirements are to be completed and how the clergy person is to demonstrate that the requirements have been completed.

3. The council is to identify a set of requirements to repair the harm done to individuals and/or the church. The clergy person is not to continue in their current appointment or be reappointed by the bishop while the clergy person fulfills the requirements. A report is to be sent to the chairperson of the council of clergy. The council is to set a timeline with specific dates as to when the requirements are to be completed and how the clergy person is to demonstrate the requirements have been completed.
4. The council is to identify a set of requirements to repair the harm done to individuals and/or the church. The clergy person is not to continue in an appointment. A report is to be sent to the chairperson of the council of clergy with a recommendation to discontinue the clergy person's membership. The council of clergy is to address membership issues through their policies and procedures. If at any point the clergy person would like to be considered for ministry in the future, the clergy person shall have completed all of the requirements, demonstrated that they are not at risk to do future harm and begin the process of becoming a clergy person again.

Any recommendations by the discernment council for the connectional church or any of its bodies is to be given to the connectional church board of stewards for appropriate and corrective action. If corrective action involves a congregation, the discernment council shall make its recommendations to the cabinet and the congregation's board of stewards.

The cabinet shall assign a trained individual or team to work with any party that has been harmed as a support during the process so that the person understands the process, is aware of help and has access to resources to aid in an individual's or group's healing.

A clergy person may appeal the decision of the discernment council within 30 days to the council of ministry who shall also conduct a review of the matter. If the council concurs with the discernment council, there is no further appeal. The council of ministry has 30 days to hear the appeal and may modify the decision as it determines. The council on ordained ministry's decision is final.

Causes for immediate removal from an appointment and the surrendering of credentials includes the following.

1. The fourth option above has been required and the clergy person does not appeal the matter within 30 days.
2. The fourth option above has been required and upon appeal, the council of ministry concurs with the decision of the discernment council.
3. The clergy person does not fulfill the requirements according to the specific dates identified by the discernment council or under appeal by the council on ordained ministry.

Once credentials are withdrawn, the individual is not available for an appointment by a bishop in The United Methodist Church.

In each of these three instances, the chairperson of the discernment council is to refer the matter to the chairperson of the council of clergy for a review of the clergy person's membership.

The information and outcome are to be summarized and placed in the individual's file and the summary is to be made available to any United Methodist congregation, council of clergy, council of ministry and bishop interested in hiring or appointing the individual. Other denominations who seek information for hiring purposes are to be told that the individual was terminated and the summary may be released at the request of the clergy person. If at any point the clergy person would like to be considered for

ministry in the future, the clergy person shall have completed all of the requirements, demonstrated that they are not at risk to do future harm and begin the process of becoming a clergy person again.

If the discernment council and under appeal the council on ordained ministry selects either option two or three above, the chairperson of the discernment council is to refer the matter to the chairperson of the council of clergy for a review of membership. If the clergy membership through its process decides to revoke clergy membership, the clergy person is no longer eligible to be appointed by a bishop of The United Methodist Church and is to surrender their credentials.

Statute of Limitations

An instance of misconduct that occurred six or more years prior to receipt of a written allegation by a connectional church official has exceeded the statute of limitations and is not reviewable by the discernment council, except in the case of child abuse which has no statute of limitations.

Additional Organizations

The connectional church may add additional organizations to carry out the mission and ministry of the connectional church. All organizations report directly to the board of stewards except for the nominations committee, the council of clergy that is responsible for its membership, and the council of laity who each report to the connectional church annual conference. The board of stewards report directly to the annual conference session.

MINISTRY

The connectional church is the primary connectional body to lead and resource The United Methodist mission and connect congregations with the greater church and its priorities and mission. The connectional church shall be organized for the mission of The United Methodist Church: make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The connectional church's ministry is to focus on recruiting and developing lay and clergy transformational leaders to lead congregations and extension ministries to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Leaders who develop fruitful Wesleyan congregations are critical to this mission.

PERSONNEL

The bishop shall appoint district superintendents who with the bishop align congregations into districts and charges and appoint and supervise clergy and congregations.

The board of stewards shall identify the paid personnel to carry out the mission, ministry and administration of the connectional church including depending on the context, budget and mission of the connectional church. Generally, staff are hired for superintending, connectional ministries, communication, finances and benefits and any other program and ministry staff needed to carry out the mission. The executive staff shall work together to accomplish the following.

1. Deepen the spirituality and faith of lay leadership and clergy so that the connectional church is working together to continually renew and nurture their faith and the mission of the church in the world.
2. Cast a vision for making disciples and growing fruitful Wesleyan congregations or extension ministries to transform the world so that goals are established, and the mission is advanced.
3. Grow the teaching ministry of the church to increase disciples' knowledge and understanding of the scriptures, theology, church, mission and ministry.

4. Lead disciples into the world to witness, act justly and show mercy so that transformation is occurring in the people of the community and world.
5. Develop leaders within congregations or extension ministries so that leaders continue to grow in their ability to lead the mission and ministry of the church.
6. Unify the church through common values, doctrine, heritage, witness and mission so that people work together for witness, mission and ministry of the church in the world.
7. Lead the organizational life of the church so that the church is organized to fulfill the mission, grow congregational vitality, meet the budget, and complete administrative tasks on time and accurately.

The board of stewards shall ensure through its personnel committee that there are personnel policies and job descriptions for the staff of the connectional church. It shall also develop best practices for congregations to use for hiring, supervising, developing personnel policies and supporting staff to excel in serving the mission, the congregation and the community.

No member of the bishop's family may be employed as a staff member of the connectional church, serve on the board of stewards of the connectional church or serve on the regional church episcopacy committee.

The following are volunteer and paid positions within the connectional church.

District Superintendents

The district superintendents are appointed by the bishop as an extension of the ministry and leadership of the bishop. They along with the bishop are the chief mission strategists for the connectional church.

Their primary focus is to develop and supervise clergy leadership to grow fruitful Wesleyan congregations so that congregations make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Superintendents also do the following.

1. Consult with clergy and congregations about appointments and use the consultation to provide critical information for appointing clergy to congregations.
2. Convene and chair charge/church conferences.
3. Coach and mentor clergy.
4. Teach within the district about The Wesleyan Path and teachings of The United Methodist Church.
5. Develop and appoint teams to assist with the implementation of strategic mission in the district
6. Appoint circuit leaders, clergy who work with the superintendent to assist with the superintending of clergy and congregations.

As much as possible, the board of stewards is to ensure there are staff to work in collaboration with superintendents to handle issues related to the congregational matters of conflict, finances and stewardship, discontinuance of congregations and property so that superintendents may primarily focus on being mission strategists and supporting clergy and congregations to grow the mission.

Outcome - The outcome of superintending is that faith is deepening, leadership is emerging and growing, congregations are becoming more fruitful Wesleyan congregations and there is transformation in lives and communities.

Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Board of Stewards and Lay Leader

The chairperson and vice chairperson shall rotate every four years between a lay person and clergy person. The chairperson or vice chairperson of the board of stewards depending on the election cycle shall be the lay leader. The lay leader shall chair the council of laity and serve on the regional church

episcopacy committee. The chairperson and vice chairperson, one a lay person and the other a clergy person shall be elected by the annual conference upon the nomination by the nominating committee. The chairperson and the vice chairperson shall be the two representatives to the regional church episcopacy committee.

Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer

The CFO/Treasurer is hired by the board of stewards in collaboration with the bishop to oversee the finances and benefits of the connectional church and all other responsibilities as identified by the board of stewards.

Connectional Church Secretary

The Secretary is responsible for minutes of annual conference sessions and board of stewards' meetings and any other work assigned by the board of stewards. The Secretary shall be nominated by the board of stewards in consultation with the bishop and elected at the annual conference session. The secretary is included as one of the 12-23 members of the board of stewards.

Chancellor

The Chancellor is the legal officer of the bishop and the board of stewards. The bishop in consultation with the board of stewards shall nominate the chancellor for election by the annual conference session.

The board of stewards may identify additional paid and volunteer staff positions to further the mission of The United Methodist Church within the region. The board of stewards is to establish the evaluation process for all staff.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The finances and administration of the connectional church shall be overseen by the board of stewards. The board may establish committees and appoint its members to assist with the work of the board.

PROPERTY

All personal and real property of the connectional church congregations is held in trust for The United Methodist Church. The property of congregations, through the trust clause, reverts to the connectional church when a congregation closes or seeks to leave the denomination without following the steps for disaffiliation or affiliation with another Wesleyan denomination that is found in the local church property paragraph. When the trust clause is enforced the proceeds are to be invested for the mission of the church in that region. If it is the sale of property in an underserved or a low-income community, the connectional church board of stewards is to ensure the proceeds are made available to that community or another like community by investing the funds and using the proceeds to fulfill the mission of The United Methodist Church. All real estate and buildings purchased by the connectional church are to be approved by the annual conference session.

THE REGIONAL CHURCH

A regional church is comprised of three or more connectional churches working together to fulfill the mission and ministry of the United Methodist Church through its connectional churches. This may include connectional churches from all or part of a continent, nation, or area of the world. It may also be a former central conference or jurisdictional conference. The connectional churches may be contiguous or may connect through a regional church because of missional affinity.

Any new regional churches beyond the central conferences and jurisdictional conferences existing in 2020 must be approved by a 2/3 vote of each participating connectional church conference and effected by the global church conference. Regional churches may merge together upon a 2/3 vote of each merging regional conference.

Individual connectional churches may transfer to a regional church upon a 2/3 vote of the receiving regional church conference and a 2/3 vote of the joining connectional church conference.

PURPOSE

A regional church exists to resource congregations to extend the witness and carry out the mission and ministry of the United Methodist Church throughout the region. Connectional churches develop transformational leaders and grow fruitful Wesleyan congregations to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Descriptions of the terms transformational leader, disciple of Jesus Christ, fruitful Wesleyan congregation and transformed world are in the Mission of The United Methodist Church, paragraph 600.

The regional church, for the good of the mission, and to develop transformational leaders and grow fruitful Wesleyan congregations, may modify paragraphs 900 and 1000 of *The Connection* related to the connectional church or local church so that it aligns culturally and contextually with the people and ministry of the regional church.

The regional church has the authority and responsibility to:

1. Elect and assign bishops within the regional church.
2. Approve ethnic plans to strengthen and grow the diversity of the regional church.
3. Set the finance and administrative policies of the regional church.
4. Approve a budget for the regional church.
5. Apportion connectional churches of the regional church up to 4% of the apportionment connectional churches receive from their congregations.
6. Covenant with global church agencies to resource connectional churches and to extend the mission of the connectional churches.
7. Certify United Methodist seminaries within the regional church and provide grants to seminaries for the training and development of students preparing for United Methodist leadership.
8. Approve benefit and pension programs for the connectional and local churches of the regional church.
9. Approve resolutions related to matters important to the mission of the regional church and its connectional churches.
10. Determine the number of bishops in the regional church and the boundaries of episcopal areas based on missional needs and the regional church's ability to pay the salary, benefits and housing of its bishops. All bishops are paid through The United Methodist Board of Stewards who receive apportionments from regional churches for their bishops' compensation. The

United Methodist Board of Stewards may recommend to the global church conference a lower number of bishops in a region if the regional church has not paid its episcopal fund apportionments in the recent quadrennium or is unable to demonstrate its ability to pay episcopal fund apportionments in the future. If the regional church wants to increase the number of bishops, it shall make the request to the Global Board of The United Methodist Church for presentation and approval by the global church conference to ensure there are sufficient resources to fund the increase in bishops.

11. Set the boundaries of a connectional church. A congregation or a group of congregations outside the geographic boundaries of a connectional church may better fulfill the mission in connection with another connectional church. In these instances, the congregation and the affected connectional boards of stewards, bishops and cabinets may approve the change.
12. Set the maximum number of quadrenniums a bishop may serve in the same episcopal area and any term limits for bishops.

ORGANIZATION

Regional Church Conference

The regional church convenes in a conference session once every four years following the global church conference to set the vision, goals, and budget for carrying out the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church within the regional church. The delegates to the regional church conference shall include the global conference delegates and generally be twice the number of the global church delegates elected by connectional church conferences. The delegates shall be apportioned to the connectional churches using the same principles used in the global church formula. A regional church may increase the number of delegates as needed. The college of bishops shall set the dates for regional church conferences, and as practical, align the dates with other regional church conferences.

Nominations Committee

The regional church shall have a nominations committee elected by the regional church conference. The nominations committee shall include a clergy and lay person from each connectional church within the region. Each connectional church nominations committee shall nominate one clergy person and one lay person from their connectional church to serve on the regional church nominations committee. Additional members may be added by the regional church nominations committee. The college of bishops shall identify one regional church residential bishop to serve on the nominations committee and convene the committee until it elects its officers. The committee shall develop and use a process to identify nominees that represent the diversity of the regional church and that have the gifts, skills and experience to effectively fulfill their roles. The committee shall nominate the following officers and members to the regional church conference session;

1. The members of the board of stewards.
2. The officers of the board of stewards, including but not limited to the chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary and treasurer. The secretary and treasurer shall be identified by the college of bishops and may be nominated by the nominations committee.
3. Committee members of the board of stewards' committees and the regional church conference's committees. The board of stewards' members shall also be nominated and elected to committees of the board of stewards.
4. The chairpersons of any of the board of stewards' committees who shall also be one of the 18-30 members of the board of stewards.
5. The chairpersons of the regional church committees as identified in the regional church conference rules of order or policies and procedures.
6. The clergy and lay representatives to the global church nominations committee.

7. The boundaries committee.
8. The discernment council.

Regional Board of Stewards

There shall be a regional church board of stewards of 18-30 professing members of The United Methodist Church with at least 50% of the membership being laity and the stewards shall represent the diversity of the regional church. Each connectional church shall have at least one member on the board of stewards. No connectional church shall have more stewards than any other connectional church unless it is by one steward to complete a full slate of stewards.

The regional church conference shall elect the members of the board of stewards upon nomination from the nominations committee. The stewards shall be in classes and may serve four-year terms and up to three terms so that ideally no more than nine stewards leave and join the board in the same year. A term shall be counted as any portion of a quadrennium. The stewards shall approve their own bylaws. The residential bishops of the regional church shall appoint one bishop to serve as an ex-officio member with voice and vote. The bishop shall be included as one of the 18-30 members.

The regional board of stewards shall develop and recommend to the regional church conference a budget for the ministry and administration of the regional church. The regional board shall present a budget that requires no more than 4% of the apportionment received by each connectional church unless the board has other sources of income to fund the amount over the 4% apportionment. If the board desires to apportion more than 4%, each participating connectional church must approve the additional apportionment. The regional board of stewards shall ensure there is an audit of the regional church finances each year. The board of stewards shall carry out all other responsibilities as assigned by the regional church.

The primary responsibility of a regional church is to support the ministry and mission of its connectional churches, as the connectional church is called to support the mission and ministry of its local churches. Any committees of the regional church shall exist primarily to support the ministry and mission of the connectional churches.

The regional board of stewards shall have a finance committee and may have any other committee(s) necessary to carry out the work of the board of stewards.

Finance Committee – shall be comprised of one member from each of the connectional churches and any additional members needed by the committee to carry out its work. The treasurer shall be an ex-officio member with voice and vote. The residential bishops shall assign one residential bishop to serve on the committee. The finance committee has the authority and responsibility to:

1. plan and implement programs, policies and practices to receive 100% of the apportionment from the connectional churches and ensure 100% of the episcopal fund for the region is paid to The United Methodist Church Board of Stewards.
2. implement policies and practices for counting money and writing checks and ensure that bank statements are reviewed by someone other than the treasurer.
3. ensure there are safeguards for counting money and writing checks and bank statements are reviewed by someone other than the treasurer.
4. ensure accurate and transparent financial reports are provided to the regional board of stewards, college of bishops and the regional church conference and that there are safeguards for counting money and writing checks, and that bank statements are reviewed by someone other than the treasurer.
5. Invest the regional church funds wisely and with social responsibility so that they continue to grow assets for mission and ministry. Socially responsible investing includes but is not limited to

refraining from investing in companies that produce or sell weapons of war and addictive substances (alcohol, gambling, and tobacco) and seeking out companies engaged in social justice, environmental sustainability, alternative energy, and clean technology efforts.

Outcome –the mission, ministry and administration are fully funded including 100% apportionment giving to the episcopal fund and all bills are paid fully and on time, and there is transparency, accurate accounting, and socially responsible investing of all the funds and finances of the regional church.

Episcopacy Committee

The regional church shall have an episcopacy committee to assign bishops to episcopal areas within the region. The committee shall be comprised of the chairperson and vice chairperson of each connectional church board of stewards within the regional church ensuring that one is a lay person and one is a clergy person. The committee may organize itself, establish its practices, elect its officers, and report directly to the regional church conference, except for financial matters which must be approved and presented by the regional board of stewards. The following are the responsibilities of the regional episcopacy committee:

1. In collaboration with the college of bishops, identify the number and boundaries of episcopal areas and recommend these to the regional conference taking into consideration the missional needs of the regional church and the financial ability of the connectional churches to pay the salary, benefits and housing of bishops. Given the financial implications, the recommended budget for bishops must be approved by and recommended to the regional church conference by the board of stewards.
2. While a connectional conference may nominate one or more candidates for bishop, the committee may identify any other groups and caucuses who may nominate candidates to ensure an inclusive group of candidates that represent the diversity of the connectional churches within the regional church.
3. Specify any written materials to be submitted by each candidate for bishop and through the secretary of the regional church, circulate the materials to the delegates.
4. Develop the process to be used by the delegates for interviewing the candidates for bishop.
5. Identify and share with the regional conference delegates prior to the voting for bishops the current standards for character, qualities, experience, gifts and abilities to accomplish the seven core responsibilities of a bishop in Paragraph 900.
6. Consult annually with the bishops in the region to identify their gifts, abilities, passions and needs.
7. Consult with the connectional boards of stewards to identify the strengths, challenges, priorities and needs of the connectional churches before recommending assignment of bishops to episcopal areas.
8. Recommend to the regional conference the maximum number of quadrenniums a bishop may serve in the same episcopal area and any term limits for bishops.
9. Discern and recommend to the regional conference the assignments of bishops.
10. Coordinate the development of a standard evaluation for the residential bishops based on the seven roles of bishops found in paragraph 900 to be used by the connectional church yearly to evaluate the bishop. The connectional church may add additional areas to evaluate the bishop. The committee shall receive a report from the chair of the board of stewards of the bishop's final evaluation.
11. Participate in the effectiveness and grievance process for bishops found in the discernment council's section below.

12. Meet with the bishops during the quadrennium to assess the progress of the connectional church's goals and the bishop's impact for leading the mission and health of the connectional church.

Boundaries Committee

The regional church shall have a boundaries committee to assess and identify the boundaries of connectional churches. The boundaries committee membership shall be one member from each connectional church nominated by the regional church nominations committee and elected by the regional church conference, and one residential bishop assigned by the college of bishops. It shall report directly to the regional church conference.

Discernment Council and Addressing Misconduct by a Bishop

The regional church shall have a discernment council to review matters where there is an allegation of character or ethics misconduct by a bishop. A bishop's assignment or employment and a bishop's membership in the council of bishops are two distinct and different matters. The discernment council reviews a bishop's assignment and employment with The United Methodist Church. The council of bishops is responsible for the bishop's membership.

The purpose of the discernment council is to review an allegation forwarded to the council by the chairperson of the episcopacy committee and/or the chairperson of a connectional church board of stewards and/or the president of the college of bishops. The council is to help bishops pursue a path of faithful Christian discipleship and identify a just resolution in any matter of misconduct. A just resolution focuses on repairing harm to people and communities, achieving accountability by making things right in so far as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. The discernment council is to hear from people in their own words and to decide how the person (s) and/or church may stay on the path of following Jesus Christ and serving in The United Methodist Church.

The council shall be comprised of at least 12 individuals from the connectional church and must include at least one member from each of the connectional churches in the region. Any nine of the council members is sufficient to conduct a review. Half of the council shall be laity and half ordained clergy members nominated by the nominations committee and elected by the regional church conference. At least fifty percent of the council shall be women and the council shall represent the diversity of the region. A council member serves a four-year term and may serve up to three terms upon re-election after completion of each term. The members shall be organized into classes so that ideally no more than six members leave or join the council in any given year. The members' term begins at the same time each newly elected regional church office holder begins. The council shall choose their convener and set the practices for spiritual discernment that seeks Godly wisdom and just resolutions. Nine members at any duly called meeting shall represent a quorum. Those appointed to the discernment council shall have a deep faith, ability to listen and discern, intercultural competence and a deep love for God, people and the church.

Misconduct Affecting the Assignment of a Bishop

The United Methodist Church believes that grace and redemption are available to all people through Jesus Christ, but it also recognizes the need for appropriate accountability when harm has been done. A clergy person who has:

1. harmed children, youth or adults in any one or more of the following ways - spiritually, physically, emotionally, or sexually in or outside the church,
2. used their leadership and position to further their personal aims or desires in relationships,
3. been unfaithful in their family relationships,
4. committed financial malfeasance,
5. engaged in conduct unbecoming of a clergy person,

6. undermined the ministry of another clergy person or the church,
7. engaged in harassment, or
8. discriminated against another based upon race, gender, color, national origin, status, ability, or economic condition,

is to have their leadership reviewed and as appropriate removed from an assignment until the issues are addressed and the church can be assured that the individual will not engage in the same behavior again. If the allegation is against a bishop who is not serving in an assignment, the matter is to be referred to the council of bishops as a membership matter. A regional church may further elaborate and give specificity in their policies to the misconduct listed above.

The process for alleged misconduct by a bishop involves two separate and distinct paths – 1) assignment and 2) membership. Assignment concerns relate to employment with The United Methodist Church, and is separate from the matter of membership. A bishop's membership resides with the council of bishops. If there are concerns about a bishop's membership, these concerns are to be referred by the president of the college of bishops and/or the chairperson of the regional church episcopacy committee and/or the chairperson of the connectional church board of stewards to the council of bishops who under their policies and procedures are to review the issues and make any determination about membership.

When an allegation of misconduct has been made in writing, the board of stewards' chairperson in consultation with the president of the college of bishops shall identify someone to research the allegations to determine if the allegations have merit and identify the categories of specific misconduct cited in *The Connection* or the policies of the regional church. If the allegations have merit, the chairperson of the board of stewards is to refer the matter to the discernment council. If a secular law has been violated, the individual is to be reported to secular authorities.

The discernment council shall invite the individual who is bringing the matter before the council and the accused bishop to appear before it. Each individual may bring one other person with knowledge about the matter but in no instance shall it be their attorney. The council may request the president of the college of bishops to provide a representative for the church.

The council may request written material prior to its gathering according to the guidelines it establishes. The council will inform those appearing before the council at least 30 days in advance of the meeting what process that will be followed and the areas of focus for the gathering. Any written materials to be used during the council's review will be provided 30 days prior to the meeting to all parties and for the members of the council. The council shall use the guidelines for holy conferencing found in paragraph 700 of *The Connection* and any other guidelines it establishes. It shall base its decision on *The Connection* of The United Methodist Church, the teachings of the church, the polity of the church and the policies of the regional church. The council has 70 days to complete its work and decision once a case has been referred to them.

The discernment council is not conducting a trial but discerning the continued assignment and employment of a bishop. The council is to answer the question, has the bishop done anything that warrants the termination of the bishop from an assignment and employment by The United Methodist Church? It serves as a personnel review committee for the church.

The board of stewards may suspend a bishop with pay and benefits if the board believes it is in the best interest of individuals and/or the church for the bishop to be suspended.

The discernment council meetings are not open to the public. This is an employment review. The council may make their decisions public when it believes transparency is warranted.

Discernment Council Decision Options

After appropriate inquiry, the discernment council shall identify one of following paths with specific dates of when items are to be completed.

1. Dismiss the matter and the bishop may continue in their current assignment.
2. The council is to identify a set of requirements to repair the harm done to individuals and/or the church. The bishop may continue in their current assignment. The council is to set a timeline with specific dates as to when the requirements are to be completed and how the bishop is to demonstrate the requirements are completed.
3. The council is to identify a set of requirements to repair the harm done to individuals and/or the church. The bishop is not to continue in their current assignment or be reassigned while the clergy person fulfills the requirements. A report is to be sent to the chairperson of the council of bishops for their review. The council is to set a timeline with specific dates as to when the requirements are to be completed and how the clergy person is to demonstrate the requirements are completed.
4. The council is to identify a set of requirements to repair the harm done to individuals and/or the church. The bishop is not to continue in an assignment and is to submit their credentials including their consecration document as a bishop. A report is to be sent to the president of the council of bishops with a recommendation to discontinue the bishop's membership. The council of bishops is to address membership issues through their policies and procedures. If at any point the bishop would like to be considered for ordained ministry in the future, the bishop shall have completed all the requirements, demonstrated that they are not at risk to do future harm and begin the process of becoming a clergy person.

Any recommendations by the discernment council for the regional church or any of its bodies is to be given to the regional church board of stewards for appropriate and corrective action. If corrective action involves a congregation and/or a connectional church and/or global church, the discernment council shall make its recommendations to the college of bishops and the appropriate board of stewards.

The episcopacy committee in consultation with the college of bishops shall assign a trained individual or team to work with any party that has been harmed as a support during the process so that the person understands the process, is aware of help and has access to resources to aid in an individual's or group's healing.

A bishop may appeal the decision of the discernment council within 30 days to the episcopacy committee who shall conduct a review of the matter. If the episcopacy committee concurs with the discernment council, there is no further appeal. The episcopacy committee has 40 days to hear the appeal and may modify the decision as it determines. The episcopacy committee's decision is final.

Causes for immediate removal from an assignment and the surrendering of credentials includes the following.

1. The fourth option above has been required and the bishop does not appeal the matter within 30 days.
2. The fourth option above has been required and upon appeal, the episcopacy committee concurs with the decision of the discernment council.
3. The bishop does not fulfill the requirements according to the specific dates identified by the discernment council or under appeal by the episcopacy committee.

Once credentials are withdrawn, the bishop is not available for an episcopal assignment **or** an appointment by a bishop to a congregation or ministry in The United Methodist Church.

In each of these three instances, the chairperson of the discernment council is to refer the matter to the chairperson of the council of bishops for a review of the bishop's membership.

The information and outcome are to be summarized and placed in the bishop's file and the summary is to be made available to any United Methodist congregation, council of clergy, council of ministry and bishop interested in hiring or appointing the former bishop. Other denominations who seek information for hiring purposes are to be told that the individual was terminated. The summary may be released at the request of the former bishop. If at any point the former bishop would like to be considered for ministry in the future, the former bishop shall have completed all the requirements, demonstrated that there are no risks for future harm and begin the process of becoming a clergy person.

If the discernment council, or the episcopacy committee under appeal, selects either option two or three above, then the chairperson of the discernment council is to refer the matter to the chairperson of the council of bishops for a review of membership. If the council of bishops through its process decides to revoke the bishop's membership, the bishop is no longer eligible for an appointment by a bishop of The United Methodist Church and is to surrender their credentials.

Statute of Limitations

An instance of misconduct that occurred six or more years prior to receipt of a written allegation by a connectional church or regional church official has exceeded the statute of limitations and is not reviewable by the discernment council, except in the case of child abuse which has no statute of limitations.

MINISTRY

The ministry of a regional church is to elect and assign bishops to the connectional churches within the region, and resource and support the connectional churches of the regional church to carry out the mission of The United Methodist Church within their context.

The regional church may not require spending or program development by the connectional church or congregations except what is apportioned as outlined in the finance and benefits section below. It may make recommendations to the connectional churches and congregations within the region.

PERSONNEL

The board of stewards of the regional church may elect or appoint or hire individuals for the positions to carry out the mission of The United Methodist Church through the regional church. The regional church shall have at a minimum the following positions.

Secretary

The regional church secretary is responsible for recording and publishing the minutes of the board of stewards and the regional church conference and all other responsibilities as assigned by the regional church. The college of bishops may identify candidates for the position. The nominations committee nominates, and the regional church conference elects the secretary.

Treasurer

The regional church treasurer is responsible for the budget, finances and audit of the regional church and all other responsibilities as assigned by the regional church. The college of bishops may identify

candidates for the position. The nominations committee nominates, and the regional church conference elects the treasurer.

College of Bishops

The college of bishops is comprised of the residential and retired bishops elected by the regional conference. The college is to organize and elect its officers according to their policies and practices. Only the residential bishops may vote and be officers of the college of bishops. The following are the responsibilities of the college of bishops within a regional church.

1. Select the residential bishops to preside at the regional conference.
2. Recommend candidates for regional treasurer to the nominations committee.
3. Recommend candidates for regional secretary to the nominations committee.
4. In collaboration with the episcopacy committee, identify the number and boundaries of episcopal areas.
5. In consultation with the regional board of stewards, the secretary and the treasurer, set the agenda of the regional conference.
6. Assign one bishop to each of the regional church committee(s) and additional bishops if requested by the regional church.
7. Organize, prepare the worship and preside over the consecration of bishops.
8. Through the council of bishops, ensure there is a bishop from another regional church represented at all regional conferences and consecration services.
9. The residential bishops are to collaborate on strategies that develop leadership in the region to grow fruitful Wesleyan congregations to make disciples for the transformation of the world.

If there is a permanent bishop vacancy for an episcopal area prior to the normal regional conference, the college of bishops is to discern in consultation with the affected connectional church board of stewards if it is best for the college to assign an interim bishop from among retired bishops or to call a special session of the regional conference to elect a new bishop. If there is a vacancy for a period of time due to illness, sabbatical, leave of absence, the college is to assign a retired bishop as interim.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The regional church, through its board of stewards and any of its committees, shall manage its budget and administration. The regional church conference shall approve the budget and the finance and administrative policies for the regional church. The regional church conference may apportion connectional churches up to 4% of the apportionments it receives from its congregations. The regional church may use these funds to further the mission of the United Methodist Church within the regional church and/or covenant with existing general agencies or create new agencies to resource the ministry within the regional church. The regional church may raise funds from other sources for its ministry. Any apportionment above 4% must be approved by each connectional church apportioned.

PROPERTY

The board of stewards of the regional church may own property that is held in trust for the mission of The United Methodist Church. All real and personal assets belong to the board of stewards and if the regional church discontinues, the assets shall be distributed proportionally to the connectional churches based on the last five years of apportionment payment to the regional church.

THE GLOBAL CHURCH

The global church is comprised of the United Methodist congregations, connectional churches, regional churches and general agencies from around the world.

PURPOSE

The global church exists to align the entire United Methodist Church to support congregations, which are the primary mission body of the church, to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The global church further supports the mission through its connectional churches, which are the primary connectional body of the church, that develops transformational leaders and fruitful Wesleyan congregations for the transformation of the world.

Descriptions of the terms transformational leader, disciple of Jesus Christ, fruitful Wesleyan congregation and transformed world are in the Mission of The United Methodist Church, paragraph 600.

The global church may also extend the witness and ministry of the church through general agencies. The first priority of the general agencies is to work through the connectional churches and their congregations to extend the mission of The United Methodist Church.

The global church, through its global conference, approves the doctrine, teachings, vision, mission, values, and goals of The United Methodist Church. The global conference also establishes the polity of The United Methodist Church that can be applied anywhere in the world. The polity shall not restrict the ability of the connectional church to organize congregations, clergy, and laity to carry out the mission, nor shall it restrict the connectional church in determining who may serve in leadership or how they are selected.

ORGANIZATION

The global church is not a corporation and shall not be incorporated or have a headquarters or staff. It may not sue any individual or organization nor may it be sued by an individual or organization. The global church does not exist as an organization; rather it is a network of congregations, connectional churches, regional churches and general agencies that may be incorporated for the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church. The global church, through its global conference, aligns the structure and resources to support the connectional churches to work with their congregations to fulfill the mission of The United Methodist Church.

The following organizations shall carry out the mission and ministry of the global church.

Global Conference

The purpose of the global conference is to celebrate and evaluate the ministry and fruitfulness of the global United Methodist Church, cast the vision and mission, and align the church resources to the mission. The global conference is the only entity that can officially speak for The United Methodist Church.

- a. The global church gathers every four years in the global conference session. It may meet between quadrennial sessions in a special session as voted by the global conference or a two-thirds vote of the present and voting members of the council of bishops plus two-thirds of the global board of stewards. When a special session of the global conference is called, it can only consider the business for which it was called.

- b. The global conference shall meet for no more than six days, including up to two days for delegates to discuss, amend and prioritize legislation and resolutions in legislative committees.
- c. The global conference shall allow up to sixteen hours of legislative discussion and voting while in plenary session.
- d. The remaining time shall be allocated for worship, workshops and sharing on best practices, speakers, a report from The United Methodist Global Board of Stewards, a young people's address, and an episcopal address.

The delegates to the global conference shall be elected by the annual conference session of the connectional churches in a fair and open process established by the connectional churches. Connectional conferences may elect their delegations more than 18 months prior to the global conference. Delegates serve for four years from the time of their election and may be re-elected in future quadrenniums. Employees and board members of a general agency that receives funds from the global church are not eligible to serve as delegates to the global conference to prevent conflict of interest concerning budgets and spending, except for the board of stewards.

The secretary of the Global Conference shall calculate the number of delegates to be elected by each connectional conference using the most recent clergy and professing lay membership figures reported by the local congregations to the connectional conference and from the connectional conference to the General Council on Finance and Administration or its successor through their conference journals, as follows:

1. One clergy delegate for the first 375 clergy members of the connectional conference and one clergy delegate for each additional 375 clergy members or major fraction thereof, and
2. One clergy delegate for the first 26,000 members of local churches of the connectional conference and one clergy delegate for each additional 26,000 local church members or major fraction thereof, and
3. A number of lay delegates equal to the total number of clergy delegates authorized as above.
4. Every connectional conference, missionary conference, and provisional annual conference shall be entitled to at least one clergy and one lay delegate.
5. The minimum number of delegates shall be 600 and the maximum number of delegates shall be 1,000. Should the computations provided in the paragraph result in a figure below the prescribed minimum or above the prescribed maximum for delegates, the Commission on the Global Conference shall be authorized to remedy the situation by adjusting up or down the numbers of clergy and laity members of the annual conference necessary to entitle an annual conference to elect delegates. Any such adjustment is to be proportionally the same for the two factors.

Legislation for the global conference may be submitted by a connectional church, one or more delegates to the global conference, affiliated organizations, or any individual professing member of The United Methodist Church. New or amended teachings of the church shall be submitted by the council of bishops. The Global Board of The United Methodist Church shall submit the budget for the church. Legislation submitted by an individual professing member other than a delegate, except for teaching legislation by the council of bishops or the budget submitted by the Global Board of Stewards of The United Methodist Church, shall be considered after all legislation submitted by the delegates is acted upon.

The global conference is to prioritize legislation through its agenda committee, and only consider within the sixteen hours allotted for legislation during the plenary session legislation that aligns with the mission of the United Methodist Church and advances the work of the church globally. The global conference may use a consent calendar that may be included in the rules of order of the global conference.

Resolutions to the global conference are calls to action by and to the church. Resolutions may only be submitted by delegates. Upon their approval, resolutions are official expressions of The United Methodist Church and valid for an eight-year period of time. They are to be printed in a Book of Resolutions that contains all valid resolutions and made available on the official website of The United Methodist Church. Resolutions may be acted upon during the sixteen hours of full session of the global conference and require a 60 percent vote for approval.

The following are the responsibilities of the global conference:

1. Approve the global mission, goals, and teachings of the church.
2. Approve changes to *The Connection* and resolutions for the church.
3. Approve the rules, policies and procedures for global conference sessions.
4. Establish the organizational framework and purpose of the local, connectional and regional churches in such a way that it is applicable anywhere in the world. The framework and authority of the global conference is limited to these areas:
 - a. *Local church* - charge or church conference, nominations committee, and board of stewards, without limiting a congregation's ability to add committees or impose additional structures. Lay membership, which may only include three types - baptized, professing, and affiliate members - without restricting who may join or serve in leadership of a congregation. This work is left to the congregation.
 - b. *Connectional church* – connectional conference, nominations committee, board of stewards and its committees, cabinet, council of laity, council of ministry, council of clergy and discernment council without imposing additional structures or limiting the connectional church's ability to add committees or agencies. Clergy membership, which may only include four types - full, associate, affiliate and local pastor members - without restricting who may be a clergy member. This work is left to the connectional church organizations.
 - c. *Regional Church* – regional conference, nominations committee, board of stewards, episcopacy committee, boundaries committee, finance committee, college of bishops and discernment council without imposing additional structures or limiting their ability to add committees and other bodies.
5. Establish the type of membership, both lay and clergy, and the general roles and responsibilities of each without limiting the clergy membership to determine qualifications and character for clergy members nor limiting the connectional church or cabinet to determine the qualifications and character of clergy who may be appointed.
6. Initiate and fund, through apportionments, strategies to extend the mission of The United Methodist Church beyond its present communities and regions.
7. Set the retirement age for itinerant clergy, including bishops and clergy staff serving with general agencies and the global, regional, and connectional churches.
8. Approve the budget and apportionment to the connectional churches.
9. Approve new regional churches.
10. Approve regional church boundaries.
11. Approve new missional and provisional connectional churches along with the budget and timeline for financial support. A missional connectional church is the initial step in forming a connectional church that includes assigning a bishop to oversee the starting and organizing of new congregations. A provisional connectional church is a missional conference that has sufficiently started new congregations and is ready to start conducting annual conference sessions. The college of bishops of the regional church shall determine when to recommend the status of mission, provisional and full connectional church to the global conference.
12. Approve special offerings and appeals for ministries and projects initiated or supported by the global church.

13. Approve full communion and autonomous affiliate relationships as negotiated by the council of bishops. The United Methodist Church develops official ecumenical relationships to continue to broaden, deepen and further the Christian witness in the world.
14. Approve autonomous affiliate relationships with connectional churches or regional churches of The United Methodist Church in 2024. A United Methodist connectional church or regional church may seek autonomous affiliate church relationship with The United Methodist Church through a request to the council of bishops. The council of bishops will negotiate any new relationships and present a recommendation to the 2024 global conference for amendment or approval. The connectional church annual conference or regional church conference must approve such a relationship by a 66% of present and voting delegates. The council of bishops shall assign a bishop to work with the connectional church to ensure congregations that want to remain United Methodist will connect with a United Methodist connectional church and the council of bishops shall assign a bishop to work with the regional church to ensure connectional churches or congregations that want to remain with The United Methodist Church will be connected to a new regional and/or connectional church.

Commission on the Global Conference

There shall be a commission on the global conference to plan and organize the global conference and its purpose and responsibilities shall be defined in the rules of order for the global conference.

The voting members of the commission shall be elected quadrennially by the global conference and shall consist of twenty-five members as follows: one person from each regional conference, one young adult, one youth, the chairperson of the host committee, and additional at-large members necessary to reach twenty-five members. The at-large members shall be allocated to reflect the proportionate membership based upon combined clergy and lay membership of the church.

Nominations Committee

The global church shall have a nominations committee comprised of one lay person and one clergy person from each regional church. Each regional church nominations committee shall identify one layperson and one clergyperson from their regional church to serve on the global church nominations committee. The council of bishops shall identify five residential bishops to serve on the nominations committee. The committee shall develop and use a process to identify nominees that reflect the diversity of the global Methodist connection and that have the gifts, skills and experience to effectively fulfill their role. The committee shall nominate the following officers and members;

1. The members of the board of stewards.
2. Committee members in addition to the board of stewards who serve on the committees of the board of stewards.
3. The committees of the global church conference as outlined in the rules and policies of the global church conference.
4. The global discernment council.

Global Board of Stewards of The United Methodist Church

The Global Board of Stewards of The United Methodist Church exists to focus the church and its resources to support disciples of Jesus Christ to make disciples and to be in service with the people in their communities around the world. The Global Board of Stewards:

1. is to carry out the global mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church including but not limited to: witness, mission, discipleship, justice, advocacy, diversity and inclusion, relief and recovery, education, women's ministry, men's ministry, young people's ministry, information and public relations, archives and history, administration, statistics and finances.

2. shall receive apportioned funds from the connectional churches as apportioned by the global conference to carry out the mission and ministry of the global church.
3. may also covenant with existing general agencies to carry out the mission and ministry of the global church. There shall be at least three general agencies of the global church, Wespath (pension and benefits programs for the church), United Methodist Publishing House, and United Methodist Women, which do not receive apportioned funding by the global conference. Additional agencies may continue and be funded through the Global Board of Stewards of The United Methodist Church to carry out the ministry and work of the church. General agencies may also covenant and be funded by regional and connectional churches.
4. is the sole entity that may receive global church apportioned funds directly from connectional and regional churches.

The global board of stewards shall be governed by a board of stewards of 24-35 members of the United Methodist Church elected by the global conference. In addition to the elected members, the council of bishops shall assign 5 bishops to the board of stewards who shall be ex-officio members with voice and vote.

The members of the global board of stewards are to possess the following attributes.

1. A deep and abiding faith in God,
2. Active membership in the United Methodist Church for five years or more with a clear track record of fruitful engagement in the life of the church.
3. Demonstrated emotional intelligence including but not limited to self-awareness, awareness of the social environment, ability to manage one's own emotions, and ability to facilitate group conversations so that people feel heard and valued,
4. Demonstrated intercultural competence and proficiency to lead so that organizations become more interculturally competent and work to end prejudice and privilege.
5. Demonstrated leadership competencies and experience in complex organizational systems that lead people to make faithful and fruitful progress toward common goals.
6. Expertise and successful experience in two or more of the following areas: board governance, management, program development, advocacy, human resources, public relations, law and/or accounting.

At least 66% of the 24-35 board members shall be laity, at least 50% women, at least 50% of Asian, African, Native American or Hispanic/Latino descent, at least 10% shall be between the ages of 18-35, and at least 40% shall be from connectional churches outside the United States.

In order to secure experience and stability, the members of the global board of stewards shall be elected into three classes, one of which shall be elected each quadrennium to one quadrennium term, so that ideally not more than one-third of the members leave or join the board the same quadrennium. Members of the global board of stewards may serve a maximum of three terms.

In the event of a vacancy, the global board of stewards, in consultation with the council of bishops, may fill the vacancy. If a board member is elected to fill a vacancy, the remainder of that term will constitute one term. Interim board members must be elected by the next global conference to continue serving on the board.

The global board of stewards shall elect its own officers, including hiring a treasurer/Chief Financial Officer and secretary for the board of stewards and the global conference. The secretary must also be elected by the global conference. The board shall establish its committees, boards of advisors and teams.

The global board of stewards shall organize according to the laws of where it is headquartered. The board may have additional offices anywhere in the world. The board shall establish its by-laws and policies. It may establish additional agencies, committees, and teams to do the work of the board and may include persons that are not members of the board of stewards.

The global board of stewards and its committees shall operate in accordance with the doctrine, teachings, theological task, Wesleyan Path and framework for organizing the global church of The United Methodist Church. .

The primary work of the global board of stewards of The United Methodist Church is to align the resources of the church to support the mission and ministry of the connectional churches, which is to equip transformational leaders to make disciples of Jesus Christ and grow fruitful Wesleyan congregations for the transformation of the world.

The global board of stewards has the following responsibilities, for which it may hire staff to accomplish directly or develop agreements with existing general agencies.

1. Evaluate the progress of The United Methodist Church and recommend global mission goals, strategies and budget to the global conference to resource and advance the mission of The United Methodist Church around the world.
2. Develop and recommend to the global conference a plan for growing the diversity and inclusion of the church, so that the connectional churches and congregations are growing younger and more diverse.
3. Develop and recommend to the global conference a global plan for addressing xenophobia, tribalism, racism, immigration, the marginalization of people, access to health care, and the care for all people created by the Creator.
4. Develop and recommend to the global conference how the church will care for God's creation.
5. In collaboration with general agencies, develop and recommend programs, outcomes, and budget for:
 - a. Archives and history
 - b. Church and society
 - c. Global ministries, including UMCOR
 - d. Communications
 - e. Discipleship, including ministries with young people
 - f. Episcopal leadership including ecumenical relationships
 - g. Finance and administration
 - h. Higher education
 - i. Religion and race
 - j. Role and status of women
 - k. United Methodist Men
 - l. In collaboration with the following agencies that do not receive global church apportionments, coordinate with and report to the global conference their program and outcomes: The United Methodist Publishing House, United Methodist Women and Wespath.
6. Develop and maintain one website, rather than multiple agency websites, that provides information and resources in the following areas. The information and resources should draw upon the materials of general agencies, connectional churches and congregations and ensuring the materials respect the different cultures and ethnicities of The United Methodist Church.
 - a. Resources to recruit and develop transformational leaders.
 - b. Resources to make and grow disciples.

- c. Resources to grow the vitality of congregations, focusing on growing worship, small groups, making new disciples, ministry with young people, engaging in community mission and generous giving.
 - d. Resources for witness, justice and mercy ministry in communities and around the world.
 - e. Resources to address xenophobia, tribalism, racism, oppression and marginalization including ministries and advocacy with immigrants.
 - f. Resources to develop intercultural competence.
 - g. Resources for advocacy and justice ministry in communities, regions and nations.
 - h. Resources to communicate the story and mission of United Methodism through congregations and connectional churches.
 - i. Resources for ecumenical ministry in communities and regions of the church.
 - j. Resources for the care of God’s creation.
 - k. Resources for stewardship and financial ministry.
 - l. Resources for recording, preserving and telling the history of congregations.
 - m. Best practices resources for organizing the administrative structure of connectional churches and congregations.
7. Develop agreements as needed with existing agencies for services to resource and extend the mission of The United Methodist Church.
 8. Set the salaries, housing and benefits for the bishops and the general secretary of the Global Board of Stewards of The United Methodist Church. The salary, housing and benefits and retirement age for the general secretary and bishops are to be comparable.

The global board of stewards shall have the following committees. It may also create additional committees, teams, and advisory boards to effectively carry out its work.

Executive Committee – comprised of the officers of the board of stewards, the committee chairpersons of the board of stewards and the general secretary to evaluate the leadership and ministry of the general secretary, review and approve the general secretary’s goals, affirm what is going well, recommend actions, directions and improvement for leading the seven core responsibilities of a general secretary.

Outcome – The general secretary understands the hopes and needs of the global church, is leading well and the global church is progressing toward its vision, ministry and goals.

Ministry Committee – one or more committees with the board’s approval, plans and implements ministries to develop and support the connectional church to develop transformational leaders to lead the congregation to make disciples of Jesus Christ and grow fruitful Wesleyan congregations for the transformation of the world. The board’s ministry committee(s) shall also plan for the following ministry that may not be done through a general church agency on behalf of the denomination.

1. Ministries to engage the church in social witness and action.
2. Ministries to engage the church in local and global mission, including disaster relief.
3. Ministries to make and grow disciples.
4. Ministries to develop faith and leadership of young people and students, particularly on college campuses.
5. Ministries to address tribalism, racism, oppression and privilege.
6. Ministries that develop the role and status of women.
7. Ministries of communication.
8. Ministries that preserves and archives history.

Outcome – The United Methodist Church is growing younger and more diverse in each region of the world. New disciples of Jesus Christ are being made, disciples are growing in their faith,

transformational leadership is recruited and equipped, fruitful Wesleyan congregations are growing and new ones are being started and ministries of witness, mercy and justice are transforming lives and communities around the world.

Personnel Committee – With the approval of the board of stewards, plans and implements ministries, policies and practices that develop and support paid staff of the boards and agencies of the global church, and the policies to hire, compensate, evaluate and oversee staff of the global board of stewards. As much as possible, the personnel policies of general agencies are to align.

Outcome – The paid staff are fairly compensated, growing in their abilities, are clear about their expectations and are evaluated and given feedback so that they along with the elected leadership continue to lead the church to make and grow disciples of Jesus Christ and grow fruitful Wesleyan congregations, and turn the church outward to the world to connect with people through ministries of witness, mercy and justice.

Finance Committee – With the approval of the board of stewards, plans and implements ministries, policies and practices to grow giving and financial resources for the ministry and administration of the global church, ensure giving is accurately recorded and reported, ensure the finances are audited each year, recommend the budget to the board and manage the approved budget, in collaboration with the personnel committee recommend staff compensation to the board, prepare financial statements and reports for the regular meetings of the board, ensure there are safeguards for counting money and writing checks, and ensure that bank statements are reviewed by someone other than the treasurer.

Funds of the global board of stewards are to be invested wisely and with social responsibility so that they continue to grow assets for mission and ministry. Socially responsible investing includes but is not limited to refraining from investing in companies that produce or sell weapons of war or addictive substances (alcohol, gambling, and tobacco) and seeking out companies engaged in social justice, environmental sustainability, alternative energy, and clean technology efforts. It is strongly encouraged that most of the reserve funds of the global board are to be invested through Wespath.

Outcome –the mission, ministry and administration are fully funded, all bills are paid in full and on time, and that there is transparency and accurate accounting of all the funds and finances of the church's resources.

Property Committee – With the approval of the board of stewards plans and implements ministries, policies and practices for property owned by the board that assesses and addresses all property needs, develops a plan to address any deferred maintenance, ensures property is adequately insured, reviews and recommends to the board all leases and capital projects, and ensures that the trust clause is included in any deeds of property owned by the board.

Outcome – The property is welcoming and is enhancing and effectively supporting the mission and ministry of the board.

Global Discernment Council

There shall be a global discernment council. The global discernment council shall consist of 12 members and four alternates elected by the global conference. The council shall have at least six female members, six laity members and five members from connectional churches outside the United States. The global discernment council shall develop its rules, policies and practices and elect its own officers. Any nine members at a duly called meeting shall serve as a quorum.

The members of the global discernment council are to possess the following attributes.

1. A deep and abiding faith in God, coupled with demonstrated Godly wisdom.
2. Active membership in the United Methodist Church for five years or more with a clear track record of fruitful engagement in the life of the church, .
3. Demonstrated emotional intelligence including but not limited to self-awareness, awareness of the social environment, ability to manage one's own emotions, and ability to facilitate group conversations so that people feel heard and valued,
4. Demonstrated intercultural competence and proficiency to lead so that organizations become more interculturally competent and work to end prejudice and privilege.
5. Demonstrated leadership competencies and successful experience in complex organizational systems.
6. Advanced understanding of church governance
7. The ability to be impartial

In order to secure experience and stability, the members of the global discernment council shall be elected into three classes, one of which shall be elected each quadrennium to one quadrennial term, so that ideally not more than one-third of the members leave or join the board the same quadrennium. Any portion of service of one quadrennium term shall constitute one term of service. Members of the global board of stewards may serve a maximum of three terms.

The global discernment council shall review and discern any action taken by the global conference, a regional conference, or a connectional conference to ensure it is in harmony with paragraphs 800, 900, and 1000 of *The Connection*. The global discernment council shall not consider parliamentary procedure which is to be resolved according to the rules of the voting body. Nor is it to consider personnel matters which are handled by the connectional church or regional church. Matters may be referred to the connectional conference by a 1/3 vote of the global conference, a regional conference, or a connectional conference.

If an action reviewed by the global discernment council does not comply with *The Connection*, the role of the global discernment council is to help a body accomplish its desired outcome. The council may explain how an action does not comply, what must occur for the action to comply, or the changes to *The Connection* would be necessary for the action to be in compliance. Any matter not in compliance cannot be implemented until the issues are appropriately addressed.

When a global, regional or connectional conference refers a question(s) to the global discernment council, the secretary for the conference shall send the question(s), those who are a party to the question, and the minutes pertaining to the question within 20 days to the global discernment council. Briefs may be submitted on the question(s) within 30 days of the close of the conference by those who are a party to the question and copy all who are a party to the question. If no briefs are submitted, the question shall not be reviewed by the global discernment council. Each party may submit one additional brief in reply to other's briefs within 20 days of the conference.

The global discernment council shall seek Godly wisdom for the church as it reviews the written recorded action by a body and determine if it is in harmony with paragraphs 800, 900, and 1000 of *The Connection*.

Any decisions of the global discernment council are final and shall be posted on UMC.org.

Additional General Agencies

There may be additional general agencies including existing agencies or newly developed agencies. These agencies may develop services and financial covenants with the Global Board of The United

Methodist Church, regional churches and connectional churches. Present agencies may merge with other United Methodist general agencies including merging with the Global Board of The United Methodist Church. If any general agency dissolves, the assets are to be given to the Global Board of The United Methodist Church or to another United Methodist agency approved by the Global Board of The United Methodist Church. General agencies in addition to the Global Board of The United Methodist Church may develop their own by-laws, policies and nominate and elect their own board of directors to oversee their mission. Any United Methodist Church general agency receiving apportionment funds through the Global Board of The United Methodist Church shall have a diverse and global board unless they are only resourcing particular regional and connectional churches. When this is the case, the directors of the general agency are to be diverse and from the regional church(es) the general agency is serving. The agencies are to submit a yearly report to the Global Board of The United Methodist Church outlining outcomes achieved, the agency's impact related to the mission of The United Methodist Church, transformation that occurred through their ministry, audited financial statement and planned outcomes and impact for the next year. To prevent conflicts of interest regarding funding and authority of a general agency, delegates to the global conference may not be board members or employees of general agencies.

The following global church agencies if they choose to continue shall through 2022 continue to receive global church apportionments through allocations determined by the Global Board of the United Methodist Church proportionate to what would have been their global church apportionment in 2021 as budgeted by GCFA.

- a. Council of Bishops including ecumenical ministry and relationships
- b. General Commission on Communication
- c. General Board of Church and Society
- d. General Board of Global Ministries
- e. General Board of Discipleship
- f. General Board of Higher Education
- g. General Commission of Religion and Race
- h. General Commission on the Role and Status of Women
- i. General Commission on Archives and History
- j. General Council on Finance and Administration and its successor
- k. General Commission on United Methodist Men

In 2023 and beyond, they may continue as an agency and receive global conference apportioned funds as covenanted with the Global Board of The United Methodist Church. The general agencies may also receive funds from regional churches, connectional churches and congregations for ministries, projects and services to these churches.

The general council on finance and administration and the connectional table shall continue until the Global Board of The United Methodist Church is organized under a new Board of stewards and at such time GCFA shall dissolve and all assets be given to the Global Board of Stewards of The United Methodist Church.

The following general agencies that do not receive general church apportionments continue as general agencies governed according to their by laws and policies. They are to provide a written report each year to the Global Board of The United Methodist Church.

- l. The United Methodist Publishing House
- m. United Methodist Women
- n. Wespath

MINISTRY

The mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Primary to this mission is turning the church outward to be in ministry with the people in the communities where congregations are located and developing new mission opportunities in communities currently not served by a United Methodist congregation. The mission depends on developing transformational leadership to serve in and through congregations and extension ministries and to grow the health and vitality of congregations.

PERSONNEL

The Global Church because it does not exist as an organization has no paid personnel. Staff needed for staffing the global church conference shall be staff hired and supervised by the staff of the Global Board of Stewards of The United Methodist Church. The secretary for the global church conference is the secretary for the Global Board of The United Methodist Church.

Council of Bishops

Bishops elected by regional churches lead the global church collectively through the council of bishops and individually by leading an episcopal area.

The council of bishops consists of the residential, retired and any bishops under special assignment. Bishops' membership is in the council of bishops. All bishops have voice in the council and their college meetings and residential bishops have the authority to vote on all matters before the council or college of bishops. Bishops lead an episcopal area that may be made up of one or more connectional churches and the bishops serve together to lead the global church. Bishops also oversee connectional churches, the teachings of the church and the ecumenical ministry of the church.

Bishops are ordained full members of the church and are held to the same standards as all clergy of the church.

The council of bishops and colleges of bishops shall determine their policies and practices to govern their membership, meetings and work. The residential bishops (bishops that oversee an episcopal area of one or more connectional churches) of the church have authority to carry out the following.

1. Appoint clergy to itinerant and non-itinerant appointments and laity, deaconesses, home missionaries and certified lay ministers, to ministries in their episcopal areas in consultation with the cabinet after there has been consultation with the clergy and congregations and assessment of the community needs. The bishop may consult with others to make effective appointments that increase the health and fruitfulness of the congregation to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
2. In consultation with the board of stewards of the connectional church, organize and oversee the staff of a connectional church to:
 - a. Accomplish the mission – to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
 - b. Develop lay and clergy transformational leaders to grow fruitful Wesleyan congregations.
 - c. Extend witness, justice and mercy ministries throughout the region.

The board of stewards may hire executive staff to oversee administrative and programmatic ministry of the connectional church to allow the bishop to focus on the vision, spiritual health, and appointment ministry of the connectional church.

3. With the cabinet, and in consultation with and approval of the connectional board of trustees, determine the districts of the connectional church within the budget approved by the connectional church.
4. With the cabinet, and in consultation with the affected congregations, align congregations into pastoral charges. A pastoral charge is one or more congregations overseen by a pastor.
5. Preside during global, regional, and connectional conferences.

The following responsibilities the full council may participate in, not only the residential bishops.

6. Negotiate the covenants for full communion and autonomous affiliate relationships with ecumenical partners and recommend the covenants to the global conference for approval.
7. Review, modify, or develop new teaching for the church in consultation with United Methodist theologians and recommend them to the global conference. Other organizations and bodies may recommend teachings and modifications to the council of bishops.
8. Establish and, from time to time, evaluate the services for ordering the life and ministry of the church including services of commissioning, ordination and consecration, as well as baptism, membership, weddings and funerals.

There shall be parity between the bishops who serve within the United States and those who serve outside the United States. The number of bishops shall be determined by the regional churches in a manner each regional church considers, taking into account the mission and needs of the regional church. While a regional church conference may request additional bishops, any bishops above their present number must be approved by the global conference for budgeting purposes.

The salary, housing and benefits of the bishops shall be apportioned to the regional churches for the bishops within their regional church. Because bishops have both residential and general superintending responsibilities and travel varies in different regions of the world, the travel for residential bishops and expenses for retired bishops shall be apportioned across the church.

The office expenses and support staff for a bishop will be paid for by the episcopal area where the bishop presides.

Grants for the salary, housing, benefits, and office (office budget is the amount budgeted for 2021) for bishops outside of the United States shall be granted by the global board of The United Methodist Church upon request of a connectional church outside the United States. These grants shall be phased in until connectional churches outside the United States are paying 70% of their cost for bishops. The grants shall be 2021-2022 – 100%, 2023 – 90%, 2024 – 70%, 2025-2026 – 50%, 2027 and beyond – 30%.

During a quadrennium, regional churches throughout the church that do not pay their full apportioned amount for bishops, including both the general episcopal fund for bishops travel and retired bishops expenses, and the regional church bishops' episcopal fund for residential bishops salary, benefits and housing, their regional church will be reduced by one or more bishops corresponding to the number of bishops or fraction thereof that was not given by the regional church to the general episcopal fund and the regional bishops episcopal fund.

The council of bishops is also responsible for the discontinuance of bishops' membership through procedures established by council of bishops' policies and procedures in accordance with the doctrine, teachings, Wesleyan Path and polity of The United Methodist Church. Any bishop who is being considered for discontinuance of membership has the right to be heard by a committee.

The council of bishops is to elect an episcopal relations committee of bishops of which 9 are to be drawn by lot to hear matters related a bishop's misconduct. Any of the 9 bishops who have a conflict of interest

are recused and additional names are to be drawn by lot. The 9 episcopal relations committee members who hear a case are to decide the bishop’s membership status when there are allegations of misconduct. At least 7 of the 9 bishops who hear the case must agree to the decision. If seven cannot agree either to continue or terminate a bishop’s membership, the matter is to be reheard by a different group of bishops. The decision of the episcopal relations committee is final unless the bishop appeals the decision within 30 days.

The council of bishops shall have an appeals committee of 12 clergy members of which at least 9 are to review any appeal to determine if there were procedural issues. If there were procedural issues that affected the decision, the matter is to be referred to a new hearing with different bishops to re-hear the case. If there were not sufficient procedural issues to alter the outcome, the decision of the episcopal relations committee shall stand.

The decision of the episcopal relations committee is final unless appealed. The council of bishops has the sole authority to govern a bishop’s membership. If a bishop’s membership is revoked, the bishop is no longer a bishop or clergy person in The United Methodist Church.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION - APPORTIONMENTS

As United Methodists we affirm Acts 2:44-45 and we share resources in common. The apportionment system is designed to share resources so that the mission may be carried out in all communities and in all parts of the world. Apportionments come from the offerings received each week from United Methodists and congregations. The global church and regional church apportion the connectional church. The connectional church, the primary connectional body, is responsible for raising global and regional church apportionments. In many cases presently, the connectional church is being apportioned 25% or more of their apportioned income from congregations which is weakening the mission. To strengthen and further develop transformational leadership and fruitful Wesleyan congregations, there will be a maximum apportionment amount totaling 13% of a connectional church’s apportionment receipts from congregations. The 13% will be distributed according to the following formula. Apportionments shall be paid by the connectional church as it receives what it apportions congregations.

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| 1. Global church apportionment for the global mission ¹ | 6% |
| 2. Regional church for agencies, seminary support and administration | 4% |
| 3. Global Church episcopal fund for regional church bishops | (estimate 3%) |
| Total percent apportioned to connectional churches | 13% |

The percentages will be phased in between 2021 and 2026.

Apportionments	Present (average)	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Global Church	25%	15%	13%	10%	8%	7%	6%
Regional Church	0%	0%	2%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Central and jurisdictional church	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

¹ Includes episcopal fund for travel for all bishops, retired bishops’ benefits and meeting

Global church episcopal fund for residential bishops apportioned to the connectional churches based on the actual costs of the bishops within their regional church (estimated to be 3%)	0%	0%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
TOTAL	26%	19%	18%	17%	15%	14%	13%

PROPERTY

The global church does not own property, but agencies, regional churches, connectional churches and congregations may own property. All property shall be held in trust for the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church. Any existing real and personal property and any new real and personal property purchased with money raised through offerings, grants, bequests and apportionments is included in this trust clause. Real property are buildings and personal property are furnishings, bank accounts, invested funds, and all other money. Real and personal property shall be held in trust for the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church. If a body is discontinued and is not merged with another United Methodist body or organization, once all debt and pension and benefit liabilities are paid, the assets shall be distributed in the following manner.

- a. The real and personal property of a congregation, district or mission institution of a connectional church shall go to the connectional church.
- b. The real and personal property of a connectional church shall go to the regional church.
- c. The real and personal property of a regional church shall go to the connectional churches proportionally based on the last five years of apportionments given to the regional church. If there are no connectional churches, the property shall go to the Global Board of The United Methodist Church.

The real and personal assets of a general church agency shall go to another church agency with similar mission or the Global Board of The United Methodist Church.

Open Meetings

In the spirit of openness and accountability, all meetings of councils, boards, agencies, commissions, and committees of the global church, including subunit meetings and teleconferences, shall be open. Regardless of local laws or customs, all participants shall be notified at the beginning of any meeting if the meeting is being recorded electronically and of the intended use of such recording. Portions of a meeting may be closed for consideration of specific subjects if such a closed session is authorized by an affirmative public vote of at least three-fourths of the voting members present. The vote shall be taken in public session and recorded in the minutes. Documents distributed in open meetings shall be considered public.

Great restraint shall be used in closing meetings; closed sessions should be used as seldom as possible. Subjects that may be considered in closed session are limited to real estate matters; negotiations, when general knowledge could be harmful to the negotiation process; personnel matters; issues related to the

accreditation or approval of institutions; discussions relating to pending or potential litigation or collective bargaining; communications with attorneys or accountants; deployment of security personnel or devices; and negotiations involving confidential third-party information. Meetings of the personnel committee are to be closed meetings. While it is expected that the global conference, the discernment council, the council of bishops and the college of bishops will live by the spirit of this paragraph, each of these bodies is governed by its own rules of procedure. Any vote taken in a closed session must be reported immediately unless people need to be notified before the results of the vote are released. In such cases, the decision is to be released as soon as the appropriate people have been contacted.

The regional, conference and local church are encouraged to develop open meeting policies.

