

United Methodist Structure



Annual Conference – Desert Southwest

1. Meets every year.
2. Members: ministerial members of the Annual Conference; lay members elected by the local church Charge Conference; conference lay leader; presidents of conference United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, and youth organization; and 2 persons under 25 years of age from each district.
3. Bishop of the area presides
4. Major duties:
 - a. Admit ministers to membership and decide who is to be ordained.
 - b. Vote on constitutional amendments a 2/3 affirmative vote of the aggregate members of the Annual Conferences).
 - c. Elect delegates to General Conference and Jurisdictional Conference.
 - d. Determine number of districts.
 - e. Hear the reports of the churches within the conference.
 - f. Adopt the budget for the annual conference.
 - g. Through the bishop, appoint the pastors to their stations.
 - h. Have all rights which have not been delegated to the General Conference or some other conference by the constitution.

Jurisdictional Conference -- Western

1. Responsible for promoting the evangelistic, educational, missionary, and benevolent interests of the church within its boundaries.
2. Meets every four years, at a time and place determined by the Council of Bishops, all Jurisdictional Conferences meeting at the same time.
3. Members elected by the Annual Conference:
 - a. One ministerial delegate for every 70 ministerial members of the Annual Conference (or major fraction thereof).
 - b. One ministerial delegate for every 22,000 resident church members within the Annual Conference (or major fraction thereof).
 - c. A number of lay delegates equal to the number of ministerial delegates.
 - d. Voting by orders.
4. Bishops serving within the jurisdiction preside, but cannot debate or vote.
5. Major duties:
 - a. Elects bishops
 - b. Elects members of general boards and agencies.
 - c. Determines the number of and set the boundaries of Annual Conferences.
 - d. Plans the general program for the jurisdiction.

General Conference

1. Has full legislative power over all matters which pertain to the connectional system of the entire United Methodist Church
2. Meets every four Years in April or May.
3. Members elected by the Annual Conferences
 - a. One ministerial delegate for every 140 ministerial members of the Annual Conference (or major fraction thereof)
 - b. One ministerial delegate for every 44,000 resident church members within the Annual Conference (or major fraction thereof).
 - c. A number of lay delegates equal to the number of ministerial delegates.
 - d. Elected by orders (lay voting for lay and ministers voting for ministers).
4. Bishops rotate as presiding officer; cannot debate or vote on any matter.
5. Major duties:
 - a. Define and fix powers of Annual Conference, Mission Conferences, and other church bodies.
 - b. Define and fix powers of bishops, ministers, and church members not already determined by the constitution.
 - c. Revise the hymnal and the liturgy.
 - d. Plan and direct the work of the connection (missions, education, publishing, etc.).
 - e. Set budget for next 4 years, and determine how to be raised and administered.
 - f. Set special emphases for the whole church for the next four years.
 - g. By a 2/3 vote, present amendments to the constitution to the Annual Conferences for ratification.
6. Limitations:
 - a. Cannot change the Articles of Religion, standards of Methodist doctrine, the confession of faith, or the general rules.
 - b. Cannot delete the episcopacy.
 - c. Cannot change the General Rules
 - d. Cannot do away with the right of church trial for pastors or members.
 - e. Cannot use money of the Publishing House for purposes other than care of retired pastors, widows, and orphans.
 - f. Cannot elect bishops.
7. Petitions: Any organization, minister, or lay member of the United Methodist Church may petition the General Conference by sending to the secretary a signed petition addressed to the members of the General Conference stating the local church of which each signer is a member.

The Fountains' Local Church Structure

Charge Conference

1. Meets annually
2. Presided over by the District Superintendent or an elder he or she designates.
3. Membership: Same as the Church Council. However, if the Charge Conference is convened as the *Annual Church Conference* then all members of the local church are entitled to vote.
4. Duties:
 - a. Evaluate the effectiveness of the program of the charge.
 - b. Establish goals for the ensuing year.
 - c. Develop specific proposals to be implemented by the Church Council.
 - d. Elect the local church officers.
 - e. Elect the lay member(s) of Annual Conference (must have been members of the United Methodist Church for 2 years and of the local church for one year preceding election).
 - f. Examine and recommend to the district committee on ministry persons as candidates for the ministry, the lay pastor's license, and the certificate of Lay Speaker.
 - g. Determine the pastor's salary.
 - h. Determine the amount to be accepted for world service and conference benevolences.

Church Council

1. Meets monthly/quarterly, as deemed necessary.
2. Facilitated by the Church Council chair, a layperson.
3. Membership: The Fountains' lay delegate(s) to annual conference, Chair of Finance, Chair of Trustees, Chair of Staff Parish Relations, Chair of Nominations (*by Discipline*, the Pastor), Associate Pastor, Music Coordinator, Chairs of other areas and ministries, Member(s)-at-Large as deemed necessary for diversity.
4. Duties:
 - a. Keep the vision of the church before people and oversee the administration and program of the church in light of its vision.
 - b. Establish goals for church ministries.
 - c. Elect lay officers not elected by the Charge Conference.
 - d. Receive reports and review the state of the church.
 - e. Establish the budget and provide for the financial needs of the church.
 - f. Discharge faithfully all duties and responsibilities committed to it by the Charge Conference.

Staff Parish Relations Team

1. Membership: a committee of not fewer than five nor more than nine laypersons, one of whom shall be the lay member of the Annual Conference. It is divided into three classes, each elected for a 3-yr. term.
2. Meets at least twice each year; chair elected by the Charge Conference.
3. Duties:
 - a. Its primary function is to aid the pastor and staff in making ministry effective by being available for counsel, keeping the pastor informed concerning pastor-parish relations, and interpreting to the congregation the work of the pastor.
 - b. Cultivate the pastor-parish relationship and counsel on matters relating to pulpit supply, salary, travel expense, vacation, continuing education, housing, and other matters relating to the effectiveness and well-being of the minister and her or his family.
 - c. Cooperate with the pastor, district superintendent, and the bishop in securing pastoral leadership for the church (relationship to the bishop and superintendent is advisory only).
 - d. Recommend to the Church Council personnel for other professional and lay staff positions created by the board but not subject to episcopal appointment.

Finance Team

1. Meets at least quarterly.
2. Presided over by a chair elected by the Charge Conference.
3. Membership: chair of the committee, pastor(s), financial secretary, treasurer, other persons elected by the Charge Conference.
4. Duties:
 - a. To receive and review all financial askings to be included in the annual budget.
 - b. Compile the budget and submit it to the Church Council for review and adoption.
 - c. Develop a stewardship program with the Stewardship Team and implement plans which will raise sufficient income to meet the budget adopted by the Church Council.
 - d. Cultivate interest in benevolent causes and the world mission of the church.
 - e. Administer church funds according to instructions from the Church Council.
 - f. Provide for the annual audit of the financial records of the church and all of its organizations and report the results of this audit to the Charge Conference.

Trustees

1. Meets once a month.
2. Presided over by a chair, elected from its own membership.
3. Not fewer than three nor more than nine members, serving in classes elected for a three year term.
4. Duties:
 - a. To care for the real and personal property of the local church, under the direction of the Charge Conference.
 - b. Care for the purchase, sale, mortgage, encumbrance, construction, repair, remodeling, and maintenance of local church property.
 - c. Accept, reject, and administer all conveyances, grants, gifts, donations, legacies, and bequests given to the local church.
 - d. Serve as the officers of the corporation in the church if incorporated

Nominations Team

1. Presided over by the chair, who shall be the pastor of the church.
2. Membership: Not more than nine persons (excluding the pastor) elected by the Charge Conference.
3. Duties:
 - a. To nominate officers and personnel to be elected by the Charge Conference and the Church Council, discerning spiritual gifts and seeking the best possible person for each position of leadership in the church.
 - b. Serve throughout the year to guide the Church Council on personnel matters (other than employed staff).
 - c. Provide adequate training for leadership for those who have accepted responsibility for leadership positions in the church.

Staff

1. Meets weekly.
2. Duties: oversees the day-to-day ministries and services of the church, including communications, coordination of ministries, worship, and administrative and pastoral details.