

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
UNITED METHODIST HANDBOOK

LET'S GO
FISHING

MAKING DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST
FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.
The people of The United Methodist Church®

COMMUNICATIONS
United Methodist Communications

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



“I hope this United Methodist Handbook will be a helpful tool and guide for exploring our connection’s amazing resources.”

DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I greet you as president of the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church. I hope this United Methodist Handbook will be a helpful tool and guide for exploring our connection’s amazing resources.

We United Methodists are a very diverse people. We seek to be inclusive of all who join in the work of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Our differences in culture, language, worldview and experience can sometimes result in very different needs, priorities and ideas. Yet, as John Wesley said, “Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion?”

Through more than 40,000 congregations in 133 annual conferences around the world, God is continually at work, making disciples of us. Like the disciples who experienced the day of Pentecost, a sense of awe comes over us when we witness God performing signs and wonders through us. As believers united in Christ, we know God calls us to share. Together, we praise God and demonstrate God’s goodness to everyone (Acts 2:47).

As United Methodists, we are not in ministry on our own. We are part of a worldwide connection that is available to serve in partnership with us. We are able to do so much more together than we ever could do alone. As we work to eliminate the deaths of children from malaria, plant new churches around the world, educate the next generation of principled leaders, respond in the midst of disaster and deploy missionaries from everywhere to everywhere, God works among us.

The world is indeed our parish! From teeming cities to small villages at the end of the road, United Methodists live, work and witness the love of God. We are engaged in ministry across the continents to build God’s beloved community. We share this work with one another and with other people of faith who journey with us. I encourage you to watch, work and pray for the day that God’s reign shall come “on earth as it is in heaven.”

Your Brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Warner H. Brown Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Warner H. Brown Jr.
Resident Bishop, San Francisco Area



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UNITED METHODISTS BELIEVE



UNITED METHODISTS AFFIRM THE HISTORIC CHRISTIAN FAITH AS SUMMARIZED IN THE APOSTLES' CREED AND THE NICENE CREED.

WE BELIEVE IN THE TRIUNE GOD, THE TRINITY — FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT

- God the Father/Creator, who brings creation into existence, upholds and reveals the ways of life that make for peace and wholeness, and ever works to heal and transform life through the power of love.
- God the Son, Jesus Christ, the firstborn of a new creation who through his life, death and Resurrection saves us and all creation from the power of sin and death.
- God the Holy Spirit, who comforts, sustains, guides and empowers us to participate in God's life and mission in the world.

WE BELIEVE EVERY PERSON IS A BELOVED CHILD OF GOD

- Whom God created in God's divine image, with inherent worth and dignity.
- Who confronts and suffers the distorting and destructive effects of sin in this life.
- Whom God has reconciled in the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, defeating the powers of sin and death.
- Whom God seeks to make holy and whole, through the presence of the Holy Spirit, transforming us into Christlikeness.

WE BELIEVE IN THE CHURCH AS THE COMMUNITY CALLED TO BE INSTRUMENTS OF GOD'S PRESENCE AND COMING REIGN IN JESUS CHRIST

- Where people worship God joyfully, proclaim God's Word faithfully and share the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion.
- Where all people are welcomed and nurtured as God's sons and daughters.
- Where people are initiated into Christ's body and nurtured toward Christian maturity through worship, prayer, study, fellowship and service.
- Where the light of God's love, justice and peace exposes and overrules evil, injustice and sin.
- Where we participate in God's mission of inviting, preparing and enlisting disciples of Jesus Christ to transform the world and to follow the risen Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, into the hurting places of the world and among the outcasts and the forgotten.

UNITED METHODISTS BELIEVE



WE BELIEVE THE BIBLE REVEALS THE WORD OF GOD

- Authoritative in matters of faith and practice.
- Containing the story of God's mighty acts of salvation in creation, in faithful engagement with people through the ages and supremely in Jesus Christ.
- The primary source for understanding the nature and purposes of God.
- Interpreted in the power of the Holy Spirit present in the community of faith.

WE BELIEVE IN THE FINAL TRIUMPH OF GOD'S REIGN OF COMPASSION, JUSTICE, GENEROSITY AND PEACE

- Anticipating the firstfruits made possible today through the power of the Spirit and the reign of Christ.
- Discovering a renewed creation where sin, suffering and death are overcome and God's victory is complete.
- Celebrating with all the faithful who are raised to live eternally in God's loving presence.
- Extending God's love to the whole creation, with God's mercy redeeming all of God's works, all that God loves.

—Bishop Kenneth L. Carder



ROOTED IN GOD'S GRACE



Our United Methodist heritage is rooted in a deep and profound understanding of God's grace. This incredible grace flows from God's great love for us.

Grace can be defined as the love and mercy God gives us because God wants us to have it, not because of anything we have done to earn it. We read in Ephesians 2:8-9 (NRSV), "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God — not the result of works, so that no one may boast."

In *Living Our Beliefs: The United Methodist Way* by Bishop Kenneth L. Carder, we read, "Grace is God's presence and power to create, heal, forgive, reconcile, and transform persons, communities, nations, and the entire cosmos. Where God is present there is grace, God's power to renew and transform." John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, described God's grace as threefold: prevenient, justifying and sanctifying.

The *Book of Discipline* (Paragraph 102) states, "Although Wesley shared with many other Christians a belief in grace, justification, assurance, and sanctification, he combined them in a powerful manner to create distinctive emphases for living the full Christian life."

PREVENIENT GRACE

Wesley understood grace as God's active presence in our lives — God going before us to prepare us for "wholeness and healing" a life of love of God and neighbor. This presence does not depend on human actions or human response. It is a gift that is always available, but that can be refused.

God's grace stirs within us a desire to know God and empowers us to respond to God's invitation to be in relationship with God. God's grace enables us to discern differences between good and evil and makes it possible for us to choose good.

"Prevenient grace," Carder wrote, "is the 'prodigal son' in Luke's Gospel becoming aware of his lost identity. Longing for home, awareness of betrayal, prompting to repent — these are manifestations of grace preparing us for a new future."

God takes the initiative in relating to humanity. We do not have to beg and plead for God's love and grace. God actively seeks us!

Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, “In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us” (2 Corinthians 5:19b, NRSV).

In his letter to the Roman Christians, Paul wrote, “But God shows love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8, *An Inclusive-Language Lectionary*).

These verses demonstrate God’s justifying grace. They point to reconciliation, pardon and restoration. Through God’s work in Christ, our sins are forgiven, and our relationship with God is restored.

According to Wesley, the image of God — which sin distorts — is renewed within us through Christ’s death. In justifying grace, the Christian acknowledges his or her human situation, makes a conscious decision to turn toward God and takes appropriate responsibility in shaping a life of discipleship.

Again, this dimension of God’s grace is a gift. God’s grace alone brings us into relationship with God. We need not jump through any hoops in order to please God and to be loved by God. God has acted in Jesus Christ. We need only to respond in faith. This process of salvation involves a change in us that we call “conversion.”

Conversion is a change of belief, spiritual outlook and manner of life. It may be sudden and dramatic, or gradual and cumulative. In any case, it marks a new beginning. Following Jesus’ words to Nicodemus, “You must be born anew” (John 3:7b, CEB), we speak of this conversion as rebirth, new life in Christ or regeneration.

Following the apostle Paul and Protestant Reformation leader Martin Luther, Wesley called this process “justification.” Justification is what happens when Christians abandon all those vain attempts to justify themselves before God, to be seen as “just” in God’s eyes through religious and moral practices. It is a time when God’s “justifying grace” is experienced and accepted, a time of pardon and forgiveness, of new peace and joy and love. Indeed, we are justified by God’s grace through faith.

Justification is also a time of repentance — turning away from behaviors rooted in sin and toward actions that express God’s love.



In this conversion, we can expect to receive assurance of our present salvation through the Holy Spirit “bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8:16b, NRSV).

SANCTIFYING GRACE

Salvation is not a static, one-time event in our lives. It is the ongoing experience of God’s gracious presence transforming us into whom God intends us to be. Wesley described this dimension of God’s grace as “sanctification,” or “holiness.”

Through God’s sanctifying grace, we grow and mature in our ability to live as Jesus lived. As we pray, study the Scriptures, fast, worship and share in fellowship with other Christians, we deepen our knowledge of and love for God.

As we respond with compassion to human need and work for justice in our communities, we strengthen our capacity to love neighbor.

Our inner thoughts and motives, as well as our outer actions and behavior, are aligned with God’s will and testify to our union with God.

In *Who Are We?: Doctrine, Ministry and the Mission of The United Methodist Church*, Bishop Carder notes that we are to press on, with God’s help, in the path of sanctification toward perfection.

By perfection, Wesley did not mean that we would not make mistakes or have weaknesses. Rather, he understood it to be a continual process of being made perfect in our love of God and each other and of removing our desire to sin.

Sources: “Teachers as Spiritual Leaders and Theologians.” Discipleship Ministries. Used by permission. The United Methodist Member’s Handbook by George E. Koehler, “Our Wesleyan Heritage,” www.umc.org



VITAL CONGREGATIONS SHARE COMMON CHARACTERISTICS



“Revitalizing congregations and developing new faith communities is really important to the future of The United Methodist Church,” said West Virginia Area Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball. “Churches need to revitalize themselves, and episcopal leaders should be in there, motivating, inspiring and helping them to see what can be done.”

When Jesus gave the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19a), he told his followers, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.” That is the mission of The United Methodist Church — to “make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” We achieve this through vital congregations that equip and empower people to be disciples in their home congregations and in communities around the world.

SO WHAT IS A VITAL CONGREGATION?
HERE ARE FIVE COMMON
CHARACTERISTICS OF VITAL
CONGREGATIONS:

1. Inviting and inspiring worship
2. Engaged disciples in mission and outreach
3. Gifted, equipped and empowered lay leadership
4. Effective, equipped and inspired clergy leadership
5. Small groups that include children and youth designed to encourage, support and hold disciples accountable in their Christian walk.

“While all congregations have some aspect of vitality,” said Greater New Jersey Area Bishop John R. Schol, “highly vital congregations grow over time, engage more people in ministry and are more generous in giving to mission.”



HE ENCOURAGED UNITED METHODISTS TO ADDRESS “ADAPTIVE SPIRITUAL CHALLENGES.” THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME SUGGESTED STEPS.

1. Call and develop spiritual leaders who cast a meaningful vision and lead the congregation toward that vision. As a result, the local church connects with the community, makes new disciples and engages people in mission.
2. Retool and learn how to connect with the nominally religious and non-religious people in the community.
3. Eliminate anything that inhibits the journey to becoming more vital.
4. Be adventuresome. Experiment with ministries to reach people in the community.

5. Be authentic. Offer real answers from real people, not play-it-safe platitudes.

6. Offer inspiring worship that moves people to make a commitment to Christ and to engage in ministry and mission.

7. Nurture effective lay and clergy leadership by walking with people and letting them know it is OK to fail.

8. Evaluate and assess current church health. Address questions. Consider new ideas. Take risks.

9. Finally, ask: What will we continue doing? What will we stop doing? What will we modify?

“It is time,” said the Rev. Amy Valdez-Barker, executive secretary of the Connectional Table, “to work together across generations and differences to engage in vital witness and mission in our communities.”



LET'S TELL GOD'S STORY



“Jesus called plain, ordinary women and men to follow him,” said the Rev. Edward P. Winkler, Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church, Charlottesville, Va. “Jesus didn’t go to the temple in Jerusalem and call the finest biblical scholars and theologians. He went to the seashore and called fishermen, ordinary people like you and me. He sent them out to fish for more disciples.”

MAKING DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD IS OUR MISSION. WHAT AN EXCITING TIME TO BE A UNITED METHODIST!

THE WORK IS UNFOLDING IN FOUR AREAS OF FOCUS:

1. Developing principled Christian leaders
2. Creating new places for new people and renewing existing congregations
3. Engaging in ministry with the poor
4. Stamping out the killer diseases of poverty.

“God may ask us to go someplace we don’t want to go,” Winkler continued. He cited the story of Jonah, whose journey to Nineveh is more about calling people to discipleship and less about surviving in the belly of a large fish.

“Our Nineveh may be somewhere near the real Nineveh in Iraq. For others, Nineveh may be down the street.” Ultimately, God calls us to make disciples — to invite people to become part of God’s story.

“Let’s tell God’s story,” Winkler urged. “Let’s invite people to be part of the story. We have the place, we have the story and we have God’s promise to be here with us. What more do we need?”



DEVELOPING PRINCIPLED CHRISTIAN LEADERS FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

Developing the next generation of leadership is an extension of John Wesley's original Methodist movement, said Bishop Grant J. Hagiya, now serving the Greater Northwest Area.

"Leadership is at the core of discipleship and defines our future as United Methodists," he added. "Leadership is a noun, not a verb. It's what we do, or not do. When we think of leadership as an action word, we think of it in terms of effective results. We are constantly looking for those leaders who will enable us to grow and be vital in God's mission to the world."

Hagiya recalled a seminary student who asked, "How will The United Methodist Church help me stay passionate about my ministry?"

"What a great question!" the bishop said. "That question continues to haunt me. Will the church continue to be a place where our passions thrive? I don't have an answer. But I do know that this is the time to experiment wildly at every level of the church."



THROUGH THIS FOCUS AREA, UNITED METHODISTS WILL STRIVE TO DO THE FOLLOWING:



- **PREPARE** clergy and lay leaders in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the United States. The 2012 General Conference approved a Commission on Central Conference Theological Education to assist theological schools, courses of study, contextually developed resources and libraries, scholarships and faculty in the central conferences.
- **ENGAGE** United Methodist colleges, universities and seminaries as key partners in educating leaders around the world.
- **PROVIDE** long- and short-term mission experiences for young adults, giving the opportunity to consider a call to professional Christian service.
- **INVITE, TRAIN AND SEND** missionaries to share the light of Christ's love in word and deed throughout the world.
- **INCREASE** the number of candidates, especially those younger than age 35, for ordained ministries. The 2012 General Conference approved a Young Clergy Initiative Fund to begin a three-quadrennium effort to enable The United Methodist Church to focus on encouraging young adults who wish to respond to the call to ordained ministry.
- **PROVIDE** scholarships and leadership-development grants for international students to complete degree and non-degree programs related to the four focus areas.
- **OFFER** leadership training to laity who are in ministry in countless ways.



CREATING NEW PLACES FOR NEW PEOPLE AND RENEWING EXISTING CONGREGATIONS



Fort Worth Area Bishop J. Michael Lowry said conversations about new-church starts once centered on brick-and-mortar churches.

Since the 2008 General Conference, United Methodists launched more than 600 churches in the United States. More than half are racial/ethnic congregations, he said, “meeting in borrowed spaces, homes and schools.”

Lowry highlighted the Urban Village Church in Chicago, which is “people-focused before being property-focused. They go wherever people gather to share the gospel. The church meets in three sites and plans to add seven more.”

Another example — Denver’s AfterHours church — meets Monday nights in pubs around town, where members experience mission by making peanut butter sandwiches to distribute to homeless people.

Lowry said the denomination continues to add new faith communities in places like Central Asia, the Nordic countries and the Philippines, at an average of 12 a month. “This is the connection at its best.”

“Cookie-cutter approaches simply do not work,” he added. “Each has a unique fingerprint, but the common DNA is the sharing of the gospel of Christ’s grace in love, justice and mercy, meeting people where they are. Methodism has again become a grassroots movement in sharing the love of Christ.”

THROUGH THIS FOCUS AREA, UNITED METHODISTS:

- recruit, train and provide materials for new-church planters to start congregations in partnership with U.S. annual conferences;
- develop new churches and faith communities in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe;
- train and equip lay and clergy leaders with an online library of best-practice resources on planting and growing vital congregations;
- provide congregations engaged in revitalization efforts with evangelism, stewardship and worship aids; and
- reach millions of people through a media-awareness campaign.

ENGAGING IN MINISTRY WITH THE POOR



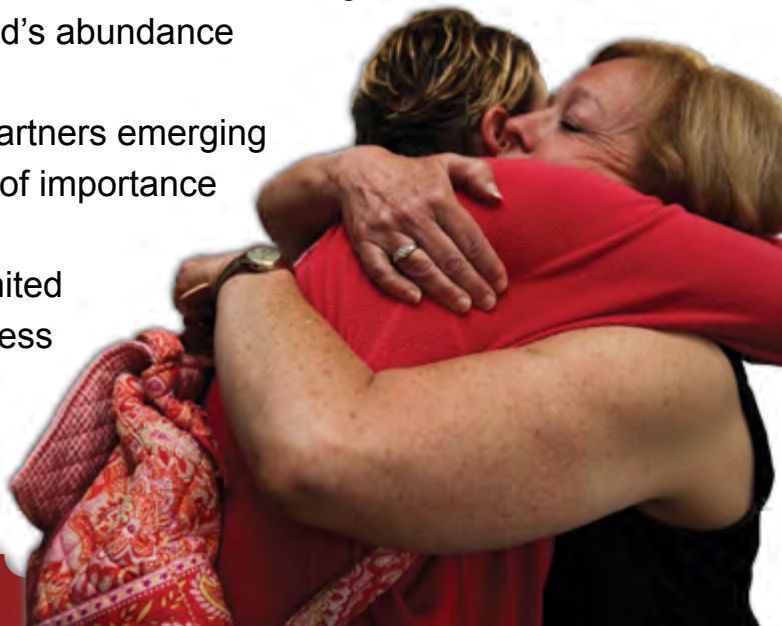
Retired bishop Joel N. Martínez believes ministry with the poor is also about “receiving from the poor, the gifts they bring, the gifts of yearnings and dreams for a future with hope ... (about) walking with people who are poor in material terms, or poor in spirit, or both.”

The Rev. Lorenza Andrade Smith of San Antonio provides a good example. She said she is “appointed by my bishop to do nothing but share the love of God.” Her ministry is unique, in that she sold her possessions and lives on the street in solidarity with homeless people. “Ministry with the poor simply means following Jesus,” Smith asserted.

United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) is a grassroots movement within The United Methodist Church designed to provide an official channel whereby Christians, both lay and clergy, may offer their skills and talents for Christian service at home and around the world on short-term assignments at their own expense. Martínez praised United Methodists who have made mission trips. “We’re all trying to respond to the call to be in ministry with the poor. One way is by getting dirty, putting our work boots on and cleaning up after disasters, working with those who have lost everything. And ‘with’ is the key word,” he continued.

THROUGH THIS FOCUS AREA, UNITED METHODISTS:

- provide awareness of poverty, support funding of government anti-poverty initiatives and urge congregations to advocate for justice and economic development;
- develop projects to provide appropriate, significant responses to poverty in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the United States;
- equip United Methodists to understand the connection between greed and over-consumption and poverty, and to share God’s abundance equitably;
- prepare and place with strategic mission partners emerging leaders who can respond to critical issues of importance to women, children and youth;
- prepare a generation of graduates from United Methodist colleges and seminaries to address issues of poverty; and collaborate with the World Council of Churches and other ecumenical bodies to eradicate poverty.



STAMPING OUT THE KILLER DISEASES OF POVERTY BY IMPROVING HEALTH GLOBALLY



“Malaria made me and my family poor,” said Ngoy Kabulo, 52, of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. “Every day, we would wake up with swollen bodies because of mosquito bites. Our two small children had anemia every month, and we were always spending money on the hospital.”

Like many of his neighbors, Kabulo and his family were vulnerable and poor to begin with, but malaria compounded their struggles on a regular basis. He ekes out a living, farming the sandy soil around his mud-brick home in rural Kamina Township, feeding his family of 12 on barely \$1 a day.

Whenever a family member was rushed to the hospital because of malaria — at least once a month, Kabulo said — his precarious budget evaporated. He spent as much as a third of his monthly income on a single visit.

But a very simple item — a long-lasting, insecticide-treated bed net — is helping to stop this escalation. When coupled with malaria-fighting, awareness-raising efforts, the bed net can reverse the trend and even end the threat posed by this very preventable disease to families like the Kabulos.

“My family is healthy,” Kabulo reported recently, “and we are saving money to meet other family needs.” The program, he said, “saved our lives.”

Through its Imagine No Malaria initiative, The United Methodist Church has distributed more than a million bed nets in half a dozen countries in Africa. The program relies on trusted faith networks and local community leaders to engage the beneficiaries. And it is dedicated to building the capacity of those networks and leaders.

Advocate! Urge others to get involved in this global fight against malaria. Raise funds! Get your congregation on board with a fundraising event. Engage your community! Take this mission beyond your church to change the world.

— In a blog, Linda Unger, senior writer for the General Board of Global Ministries, shared the story of Ngoy Kabulo.



ONLINE COURSE INTRODUCES FOUR AREAS OF FOCUS



Discover how The United Methodist Church is focusing on four long-term priorities in a free, online course provided by United Methodist Communications. “Four Areas of Focus” (FAF 101) is a self-directed, online learning experience that provides a basic overview of the focus areas adopted by the 2008 General Conference: leadership development, church growth, ministry with the poor and global health.

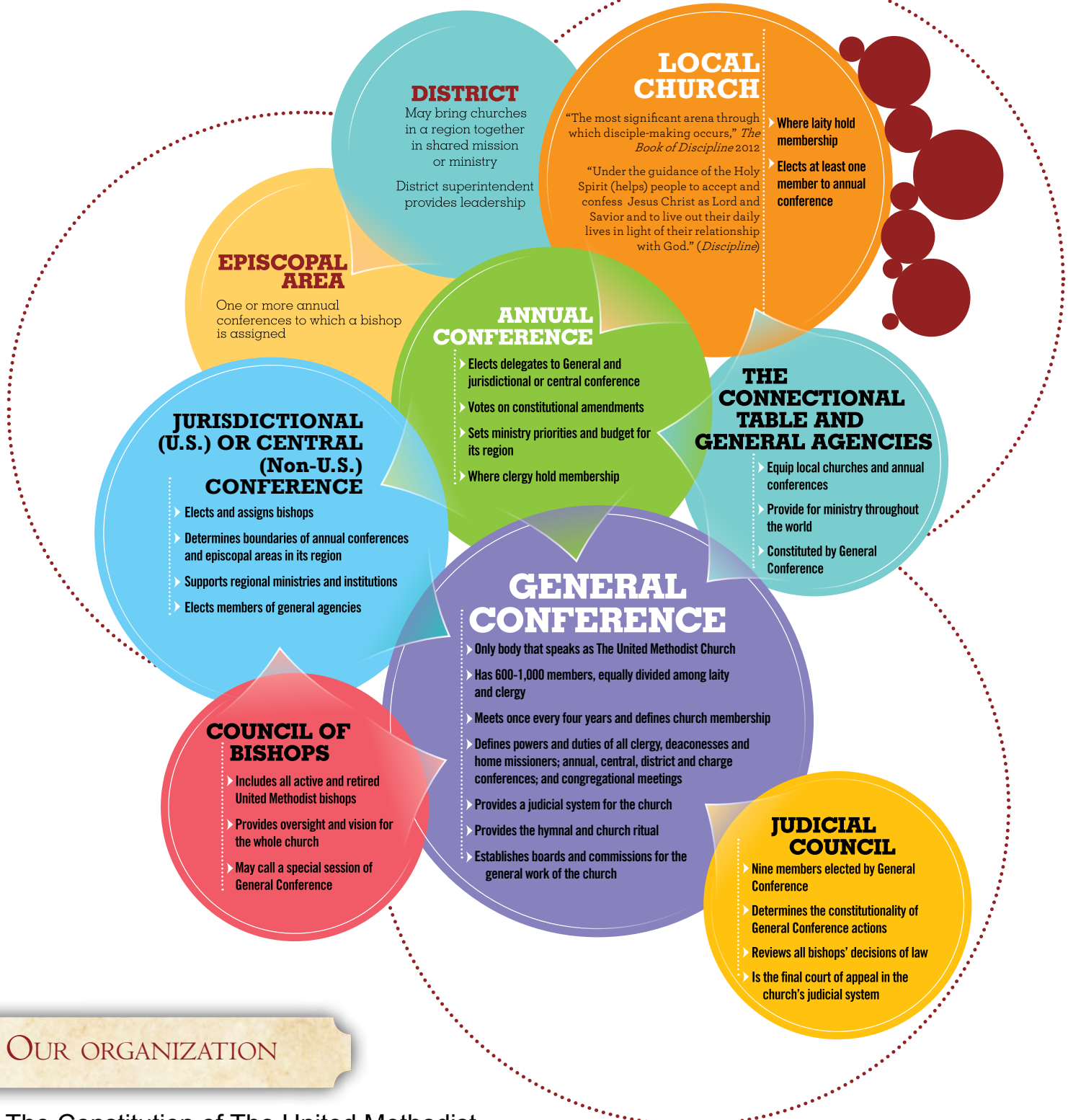
The four areas provide a source of inspiration and opportunity for discipleship for all United Methodists as we bring these priorities to life through a wide range of ministries.

To access this free online course, go to moodle.umcom.org and select the “United Methodist Basics” category. Then select “Four Areas of Focus” from the list of course offerings. On the right side of the login page, complete the brief registration form.

For more information about this course or other online courses, visit learn.umc.org.



UNITED METHODISTS: A Connected Church



LOCAL CHURCH

"The most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs," *The Book of Discipline 2012*

"Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (helps) people to accept and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to live out their daily lives in light of their relationship with God." (*Discipline*)

Where laity hold membership

Elects at least one member to annual conference

DISTRICT

May bring churches in a region together in shared mission or ministry

District superintendent provides leadership

EPISCOPAL AREA

One or more annual conferences to which a bishop is assigned

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

- ▶ Elects delegates to General and jurisdictional or central conference
- ▶ Votes on constitutional amendments
- ▶ Sets ministry priorities and budget for its region
- ▶ Where clergy hold membership

JURISDICTIONAL (U.S.) OR CENTRAL (Non-U.S.) CONFERENCE

- ▶ Elects and assigns bishops
- ▶ Determines boundaries of annual conferences and episcopal areas in its region
- ▶ Supports regional ministries and institutions
- ▶ Elects members of general agencies

THE CONNECTIONAL TABLE AND GENERAL AGENCIES

- ▶ Equip local churches and annual conferences
- ▶ Provide for ministry throughout the world
- ▶ Constituted by General Conference

GENERAL CONFERENCE

- ▶ Only body that speaks as The United Methodist Church
- ▶ Has 600-1,000 members, equally divided among laity and clergy
- ▶ Meets once every four years and defines church membership
- ▶ Defines powers and duties of all clergy, deaconesses and home missionaries; annual, central, district and charge conferences; and congregational meetings
- ▶ Provides a judicial system for the church
- ▶ Provides the hymnal and church ritual
- ▶ Establishes boards and commissions for the general work of the church

COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

- ▶ Includes all active and retired United Methodist bishops
- ▶ Provides oversight and vision for the whole church
- ▶ May call a special session of General Conference

JUDICIAL COUNCIL

- ▶ Nine members elected by General Conference
- ▶ Determines the constitutionality of General Conference actions
- ▶ Reviews all bishops' decisions of law
- ▶ Is the final court of appeal in the church's judicial system

OUR ORGANIZATION

The Constitution of The United Methodist Church is designed with checks and balances built into the structure to prevent any one branch from taking too much authority over the whole body.

Source: Originally published in *New World Outlook* magazine, September-October 2012, General Board of Global Ministries. Used by permission. Graphic designed by Christopher Coleman.

CONSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE



The United Methodist Church does not have a central headquarters or a single executive leader. Duties are divided among bodies that include the General Conference, the Council of Bishops and the Judicial Council. Each of these entities plays a significant role in the life of the church.

The General Conference also defines the powers and duties of the episcopacy, authorizes the official hymnal and book of worship, provides a judicial system and procedures, initiates and directs all connectional enterprises of the church and enacts other legislation for the operation of the church.

GENERAL CONFERENCE

The General Conference, the primary legislative body of The United Methodist Church, is the only body that speaks officially for the church.

Meeting once every four years to determine legislation affecting connectional matters, it is composed of no fewer than 600 and no more than 1,000 delegates.

Working within the boundaries of the Church Constitution and General Rules, the General Conference defines and fixes the conditions, privileges and duties of church membership; the powers and duties of elders, deacons, diaconal ministers and local pastors; and the powers and duties of annual conferences, missionary conferences, charge conferences and congregational meetings.

It authorizes the organization, promotion and administrative work of the church.

COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

Composed of all active and retired bishops, the council meets as a group at least once a year. The Council of Bishops gives general oversight of the ministry and mission of the church and spiritual leadership to the entire church connection.

Bishops are elected by Jurisdictional Conferences and assigned to a particular area, made up of one or more annual conferences. Each bishop provides oversight to the ministry and mission of annual conferences in his or her area and appoints all clergy to their places of service.

Through its Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships, the council builds and maintains ties with other Christian denominations as well as other faith groups.



According to the *Book of Discipline* “bishops are called to lead and oversee the spiritual and temporal affairs of The United Methodist Church which confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and particularly to lead the Church in its mission of witness and service in the world” (Paragraph 414).

of the various church bodies adhere to the constitution and follow the rules outlined in the *Book of Discipline*.

Their cases are generally referred to them by action of the Council of Bishops, the annual conferences or the General Conference. According to the *Constitution*, decisions of the Judicial Council are final (Paragraph 57, Article III).

JUDICIAL COUNCIL

As the denomination’s highest judicial body or “court,” the Judicial Council interprets church law and determines constitutionality of proceedings at all levels of church life.

Its nine members, made up of laity and clergy, are elected by the General Conference and normally meet twice a year to consider whether actions

EPISCOPAL AREAS

The episcopal area is the annual conference(s) to which a bishop is assigned by the jurisdictional or central conference. The bishop lives within the bounds of the episcopal area and presides over the work of one or more annual conferences.





UNITED STATES JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCES

Five geographic jurisdictional conferences (regions) in the United States include eight to 15 annual conferences each. Jurisdictional conferences meet simultaneously every four years to elect and assign bishops and some members of general church agencies and, in some cases, to develop jurisdictional programs. Members of the jurisdictional conferences are General Conference delegates from that region, plus additional delegates — an equal number of laypeople and ordained ministers elected by the region's annual conferences.

GENERAL CHURCHWIDE AGENCIES

General agencies are primarily accountable to the General Conference. Boards of directors, lay and clergy elected jointly by General Conference and regional organizations, govern the agency staffs. According to the Constitution, General Conference has the authority to create boards and agencies for the purpose of “connectional enterprises” (Paragraph 16, Article IV.8), which enable local churches to participate in ministry beyond their regions to fulfill their mission.

THE CONNECTIONAL TABLE

The Connectional Table discerns and articulates the vision and the stewardship of the mission, ministries and resources of The United Methodist Church as determined by

General Conference and in consultation with the Council of Bishops.

ANNUAL CONFERENCES

The annual conference is a geographical region (comprising districts), an organizational body (made up of elected lay and clergy members), and a yearly meeting. Annual conferences approve programming and budget, elect delegates to General and jurisdictional conferences, and examine and recommend candidates for ministry.

The annual conference is composed of clergy and lay members elected by each charge, diaconal ministers, conference presidents of United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men, conference and district lay leaders and presidents of young adult and youth organizations.

LOCAL CHURCHES AND DISTRICTS

The heart of our local church ministry is continuing — and extending — Jesus Christ's ministry and outreaching love. Each congregation in the United States is part of a district, an administrative grouping of approximately 40 to 80 churches with a full-time superintendent. A charge conference governs each local church, with a church council as the year-round supervisor.

CENTRAL CONFERENCES



United Methodists in Africa, Europe and the Philippines call their comparable geographical division a “central conference.” The denomination has seven central conferences: Africa, Central and Southern Europe, Congo, Germany, Northern Europe and Eurasia, Philippines and West Africa. The central conferences are composed of equal numbers of lay and clergy members.

AFRICAN CENTRAL CONFERENCES

Africa includes three central conferences: Africa Central, with five episcopal areas; Congo Central, with four; and West Africa, also with four. In Africa Central and Congo Central, bishops are elected for four years as “term bishops,” and with reelection, they are elected for life. In West Africa, bishops are elected for life upon their first election.

EUROPEAN CENTRAL CONFERENCES

Europe has three central conferences: Central and Southern Europe (one episcopal area), Germany (one episcopal area) and Northern Europe (two episcopal areas). In Central and Southern Europe, bishops are elected for four years as “term bishops.” In the second quadrennium, the central conference can reelect a bishop for life or elect a new bishop.

In Germany, bishops are elected for four years as “term bishops.” Each new quadrennium, they can be elected to serve another four years, with a maximum of 12 years of service. If a bishop qualifies for retirement at the end of 12 years of service, he or she retires and becomes a bishop for life. If a bishop is too young to retire, he or she returns to the annual conference as a pastor and surrenders the episcopal status.

In Northern Europe, bishops are elected for eight years as “term bishops.” In the third quadrennium, a bishop can be elected for an additional four years, with a maximum of 12 years of service. If a bishop qualifies for retirement at the end of 12 years’ service, he or she retires and becomes a bishop for life. If a bishop is too young to retire, he or she returns to the annual conference as a pastor and surrenders the episcopal status.

PHILIPPINES CENTRAL CONFERENCE

The Philippines has one central conference — Philippines, with three episcopal areas. Bishops are elected as term bishops for four years at a time. They must be reelected every four years. If a bishop continues to be elected a bishop until he or she reaches retirement age, he or she becomes a bishop for life. If a bishop is too young to retire, he or she returns to the annual conference as a pastor and surrenders episcopal status.

WHERE THE U. S. LOCAL CHURCH EXPENSE DOLLARS GO



The cost of our Christ-centered global ministry is significant, but it is only a small portion of our local church budget. Of every \$1 given in the offering:

85 cents
stays in the local church

6 cents
Benevolent giving
(second-mile giving)

2 cents
goes to general apportionments



Your church's expense figures will vary, depending on your support of annual conference benevolences.

7 cents
goes to jurisdictions,
annual conferences
and districts

Source: General Council on Finance and Administration data, 2012

GRATITUDE AND GENEROSITY



Our United Methodist Church is a generous church. Our people give to their local congregations and reach beyond their church walls to assist a variety of mission projects, community ministries and charities.

A portion of the local church giving (about 2 percent) goes to The United Methodist Church through our “connection” with congregations, conferences, agencies and ministries around the world.

More than money, however, this connection is our way of affirming the unity we share in ministry and mission. Our generosity arises from our gratitude to God. God is the source of all our gifts, and we give in response to the One who has so generously given to us — including the gift of God’s own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who calls us to be a part of his church.

Every disaster, every hungry child, every lost person and every injustice is an opportunity for us to respond with generosity, passion and care. Our money is one method of expressing our generosity, our values and our commitment to Christ. The funds are carefully accounted for, audited and reported, not because we focus on the money, but because we focus on our gratitude to God.

As the United Methodist church agency responsible for financial oversight, the General Council on Finance and Administration is in servant ministry to strengthen, safeguard and steward the grateful generosity of the people called United Methodists.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael J. Coyner".

Bishop Michael J. Coyner
President, General Council on Finance
and Administration Board



WHAT IS CONNECTIONAL GIVING?



The United Methodist Church is what we call “connectional.” Imagine your local church as a link on a very long chain. Whether yours is a rural congregation of 30 or a megachurch of 3,000, you are part of a bigger church. And we all contribute to its work – in our own neighborhood and around the world.

The cost of our Christ-centered global ministry is significant, but only a tiny portion of our local church budget. Perhaps you have heard the term

“apportionment.” Some people call it “a portion meant for ministry.” It is the share that each local church or annual conference pays to support regional, national and international mission. But this next part may surprise you.

Of every dollar you put into the offering plate:

85 cents stays in your local church!

13 cents goes to ministries in your district, annual conference and jurisdiction.

2 cents funds “connectional giving” that supports United

Methodist mission around the world, including Africa University, historically black colleges, clergy education, work with other denominations and much, much more.

This portion also includes contributions to the six churchwide Special Sundays – Human Relations Day, One Great Hour of Sharing, Native American Ministries Sunday, Peace with Justice Sunday, World Communion Sunday and United Methodist Student Day – and designated gifts through The Advance and World Service Special Gifts.

***“Though there are many of us, we are one body in Christ, and individually we belong to each other.”
– Romans 12:5b, CEB***

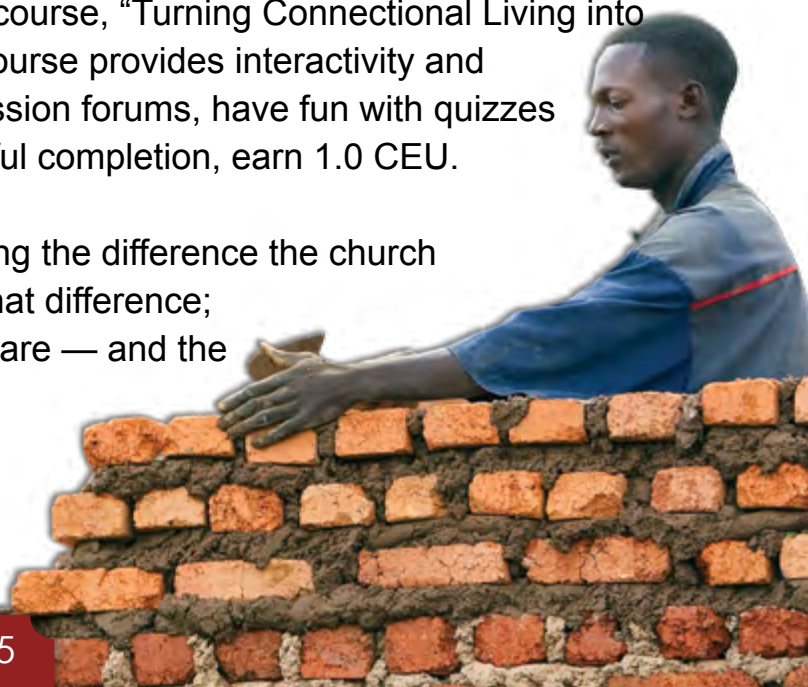
ONLINE COURSE INTRODUCES CONNECTIONAL GIVING

Most of us find it easier to talk about our faith than about money. If you find it difficult to talk about giving, consider taking a free online course, “Turning Connectional Living into Connectional Giving” (CG101). The four-part course provides interactivity and hands-on learning. You will participate in discussion forums, have fun with quizzes and explore other activities, and upon successful completion, earn 1.0 CEU.

Moving at your own pace, you will learn:

- how to be a missional storyteller — describing the difference the church makes in the world and how giving affects that difference;
- what the apportioned and designated funds are — and the difference between the two types of funds;
- how our church does more together than we can do alone.

To register, visit www.umcom.org/cg101.





APPORTIONED FUNDS

WORLD SERVICE FUND

Perhaps ministry today is not just about the *now* but is also about the *next*. World Service is, indeed, about both the now and the next. Basic to the financial program of The United Methodist Church, this vital fund helps to build new churches, prepare clergy and lay leaders, increase the number of young clergy, pay missionary salaries, expand Bible studies, provide leadership for youth ministry, continue a proud tradition of cooperation and dialogue with other faith traditions through interdenominational and ecumenical work, express the church's commitment to God's reign through advocacy for peace and justice and much more. World Service is the financial lifeline to a long list of Christian mission and ministry throughout the denomination.

AFRICA UNIVERSITY FUND

Located in Old Mutare, Zimbabwe, [Africa University](#) is the first fully accredited United Methodist-related educational institution on the African continent. Established by General Conference action, the university offers bachelor's and master's degree programs in six faculties of learning: agriculture and natural resources, education, health sciences, humanities and social sciences, management and administration and theology. The Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance offers postgraduate diplomas and master's programs. Gifts to the Africa University Fund support the general operating expenses of Africa University including faculty and staff salaries and vital infrastructure, but other donations through World Service Special Gifts support scholarships and the endowment fund.

BLACK COLLEGE FUND

When the 1972 General Conference established the Black College Fund apportionment, United Methodists made a commitment to justice ministries that began with the work of the Freedmen's Aid Society. Organized following the Civil War to educate people newly freed from slavery, the society helped to establish more than 70 schools in the south and southwest regions of the United States. Eleven of those institutions remain.



“Historically black colleges and universities live out a social gospel by educating their students and preparing them to solve these issues,” said Walter M. Kimbrough, president of Dillard University, New Orleans, La. Wiley College hosts an annual ethical student leadership conference that strengthens student values. Claflin University’s mission is preparing visionary leaders for global challenges. Dillard University partnered with the National Institutes of Health to study and correct health-care disparities.

Bennett College launched a global studies and entrepreneurship program. Similar programs exist at Huston-Tillotson, Paine, Rust, Bethune-Cookman and Meharry Medical College. And Philander Smith College changed its mission to focus on social justice. Clark Atlanta University launched an initiative to address the health and wellness of women at historically black colleges and universities.

The Black College Fund provides financial support to maintain solid and challenging academic programs, strong faculties and well-equipped facilities.

THE UNITED METHODIST-RELATED HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES ARE:

[Bennett College](#)

[Bethune-Cookman University](#)

[Claflin University](#)

[Clark Atlanta University](#)

[Dillard University](#)

[Huston-Tillotson University](#)

[Meharry Medical College](#)

[Paine College](#)

[Philander Smith College](#)

[Rust College](#)

[Wiley College](#)



EPISCOPAL FUND

“This election as bishop is a tremendous honor,” said new bishop Jonathan Holston, assigned to the Columbia (S.C.) Area. “It’s humbling, and yet, it’s an opportunity to give leadership and service to the church.”

Bishops are an integral part of the spiritual and administrative leadership of The United Methodist Church. They are elected and consecrated to speak to the church and from the church. The Episcopal Fund pays for bishops’ salaries, office and travel expenses, and pension and health-benefit coverage.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION FUND

“I’m really passionate about not being a passive participant in the church,” said first-time General Conference delegate Ricky Harrison, 20. “I want to be an active member who’s helping shape the church.”

The General Administration Fund provides for the expenses of the sessions of the General Conference, the Judicial Council, special commissions and committees constituted by the General Conference and other administrative agencies and activities recommended for inclusion in the budget by the General Council on Finance and Administration and approved by the General Conference. It also maintains United Methodism’s official documents and historical artifacts; designates historical shrines, landmarks and sites; and implements a trustworthy system of administrative oversight and fiscal accountability.

INTERDENOMINATIONAL COOPERATION FUND

The Interdenominational Cooperation Fund enables United Methodists to have a presence and a voice in the activities of several national and worldwide ecumenical organizations. It provides the United Methodist share of the basic budgets of these organizations.

MINISTERIAL EDUCATION FUND

Pursuing a master of divinity degree at Candler School of Theology, Emory University in Atlanta, Ashley Kirk is grateful for the Ministerial Education Fund. “As Christians,” she said, “we are *all* called to be ministers of the gospel. The only difference with me is that I feel gifted to make ministry my sole vocation.”

The Ministerial Education Fund is at the heart of preparing people for making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The 13 United Methodist seminaries help students to discover their calling through challenging curriculum. The fund enables the church to increase financial support for the recruitment and education of ordained and diaconal ministers and to equip annual conferences to meet increased demands.



THE 13 UNITED METHODIST SEMINARIES ARE:

[Boston University School of Theology](#)

[Candler School of Theology, Emory University](#)

[Claremont School of Theology](#)

[Drew Theological School](#)

[Duke Divinity School](#)

[Gammon Theological Seminary](#)

[Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary](#)

[Iliff School of Theology](#)

[Methodist Theological School in Ohio](#)

[Perkins School of Theology, SMU](#)

[Saint Paul School of Theology](#)

[United Theological Seminary](#)

[Wesley Theological Seminary](#)



DESIGNATED GIFTS



THE ADVANCE

Hadley Davis, 10, sells handmade jewelry to help those in need. “It’ll make a big difference when I give all the money through The Advance,” she explained. The Advance provides an opportunity to support missionaries, build churches, provide lifesaving health care, dig wells, educate children and share God’s word.

An official program within The United Methodist Church, The Advance invites contributors to designate support for projects related to the General Board of Global Ministries. Individuals, local churches, organizations, districts and conferences may donate to The Advance. One hundred percent of every gift to The Advance goes to the project selected by the giver. Administrative costs come from other sources such as the World Service Fund.

WORLD SERVICE SPECIAL GIFTS

The 1984 General Conference approved World Service Special Gifts as a test program during the 1985-88 quadrennium, and it continues today. Current World Service Special Gifts projects include the Africa University Endowment Fund, the Methodist Global Education Fund, the National Anti-Gambling Project and the Lay Missionary Planting Network.

A World Service Special Gift is a designated financial contribution made by an individual, local church, organization, district or annual conference to a project authorized as such by the Connectional Table. All general boards and commissions, except units of general agencies authorized to receive gifts through The Advance, can recommend projects specifically related to one or more of the agency’s *Disciplinary* functions.



CHURCHWIDE SPECIAL SUNDAYS WITH OFFERINGS



HUMAN RELATIONS DAY

“These are mostly good kids who get lured into drug trafficking,” said Bruce Ballou, chief juvenile probation officer in Eagle Pass, Texas. Based at First United Methodist Church, Eagle Pass, and aided by the Human Relations Day offering, Mission: Border Hope reaches out to youth whose families live on the margins of society.

Celebrated on the Sunday before the birthday observance of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Human Relations Day calls United Methodists to recognize the right of all God’s children in realizing their potential as human beings in relationship with one another.

The special offering benefits neighborhood ministries through Community Developers, community advocacy through United Methodist Voluntary Services and work with at-risk teens through the Youth Offender Rehabilitation Program.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

When disaster strikes anywhere in the world, the United Methodist Committee on Relief supports local efforts to aid survivors

by providing early-response training for volunteers, shipping emergency kits and granting disaster-response funds.

Observed on the Fourth Sunday in Lent, One Great Hour of Sharing calls United Methodists to share the goodness of life with those who hurt. Your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing lay the foundation for UMCOR to share God’s love with communities everywhere. When you give to One Great Hour of Sharing, you underwrite UMCOR’s “costs of doing business.” This helps UMCOR to keep the promise that 100 percent of any gift to a specific UMCOR project will go toward that project, not for administrative costs.

NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES SUNDAY

A member of the Muscogee (Creek) Tribe, Shyloe O’Neal is a student at Duke Divinity School in Durham, N.C. O’Neal, a recipient of the Native American Ministries Sunday seminary scholarship, plans to return to Oklahoma to work in rural ministry.

Celebrated on the Third Sunday of Easter, Native American Ministries Sunday reminds United Methodists of the gifts and contributions made by Native Americans to

our society. The special offering supports Native American outreach within annual conferences and across the United States and provides seminary scholarships for Native Americans.

United Methodists relate to Native American Ministries Sunday by reaching out to Native Americans in their communities and by encouraging Native Americans to consider becoming pastors and nurturing them in their journey.

PEACE WITH JUSTICE SUNDAY

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Bishop Nkulu Ntanda Ntambo assumed his post as a brutal civil war began in 1996. After nearly eight years of war, he helped to broker a peace settlement at a conference where 250 fighters committed not to fight again.

“The church brought the peace,” he said. United Methodists in the Congo — 2.5 million strong — received two Peace with Justice grants from the General Board of Church and Society to respond to the 2011 post-election violence and to teach people to share Jesus’ love.

The Peace with Justice Sunday offering, shared on the First Sunday after Pentecost, benefits peace with justice ministries in the annual conference and through the Board of Church and Society.

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

“This scholarship,” said Erin Adachi-Kriege, “has contributed to my sense of success as a college student, which encourages me to keep working hard.” A student at the University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, Wash., she grew up at Epworth United Methodist Church, Berkeley, Calif. “Church was, and still is, a very big part of my life,” she added.

Celebrated on the first Sunday of October, World Communion Sunday calls the church to reach out to all people and model diversity among God’s children. The special offering provides World Communion Scholarships, the Ethnic Scholarship Program and the Ethnic In-Service Training Program. United Methodists relate to World Communion Sunday by informing qualified people to apply for scholarships and by giving generously.



UNITED METHODIST STUDENT DAY



For Daniel Tribble, a student at Tennessee Tech University, Cookeville, worship is vital to his spiritual life. He attends First United Methodist Church, Lebanon, Tenn. His faith, Tribble said, “remains an essential part of who I am. After I graduate, I would love nothing more than ... to continue to serve the congregation that brought me up.”

The special offering shared on United Methodist Student Day, the last Sunday in November, supports scholarships for qualified United Methodist applicants. Scholarships are awarded on an academic year basis. General Board of Higher Education and Ministry scholarships assist students from diverse backgrounds working toward various higher education degrees. Eligible applicants may enroll at any accredited institution within the United States.



THE CONNECTIONAL TABLE AND GENERAL BOARDS, COUNCILS AND COMMISSIONS



Providing vital resources to congregations, the Connectional Table, the General Council on Finance and Administration, The United Methodist Publishing House and 11 program agencies help United Methodists make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Here is a brief introduction to their diverse responsibilities.

THE CONNECTIONAL TABLE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

- Coordinates The United Methodist Church's mission, ministries and resources
- Discerns and articulates the church's vision
- Establishes policies and procedures
- Provides for fiscal responsibility in partnership with the General Council on Finance and Administration to carry out mission
- Includes clergy and lay members elected from jurisdictional and central conferences, as well as members from the denomination's racial and ethnic caucuses and general agencies

Address: 8765 W. Higgins Road, Suite 404, Chicago, IL 60631

Telephone: (773) 714-1517

Toll-free: (866) 648-9584

Fax: (866) 324-6325

Email: connectionaltable@umc.org

Website: www.umc.org/connectionaltable

GENERAL COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

- Coordinates and administers The United Methodist Church's finances in accordance with General Conference legislative actions
- Receives, disburses and accounts for the church's general funds
- Safeguards the church's legal interests and rights
- Compiles and publishes denominational records
- Provides an insurance program available to all U.S. local churches
- Provides an investment vehicle for church funds through The United Methodist Church Foundation



Address: P.O. Box 340029, Nashville, TN 37203-0029
Office: 1 Music Circle N., Nashville, TN 37203-0029
Telephone: (866) 367-4232 and (615) 329-3393
Email: gcfa@gcfa.org
Website: www.gcfa.org

GENERAL BOARD OF CHURCH AND SOCIETY

- Promotes the church's Social Principles and other statements on social justice made by General Conference
- Analyzes long-range social trends underlying ethical values, systemic alternatives and strategies for social change
- Develops, promotes and distributes resources to inform, motivate, train, organize and build networks for action toward social justice
- Serves as the denomination's chief social-action and public-policy agency, addressing U.S. and international issues

Address: 100 Maryland Ave. N.E., Washington, DC 20002-5625
Telephone: (202) 488-5600 | Service Department: (800) 967-0880
Email: gbcs@umc-gbcs.org
Website: www.umc-gbcs.org

DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES

- Works directly with leaders in local churches, districts and annual conferences to fulfill the shared dream of making world-changing disciples
- Connects leaders with needed resourcing, training, consulting and networking that support spiritual formation through Upper Room Ministries, new church development, revitalization of local churches, young people's ministries and materials for use in central conferences

Address: P.O. Box 340003, Nashville, TN 37203-0003
Telephone: (877) 899-2780 and (615) 340-7200
Email: info@umcdiscipleship.org
Website: www.umcdiscipleship.org

GLOBAL MINISTRIES



- Serves as the global mission agency of The United Methodist Church
- Connects 13 million United Methodists in mission in 136 countries — through people, projects and partnerships
- Coordinates efforts to make disciples, build up the church, alleviate suffering and promote justice, freedom and peace worldwide
- Through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and The Advance, the denomination's designated mission-giving channel, works to equip and transform people and places for God's mission around the world

Address: 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115

Telephone: (212) 870-3600 and (800) 862-4246

TDD: (212) 870-3709

Email: info@umcmmission.org

Website: www.umcmmission.org

GENERAL BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND MINISTRY

- Benefits elders, deacons and licensed local pastors through a candidacy system and training
- Offers resources to annual conference boards of ordained ministry for their work with candidates for ordination and continuing education, training, certification and mentoring of clergy
- Helps young adults to clarify their vocation and God's call on their lives through leadership and discernment programs
- Assists current and future United Methodist leaders — both lay and clergy — through student loans (about \$2 million annually) and scholarships (about \$3 million per year) and 520 campus ministries
- Fosters educational access through the Black College Fund, the Ministerial Education Fund, the Africa University Fund and 120 schools, colleges, universities and schools of theology
- Collaborates with the central conferences and Methodist-related theological schools to expand opportunities for training clergy

Address: P.O. Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37203-0007

Telephone: (615) 340-7400

Website: www.gbhem.org

GENERAL BOARD OF PENSION AND HEALTH BENEFITS



- Cares for those who serve The United Methodist Church and has done so for more than 100 years
- Serves as the primary financial institution for long-term savings and retirement plans and programs for 91,000 participants in alignment with United Methodist Church values
- Administers — through the Center for Health — health, disability and death benefit plans and programs for clergy and their families, employees of general agencies, lay employees of local churches and UMC-affiliated institutions
- Administers — through the Wespath Investment Management Division — an internationally recognized, socially responsible investment program with approximately \$17 billion in assets under management. The pension fund is the largest denominational fund, ranking among the top 100 U.S. pension funds.
- Develops and helps fund — through the Central Conference Pension Initiative — sustainable pension programs for all clergy outside the United States who need them

Address: 1901 Chestnut St., Glenview, IL 60025-1604

Telephone: (800) 851-2201 and (847) 869-4550

Website: www.gbophb.org

GENERAL COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

- Cares for the historical interests of The United Methodist Church
- Gathers, preserves and disseminates archival materials
- Maintains archives and libraries to preserve the church's records for responsible public and scholarly use
- Highlights the historic witness made by women, racial- and ethnic-minority peoples and other constituencies not usually covered in traditional documentation

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 127, Madison, NJ 07940-0127

Office Address: 36 Madison Ave., Madison, NJ 07940

Telephone: (973) 408-3189

Email: gcah@gcah.org

Website: www.gcah.org

UNITED METHODIST COMMUNICATIONS



- Seeks to increase awareness of the mission and ministries of The United Methodist Church in communities and nations around the world
- Works to meet the strategic communications, public relations and marketing needs of the global church in order to invite people into relationship with Jesus Christ and advance ministries that change lives
- Serves in partnership with local churches to support communications ministry by offering services, tools, products, resources and training designed to meet their needs
- Supports the development of global communications infrastructure
- Gathers and distributes stories of United Methodists making a difference in the world through a variety of channels
- Manages the denomination's official website UMC.org

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 320, Nashville, TN 37202-0320

Office Address: 810 12th Ave. S., Nashville, TN 37203-4744

Telephone: (615) 742-5400 | Customer Service: (888) 346-3862

Email: umcom@umcom.org

Website: www.umcom.org

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

- Serves as the largest denominational faith organization for women with approximately 800,000 members
- Fosters spiritual growth, develops leaders and advocates for justice
- Raises up to \$20 million each year for programs and projects related to women, children and youth in the United States and in more than 100 countries around the world

Address: Interchurch Center, 475 Riverside Drive,
15th Floor, New York, NY 10115

Telephone: (212) 870-3900

Email: y Moore@unitedmethodistwomen.org

Website: www.unitedmethodistwomen.org



GENERAL COMMISSION ON RELIGION AND RACE



- Cultivates racial inclusion and the full participation of all people into the work, witness and life of The United Methodist Church
- Empowers church clergy and lay leadership from the local church to United Methodist agencies and related institutions to the values of inclusion, racial equity and justice in the transformative work of vital congregations in order to build up the body of Christ
- Engages The United Methodist Church in seeking unity in everything the denomination does through leadership development, cultural competency training, research and evaluation, resourcing and relationship building
- Strives to fulfill God's vision of a global family serving all people and, inevitably, moving the church from eliminating racism to preventing racism

Address: 100 Maryland Ave. N.E., Suite 400, Washington, DC 20002
Telephone: (202) 547-2271
Email: info@gcorr.org
Website: www.gcorr.org

GENERAL COMMISSION ON THE STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN

- Challenges United Methodists to work toward the full and equal responsibility and participation of women at all levels of the global church
- Advocates for women, individually and collectively, within the church
- Develops policies and strategies to address and eradicate all forms of institutional sexism, including gender discrimination and sexual harassment
- Seeks creative methods to rectify past inequities and to prevent future discrimination
- Leads the church in preventing, addressing and healing sexual misconduct by ministerial leaders
- Develops guidelines and recommendations to ensure that The United Methodist Church is inclusive of all people and reflective of the fullness of God

Address: 77 W. Washington St., Suite 1500, Chicago, IL 60602
Telephone: (800) 523-8390 and (312) 346-4900
Email: info@gcsrw.org
Websites: www.gcsrw.org
www.umsexualethics.org

GENERAL COMMISSION ON UNITED METHODIST MEN



- Provides resources that enable churches to create and sustain ministry to, for and through men within congregations and to men in surrounding communities
- Trains men's ministry specialists
- Enables groups to relate to the national organization
- Encourages development of small, special-interest groups
- Provides opportunities for spiritual growth
- Suggests outreach ministries
- Trains scouting ministry specialists and promotes opportunities for churches to expand their ministries to young people through Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Big Brothers Big Sisters, 4-H and Camp Fire USA

Address: 1000 17th Ave. S., Nashville, TN 37212

Telephone: (615) 340-7145

Email: gcumm@gcumm.org

Website: www.gcumm.org

THE UNITED METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE

- Advances Christianity throughout the world by publishing and distributing resources to support the work, ministry and mission of clergy, seminarians, Christian educators and laity in The United Methodist Church and the broader Christian community
- Functions as a fully self-supporting agency
- Includes the following publishing imprints: Abingdon Press (a wide variety of books and materials for the broad market), Cokesbury (official United Methodist teaching and learning materials), Common English Bible, Kingswood Books (scholarly Methodist works) and The United Methodist Publishing House (official publications of The UMC)
- Provides, through Cokesbury, a vast array of products and services to individuals and congregations, including altar ware, church furniture, church signs, vestments and robes, candles, steeples, and books and resources from a variety of publishers.
- Cokesbury operates cokesbury.com, employs field representatives and provides a call center with a Christian education hotline.





Mailing Address: P.O. Box 280988, Nashville, TN 37228-0988
Office Address: 2222 Rosa L. Parks Blvd., Nashville, TN 37228-0988
Telephone: (615) 749-6000, Cokesbury: (800) 672-1789
Email: cokes_serv@cokesbury.com
Website: www.Cokesbury.com
www.AbingdonPress.com
www.MinistryMatters.com
www.UMPH.org

COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

- Provides spiritual leadership through the bishops of The United Methodist Church to more than 11 million people in a broad range of settings on four continents, including North America, Europe, Africa and Asia
- Presides over annual and central conferences
- Plays an important leadership role in helping to set the direction of the church and its mission throughout the world

Address: 100 Maryland Ave. N.E., Suite 320, Washington, DC 20002
Telephone: (202) 547-6270
Email: cob@umc.org

OFFICE OF CHRISTIAN UNITY AND INTERRELIGIOUS RELATIONSHIPS OF THE COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

- Advocates for ecumenical relationships with other faith communities
- Seeks to help United Methodists to realize the church's ecumenical commitment — to understand their membership in the one church of Jesus Christ
- Seeks to discern and advocate God's plan for the unity of the human community
- Develops training for ecumenical leadership among United Methodists
- Interprets United Methodist ties with national and international interreligious organizations

Address: Room 300, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115
Telephone: (800) 653-8936 and (212) 870-3800
Website: www.ocuir.org



- Determines the constitutionality of acts, or proposed acts, of the General, jurisdictional, annual or central conferences — either on appeal or through request for declaratory decisions; determines whether acts of official bodies of the church conform to the *Book of Discipline*
- Reviews decisions of law made by presiding bishops

Address: The Rev. F. Belton Joyner Jr., Secretary
1821 Hillandale Road, Suite 1B, PMB 334
Durham, NC 27705-2659

Email: judicialcouncil@umc.org

ONLINE COURSE INTRODUCES UNITED METHODIST BASICS

“UNITED METHODISM 101” (UM 101)

This online course is designed for new church members and anyone else wanting to know more about the denomination and its history, structure, beliefs and ministries.

In this popular course, we explore questions such as:

- Who are the people of The United Methodist Church?
- Why are we called “United Methodists”?
- Who speaks on behalf of The United Methodist Church?
- Who decides the official beliefs of The United Methodist Church?
- Is it OK to disagree with the church on an issue like war or abortion?
- Why is The United Methodist Church

involved in political issues?

During an open session, start the online course when it is most convenient for you and move at your own pace. Each of the four modules in this course contains many interactive features and takes about one hour to complete. The course is open for six weeks and provides .5 CEU for successful completion.

To learn more, register and see sample course materials, visit
www.umcom.org/um101.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Q: Where can I get more information on United Methodism?

A: Here are a few of the many places to learn about United Methodism:

- www.umc.org, The United Methodist Church's official website, offers information on church doctrine and beliefs, history, structure and organization and ministry funding.
- Several free online courses about United Methodist basics are available at training.umcom.org.
- Cokesbury.com, the retail arm of The United Methodist Publishing House, offers books and curriculum.

Q: Where can I learn more about my annual conference?

A: Visit your conference website for information about conference ministries, missions, grants and scholarships, news and resources. At www.umc.org, click on "Conferences" in "Directory" to find your conference.

Q: What are United Methodism's major publications?

A: The United Methodist Church offers a variety of resources highlighting news and the church's mission and ministry as well as devotional guides for all ages. For the complete list, visit www.umc.org and choose "Agency Publications" under "Directory."

Q: How does The United Methodist Church, as a denomination, communicate with me?

A: Conferences and general agencies

offer news stories, e-newsletters and other publications to inform you about where and how the church is working around the world and how you can become involved. You also can find news about the church on Facebook and Twitter.

Q: I'm new to my community. How can I find a United Methodist church in my U.S. neighborhood?

A: Go to www.umc.org/find-a-church. Type your city, state and ZIP code and — voilà — a list of community churches will appear. If you've heard of a particular church and want to see if it might meet your needs, type the church name and click on its website.

Q: Where can I learn about United Methodist schools?

A: To learn more, go to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry website, www.gbhem.org. Under the blue "Education" tab, click on "Schools, Colleges and Universities."

Q: I am exploring a call to the ordained ministry. Who will help me to answer that call?

A: Your pastor is an excellent source. For basic information, go to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry website, www.gbhem.org.

Do you have more questions?
Ask InfoServ, the information service for the church, infoserv@umcom.org and infoserv.umc.org.

GLOSSARY OF SELECTED UNITED METHODIST TERMS



Apportionment: The share each annual conference or local church pays to support international, national and regional (annual conference) mission.

Associate member: Local pastors who have reached age 40, completed at least four years of full-time service as a local pastor, and the five year Course of Study, and have been approved by the board of ordained ministry and clergy session.

They are not ordained, but are available for full-time service and are guaranteed an appointment within the annual conference. Associate members have voice and vote in every matter except constitutional amendments, ordination and conference relations of clergy (¶¶ 321–323).

Baptism (Holy Baptism): Sacramental act whereby a person is cleansed by the Holy Spirit and becomes part of the body of Christ, the church universal. The United Methodist Church recognizes two sacraments: Baptism and Holy Communion.

Benevolences: Monetary gifts to causes that carry out United Methodist mission, ministry and program.

Book of Discipline, The: A fundamental book outlining the law, doctrine, administration, organizational work and

procedures of The United Methodist Church. Each General Conference amends *The Book of Discipline*, and the actions of the General Conference are reflected in the quadrennial revision. Often referred to as the *Discipline*.

Book of Resolutions, The: The volume containing the text of all resolutions or pronouncements on issues approved by the General Conference and currently valid. *The Book of Resolutions* contains not only the resolutions and policy statements passed by the most recent General Conference but also all such statements still considered to represent the position of The United Methodist Church. The text of any resolution is considered the official position of the denomination on that subject.

Book of Worship, The: Book containing the rituals, sacraments and orders of worship related to The United Methodist Church.

Charge Conference: Basic policy-making body of the local church. It reviews the congregation's ministries, endorses candidates for ministry and sets clergy compensation.

Charge, Pastoral: One or more local churches organized under and subject to the *Discipline*, governed by a single charge conference.



Communion (Holy Communion): Holy Communion, also called the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist, is one of two sacraments celebrated in The United Methodist Church. Instituted by Christ at the Last Supper, it repeats the action in which Jesus gave his disciples bread and wine, representing his body and blood (Mark 14:22-24). This sacrament follows the ministry of the Word read and proclaimed.

Gathered worshippers, led by an elder or an appointed licensed local pastor, join with others who love Jesus to offer God gifts of bread and wine "in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice in union with Christ's offering for us."

They share these gifts with one another, confident and rejoicing that the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon them that they "may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood."

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Confirmation: The act by which people who were baptized as infants or young children (or, because of other special circumstances, could not make the baptismal vows themselves) make their first public statement of their declaration or profession of faith.

Connection, connectional, connectionalism: Principle, basic to The United Methodist Church, that all leaders and congregations are connected in a network of loyalties and commitments.

Deacon: Person in full connection ordained to lifetime ministry of Word and Service to community and congregation. In this capacity, he or she leads the church in relating the gathered life of Christians to their ministries in the world, thus connecting the church's worship with its service in the world.

District: Regional group of churches or charges, supervised by a district superintendent.

District superintendent: Ordained elder appointed by the bishop to administer the work of the church within a particular geographic area.

Elder: Person ordained to a lifetime ministry of Service, Word, Sacrament and Order. He or she is authorized to preach and teach God's word, to administer the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, and to order the life of the church for mission and ministry.

General funds: Funds approved by the General Conference to support various aspects of denominational work. The General Council on Finance and Administration serves as the treasurer of the general funds.

Itinerancy/itineracy: System of The United Methodist Church by which bishops appoint pastors to charges. The pastors are under obligation to serve where appointed. The current form of the itinerancy grew from the practice of Methodist pastors traveling widely throughout the church on circuits.

Laity: From *laos*, meaning “people of God,” and used to describe members of a congregation or parish.

Local pastor: A licensed pastor, annually approved by the district committee on ordained ministry, who is authorized to perform all duties of an ordained minister, including the sacraments, while assigned to a particular charge under the supervision of a district superintendent. A clergy mentor oversees the local pastor’s work in the course of study for ordained ministry and advises on matters of pastoral responsibility.

Missionary conference: Conference that has particular missionary opportunities, limited membership and resources, unique leadership requirements, strategic regional or language considerations and ministerial needs. In the United States, the two missionary conferences include Oklahoma Indian and Red Bird.

Sacrament: Something consecrated or holy. Traditionally, a Christian ordinance manifesting an inward, spiritual grace by an outward, visible sign or symbol. United Methodists recognize two sacraments: Holy Baptism and Holy Communion.

Social Principles: A document setting forth the basic position of The United Methodist Church on important social issues. Each General Conference reviews the Social Principles document and it is printed in full in the *Discipline*.

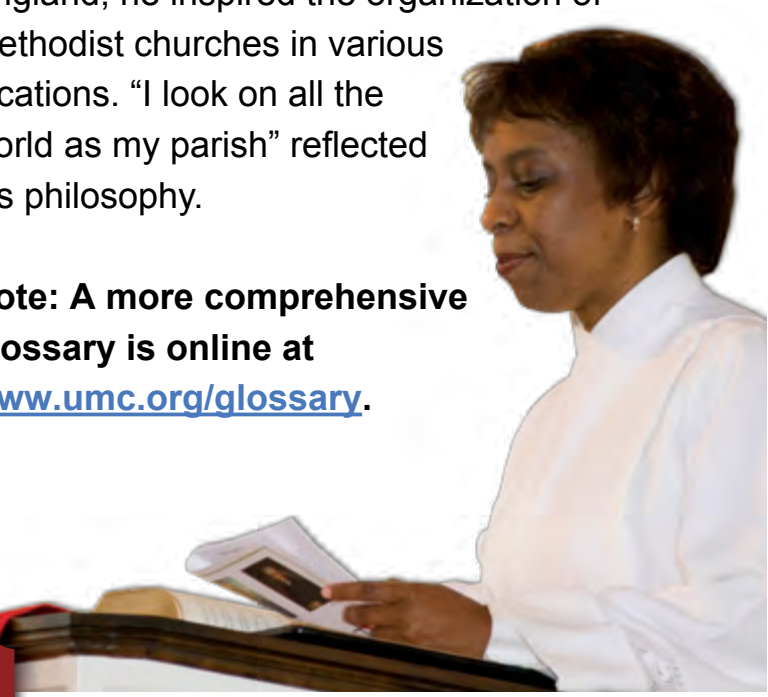
Stewardship: Devout investment or use of money, time and ability. In biblical times, a steward supervised a household or an estate. Today, as God’s children, we deem God the source of all we have, seek to hold it in trust for God and desire to be “good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10a, NRSV).

Tithe: Biblical standard, usually one-tenth of one’s annual income, given as a contribution to support the ministry and mission of the church.

Wesley, Charles (1707-88): British Methodist leader, hymn writer and brother of John Wesley. One of the first Methodists, he is said to have composed more than 5,000 hymns.

Wesley, John (1703-91): British founder of Methodism and brother of Charles Wesley. An Anglican clergyman, he said his heart was “strangely warmed” in 1738 while listening to the reading of a comment by Martin Luther on Romans. He became a preacher. Although he never left the Church of England, he inspired the organization of Methodist churches in various locations. “I look on all the world as my parish” reflected his philosophy.

Note: A more comprehensive glossary is online at www.umc.org/glossary.



EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS



Effective communication helps you portray your church as an inviting and inspiring place to worship and engages your congregation in mission and outreach. Listed below are some resources from United Methodist Communications that support vital congregations.

HOW YOU CAN USE THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook was developed as a communications tool to strengthen your ministry. Listed below are a few ways to use the handbook and share the maps. This multipurpose resource can help you tell the story of our amazing connectional church.

**New member orientation classes – Confirmation classes – Stewardship classes
Leadership training – Welcome packets – Church bulletin boards
Sunday school presentations – Finance-ministry meetings
Charge conference packets – Budget session – Mission meetings**

REACH OUT EFFECTIVELY

Church marketing plan: Reach the people you want to serve –

www.umcom.org/learn/market-your-church

Advertising: Spread the word – Rethinkchurch@umcom.org

Find-A-Church: Write a profile to attract newcomers – www.umc.org/find-a-church

Welcoming: Create hospitality – www.umcom.org/welcoming

Web ministry: Open your doors online – www.umcom.org/webministry

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Imagine No Malaria: Advocate and raise funds – www.ImagineNoMalaria.org

Rethink Church: Engage the world – www.umcom.org/rethinkchurch and connect with seekers – www.RethinkChurch.org

Rethink Church Events: Relate to your neighbors – events.rethinkchurch.org

UMC Giving: Learn how giving changes lives – www.umcgiving.org

STAY CONNECTED

UMC.org: Get news and information – www.umc.org

United Methodist News Service: See what's happening – umns.umc.org

UMC Resources: www.umc.org/resources

DEVELOP KNOW-HOW

MyCom: Find free tips – www.umcom.org/mycomsubscribe

Training: Expand your knowledge – learn.umc.org

Social media: Broaden your connection – www.umcom.org/socialmedia

Interpreter magazine: Strengthen your leaders – www.interpretermagazine.org

UMC Giving: Get generosity resources for leaders – www.umcgiving.org

FIND VALUE - ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

TechShop: Purchase deeply discounted software – www.umcom.org/techshop

Free Resources: shop.umc.org

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THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Thank you for making this multipurpose communications tool available through your generous support of the World Service Fund. This book is created by United Methodist Communications.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

To order additional resources, visit www.umcsgiving.org
Email csc@umcom.org or call 888-346-3862



For more information, visit these websites: www.umcsgiving.org or infoserv.umc.org
or email: infoserv@umcom.org

