

Draft of a *General Book of Discipline* 2020

New Part VI

General Organization and Administration

Chapter One

The Local Church

Section I. The Church and Pastoral Charge

¶ 201. *Definition of a Local Church*—The Local Church is a community of true believers under the Lordship of Christ. It is the redemptive 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 exists for the worship of God, the edification of believers, and the redemption of the world.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 201 = 201

¶ 202. *The Function of the Local Church*—The church of Jesus Christ exists in and for the world. It is primarily at the level of the charge consisting of one or more local churches that the church encounters the world. The local church is a strategic base from which Christians move out to society. The function of the local church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is to help people to accept and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to live their daily lives in light of their relationship with God. Therefore, the local church is to minister to persons in the community where the church is located, to provide appropriate training and nurture to all, to cooperate in ministry with other local churches, to defend God's creation and live as an ecologically responsible community, and to participate in the worldwide mission of the church.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 202 = 202

¶ 203. *Relation to the Wider Church*—The local church is a connectional society of believers, being within The United Methodist Church and subject to its *Discipline* and is also an inherent part of the church universal, which is composed of all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and which in the Apostles' Creed we declare to be the holy catholic church.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 203=203

¶ 204. *Responsibility for the Community* —Each local church has a definite evangelistic, nurturing, and witnessing responsibility for its members and the surrounding area and a missional outreach responsibility to the local and global community. It is responsible for ministering to all its members, wherever they live, and for persons who choose it as their church.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 204=204

¶ 205. *Definition of a Pastoral Charge*—1. A pastoral charge shall consist of one or more churches that are organized under and subject to the *Discipline* of The United Methodist Church, with a charge conference, and to which an ordained or licensed clergy is or may be duly appointed or appointable as

pastor in charge or co-pastor. Where co-pastors are appointed, the bishop may designate for administrative purposes one as pastor in charge.¹ >VII: 205.001<

2. A lay person assigned by the bishop, upon recommendation of the cabinet, to do the work of ministry, is accountable to the district superintendent or another clergy appointed to oversee the charge, who will make provision for sacramental ministry.-The layperson assigned is also accountable to the policies and procedures of the annual conference where assigned. >VII: 205.002<

GBOD ¶ 205.1=205.1; 205.2=205.4

1. See Judicial Council Decisions 113, 319

Section II. Church Membership

¶ 206. *Eligibility*—The United Methodist Church is a part of the holy catholic (universal) church, as we confess in the Apostles' Creed. All people may attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments and become members in any local church in the connection (¶ 4).

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 206=214

¶ 207. *Definition of Membership*—1. The membership of a local United Methodist church shall include all people who have been baptized and all people who have professed their faith.

a) The baptized membership of a local United Methodist church shall include all baptized people who have received Christian baptism in the local congregation or elsewhere, or whose membership has been transferred to the local United Methodist church subsequent to baptism in some other congregation.

b) The professing membership of a local United Methodist church shall include all baptized people who have come into membership by profession of faith through appropriate services of the baptismal covenant in the ritual or by transfer from other churches.

2. For statistical purposes, church membership is equated to the number of people listed on the roll of professing members.

3. All baptized or professing members of any local United Methodist church are members of the worldwide United Methodist connection and members of the church universal.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 207.1-3=215.1-4

¶ 208. *Baptismal Covenant* - 1. Christ constitutes the church as his body by the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13, 27). The church draws new people into itself as it seeks to remain faithful to its commission to proclaim and exemplify the gospel. In baptism water is administered in the name of the Triune God by an authorized person. Baptism is the sacrament of initiation and incorporation into the body of Christ. After baptism, the church provides the nurture that makes possible a comprehensive and lifelong process of growing in grace.

Becoming a professing member requires the answer of faith of the baptized person made visible in a service of profession of Christian faith and confirmation using the vows of the baptismal covenant. In the case of persons whose disabilities prevent them from reciting the vows, their legal guardian[s], themselves members in full covenant relationship with God and the Church, the community of faith, may recite the appropriate vows on their behalf.

2. *Baptism and Professing membership*- a) Baptized infants and children are to be instructed and nurtured in the meaning of the faith, the rights and responsibilities of their baptism, and spiritual and moral formation. Using the services of the baptismal covenant, youth will profess their faith, commit themselves to a life of discipleship, and be confirmed. Confirmation is both a human act of commitment and the gracious action of the Holy Spirit strengthening and empowering discipleship.

b) Youth and adults who have not been baptized and who are seeking to be saved from their sins and profess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior are proper candidates for baptism in The United Methodist Church. It is the duty of the congregation, led by the pastor, to instruct them in the meaning of baptism, in the meaning of the Christian faith, and in the history, organization, and teachings of The United Methodist Church. After the completion of the period of nurture and instruction, the sponsor(s) and pastor shall bring the candidates before the congregation and administer the services of Baptismal Covenant, in which people are baptized, confirmed, and received into the Church. >VII: 208.001<

3. *Ongoing Formation in the Baptismal Covenant-* a) Formation in the baptismal covenant and in the call to ministry in daily life is a lifelong process and is carried on through all the activities that have educational value. It focuses attention upon the meaning of discipleship and the need for members to be in mission in all of life's relationships.

b) There are many occasions as people mature in the faith when the Holy Spirit's confirming action may be celebrated, such as in the reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant or other services related to life passages. Unlike baptism, which is a once-made covenant and can only be reaffirmed and not repeated, confirmation is a dynamic action of the Holy Spirit that can be repeated.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 208.1=216.1+214; 208.2=216, 1 a+b; 208.3=216.2

¶ 209. *Professing Membership* - 1. When persons unite as professing members with a local United Methodist church, they profess their faith in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; in Jesus Christ his only Son, and in the Holy Spirit. Thus, they make known their desire to live their daily lives as disciples of Jesus Christ.

2. They covenant together with God and with the members of the local church to keep the vows which are a part of the order of confirmation and reception into the Church:

a) To renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of the world, and repent of their sin;

b) To accept the freedom and power God gives them to resist evil, injustice, and oppression;

c) To confess Jesus Christ as Savior, put their whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as their Lord;

d) To remain faithful members of Christ's holy church and serve as Christ's representatives in the world;

e) To be loyal to Christ through The United Methodist Church and do all in their power to strengthen its ministries;

f) To faithfully participate in its ministries by their prayers, their presence, their gifts, their service, and their witness;

g) To receive and profess the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 209.1-2=217.Intro+1-7

¶ 210. *Growth in Faithful Discipleship*—Faithful membership in the local church is essential for personal growth and for developing a deeper commitment to the will and grace of God. As members involve themselves in private and public prayer, worship, the sacraments, study, Christian action, systematic giving, and holy discipline, they grow in their appreciation of Christ, understanding of God at work in history and the natural order, and an understanding of themselves.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 210=218

¶ 211. *Mutual Responsibility*—Faithful discipleship includes the obligation to participate in the corporate life of the congregation with fellow members of the body of Christ. A member is bound in sacred covenant to shoulder the burdens, share the risks, and celebrate the joys of fellow members. A Christian is called to speak the truth in love, always ready to respond to conflict in the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 211=219

¶ 212. *The Call to Ministry of All the Baptized*—All members of Christ's universal church are called to share in the ministry which is committed to the whole church of Jesus Christ. Therefore, each member of The United Methodist Church is to be a servant of Christ on mission in the local and worldwide community. This servanthood is performed in family life, daily work, recreation and social activities, responsible citizenship, the stewardship of property and accumulated resources, the issues of corporate life, and all attitudes toward other persons. Members are to engage in disciplined, covenant or class meetings to foster their missional involvement and to witness for Christ, serving as a living example in society while addressing injustice and suffering in the world and taking action which helps exemplify the hope and promise of Christ.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 212=220

¶ 213. *Lay Servant Ministries*- Each central conference may create categories of servant ministries for lay persons which are appropriate and needed for the expanding and ongoing mission and ministry of that conference. Educational, spiritual, and psychological qualifications and provisions for appropriate certification may be defined by the central conference. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII: 213.001-213.004<

GBOD ¶ 213=266+new

¶ 214. *Membership Records*. – 1. Each local church shall accurately maintain:

a) Membership records for each baptized or professing member including:

- (1) the person's name, date of birth, address, place of birth, date of baptism, officiating pastor, and sponsors;
- (2) date of confirmation/profession of faith, officiating pastor, and sponsors;
- (3) if transferred from another church, date of reception, sending church, and receiving pastor;
- (4) if transferred to another church, date of transfer, receiving church, and address of receiving church;
- (5) date of removal or withdrawal and reason;
- (6) date of restoration of professing membership and officiating pastor;
- (7) date of death, date and place of funeral/memorial, place of burial, and officiating pastor.

b) Constituency Roll, containing the names and addresses of such persons as are not members of the church concerned, including unbaptized children, youth and adults whose names are not on the membership record, and other nonmembers for whom the local church has pastoral responsibility.

c) Affiliate Membership Roll.

d) Associate Membership Roll.

2. In the case of a union or federated church with another denomination, the governing body of such a church may report an equal share of the total membership to each judicatory, and such membership shall be published in the minutes of each church, with a note to the effect that the report is that of a union or federated church, and with an indication of the total actual membership.

>VII: 214.001-214.003<

GBOD ¶ 214.1a=230.1; 214.1b-d+2=230.3-6

¶ 215. *Transfer from Other Denominations*—A member in good standing in any Christian denomination who has been baptized and who desires to unite with The United Methodist Church shall be received as either a baptized or a professing member. Such a person may be received as a baptized member by a proper certificate of transfer from that person’s former church or some certification of Christian baptism and as a professing member upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith through appropriate services of the baptismal covenant in our ritual. The pastor will report to the sending church the date of reception of such a member. It is recommended that instruction in the faith, ministry, and polity of the Church be provided for all such persons. Persons received from churches that do not issue certificates of transfer or letters of recommendation shall be listed as “Received From Other Denominations.”

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 215=225

¶ 216. *Affiliate and Associate Membership* - 1. A professing member of The United Methodist Church, of an affiliated autonomous Methodist or united church, or of a Methodist church that has a concordat agreement with The United Methodist Church, who resides for an extended period in a city or community at a distance from the member’s home church, may on request be enrolled as an affiliate member of a United Methodist church located in the vicinity of the temporary residence. The home pastor shall be notified of the affiliate membership. Such membership entitles the person to the fellowship of that church, to its pastoral care and oversight, and to participation in its activities, including the holding of office; except such as would allow one to vote in a United Methodist body other than the local church. However, that person is counted and reported as a professing member of the home church only.

2. A member of another denomination may become an associate member under the same conditions, but may not become a voting member of the church council.²

3. Affiliate or associate relationship may be terminated at the discretion of the United Methodist church in which the affiliate or associate membership is held whenever the affiliate or associate member shall move from the vicinity of the United Methodist church in which the affiliate or associate membership is held.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 216.1-3=227

2. See Judicial Council Decision 372.

¶ 217. *Accountability*—1. All members are to be held account-able for faithfulness to their covenant of baptism.

2. If a baptized member neglects faithfulness and discipline in terms of the baptismal covenant, every means of encouraging that member to return and of nurturing him or her to assume the vows of professing membership should be made.

3. If a professing member should be accused of violating the covenant and failing to keep the confirmation vows, then it is the responsibility of the local church, working through its pastor and its

units, to minister to that member in compliance with the provisions of ¶ 220 in an effort to enable the member to faithfully perform the vows and covenant of membership.

>VII: 217.001<

GBOD ¶ 217.1-3=221.1-3

¶ 218. *Annual Membership Report and Audit*—1. The pastor shall report to the charge conference annually the names of persons received into the membership of the church or churches of the pastoral charge and the names of persons removed since the last charge conference, indicating how each was received or removed. The church council shall appoint a committee to audit the membership record, submitting the report annually to the charge conference. >VII: 218.001<

2. In central conferences, the membership records in each local church shall be according to a common format prepared by the General Council on Finance and Administration in cooperation with the central conferences. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII: 218.002<

GBOD ¶ 218.1=231; 218.2=233/new

Section III. Care of Members

¶ 219. *Care of Children and Youth*—1. Because the redeeming love of God revealed in Jesus Christ extends to all persons, and because Jesus explicitly included the children in his kingdom, it is the responsibility of the pastor of each charge to counsel Christian parents or guardians in the meaning of baptism for children and youth of all ages, and of the significance of the vows for themselves and the local church. This includes active participation in the life of faith in the local church to prepare everyone for lifelong membership in Christ's Church. At least one parent or guardian shall be a member of a Christian church; or sponsor(s) or godparent(s) who are members renewing their own baptismal vows. All members of the local church likewise will assist and encourage the nurture of each child or youth.

2. The pastor of the church shall, at the time of administering the sacrament of baptism, furnish the parent(s), guardian(s), sponsor(s), or godparent(s) of the child who is baptized with a certificate of baptism, which also clearly states that the child is now a baptized member in The United Methodist Church. Appropriate records of the sacrament of baptism shall be maintained and kept at the local church or another appropriate location. >VII: 219.001<

3. The membership record shall be regularly reviewed to identify those who have not become professing members, for purposes of nurturing them toward profession of faith. >VII: 219.002<

GBOD ¶ 219.1=226.1; 219.2=226.2a+b; 219.3=226.3

¶ 220. *Care of Adult Members*— 1. The local church shall endeavor to enlist each member in activities for spiritual growth and in participation in the services and ministries of the Church and its organizations. It is the duty of the pastor and of the members of the church council by regular visitation, care, and spiritual oversight to provide necessary activities and opportunities for spiritual growth through individual and family worship and individual and group study to connect faith and daily living, and continually to aid the members to keep their vows to uphold the Church by their prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. The Church has a moral and spiritual obligation to nurture its nonparticipating and indifferent members and to lead them into an active church relationship.

2. The pastor in cooperation with the church council may arrange the membership in groups— with a leader for each group—designed to involve the membership of the Church in its ministry to the

community. Such groups may be especially helpful in evangelistic outreach by contacting newcomers and unreached persons, by visitation, by mobilizing neighbors to meet social issues in the community, by responding to personal and family crises, by holding prayer meetings in the homes, by distributing Christian literature, and by other means.

>VII: 220.001<

GBOD ¶ 220.1=228.1; 220.2=228.2a

¶ 221. *Review in Case of Neglect* – 1. While primary responsibility and initiative rests with each professing member to faithfully perform the vows of the baptismal covenant that have been solemnly assumed, if the member should be neglectful of that responsibility, the following procedures shall be implemented:

2. Membership records are reviewed regarding the active participation of all professing members residing in the community. Inactive members are requested to do one of four things:

a) reaffirm the baptismal vows and return to living in the community of the baptismal covenant in the church where the member's name is recorded,

b) request transfer to another United Methodist church where the member will return to living in the community of the baptismal covenant,

c) arrange transfer to a particular church of another denomination, or

d) request withdrawal.

3. If a professing member whose address is known is residing outside the community and is not participating in the worship or activity of the church, the directives to encourage a transfer of the member shall be followed or that member may request in writing that the name be removed from the roll of professing members.

4. If the address of a professing member is no longer known to the pastor, every effort shall be made to locate the member. If the member can be located, the directives of either §2 or §3 above shall be followed.

5. If the directives of §2, §3, or §4 above have been followed over a period of two years without success, the member's name may be removed as a professing member by vote of the charge conference on recommendation of the pastor. On the membership record there shall be entered after the name: "Removed by Charge Conference Action"; and if the action is on the basis of §4 above, there shall be added: "Reason: Address Unknown." The record shall be retained in order that upon reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant the person may be restored as a member. Should a transfer of membership be requested, the pastor may, after consultation with the person, issue the certificate of transfer.

>VII: 221.001<

GBOD ¶ 221.1-5=228.2b(1)-(4)

¶ 222. *Transfer of Members* – 1. *Transfer to Other United Methodist Churches*—When a pastor receives a request for a transfer of membership from a member or from the pastor of another United Methodist church or a district superintendent, that pastor shall send the proper certificate directly to the pastor of the United Methodist church to which the member is transferring, or if there is no pastor, to the district superintendent. On receipt of such a certificate of transfer, the pastor or district superintendent shall enroll the name of the person so transferring after public reception in a regular service of worship, or if circumstances demand, public announcement in such a service. The pastor of the church issuing the

certificate shall then be notified, whereupon said pastor shall remove the member from the roll.
>VII: 222.001<

2. *Transfer to Other Denominations*—A pastor, upon receiving a request from a member to transfer to a church of another denomination, shall properly record the transfer of such person on the membership record of the local church. Upon request of the member, the pastor shall hand a certificate of transfer to the member. >VII: 222.002<

3. *Transfer from Discontinued Local Churches*- If a local church is discontinued, the district superintendent shall select another United Methodist church and transfer its members thereto, or to such other churches as the members may select.

GBOD ¶ 222.1=239; 222.2=240; 222.3=229

¶ 223. *Withdrawal Without Notice*—If a pastor is informed that a member has without notice united with a church of another denomination, the pastor shall make diligent inquiry and, if the report is confirmed, shall enter “Withdrawn” after the person’s name on the membership roll and shall report the same to the next charge conference.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 223=241

¶ 224. *Restoration of Professing Membership*—1. A person whose name has been removed from professing membership by withdrawal, or action by charge conference, or trial court, may ask to be restored to membership in the local church.

2. A person whose membership was recorded as having been withdrawn, for any voluntary reason may be restored to professing membership by reaffirmation of the baptismal vows.

3. A person who withdrew under charges or was removed by trial court may ask to return to the church. Upon evidence of a renewed life, approval of the charge conference, and reaffirmation of the baptismal vows, the person may be restored to professing membership.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 224.1+2=242.1+2; 224.3=242.5

Section IV. Organization of the Local Church

¶ 225. *Primary Tasks*—

In carrying out its primary task, the local church shall be organized so that adequate provision is made for these basic responsibilities:

- (1) planning and implementing a program of nurture, outreach, and witness for persons and families within and without the congregation;
- (2) providing for effective pastoral and lay leadership;
- (3) providing for financial support, physical facilities, and the legal obligations of the church;
- (4) utilizing the appropriate relationships and resources of the district and annual conference;
- (5) providing for the proper creation, maintenance, and disposition of documentary record material of the local church; and
- (6) seeking inclusiveness in all aspects of its life.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 225=243

¶ 226. *Organization*— 1. The basic organizational plan for the local church shall include provision for the following units: a charge conference, a church council, a committee on nominations and leadership development, a committee on pastor-parish relations, a committee on finance, a board of trustees unless otherwise required by civil law, and such other elected leaders, commissions, councils, committees, and task forces as the charge conference may determine. Every local church shall develop a plan for organizing its administrative and programmatic responsibilities. >VII: 226.001<

2. The church council and all other administrative and programmatic structures of the local church shall be amenable to the charge conference. The church council shall function as the executive unit of the charge conference.

3. When circumstances so require, the charge conference may, in consultation with and upon the approval of the district superintendent, modify the organizational plans, provided that the provisions of ¶ 225 are observed. >VII: 226.002<

4. Members of the church council or alternative structure shall be persons of genuine Christian character who love the church, are morally disciplined, are committed to the mandate of inclusiveness in the life of the church, are loyal to the ethical standards of The United Methodist Church set forth in the Social Principles, and are competent to administer its affairs. It shall include youth and young adult members chosen according to the same standards as adults. All persons with vote shall be members of the local church, except where central conference legislation provides otherwise. The pastor shall be the administrative officer and, as such, shall be an ex officio member of all conferences, boards, councils, commissions, committees, and task forces, unless otherwise restricted by the *Discipline*.³

5. Central conferences shall establish provisions, or delegate such authority to their respective annual conferences, for organizing a new church or a new charge, provided that the organizing of a new local church within a charge shall be subject at least to the agreement of the superintendent and of said charge conference, and that the organizing of a new charge shall be subject at least to the agreement of the cabinet of the annual conference. All such newly organized churches shall be in accordance with local laws and other provisions of the *Discipline*.

Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*. >VII: 226.003<

6. Central conferences may establish provisions for ministry groups, units or institutional work on the level of the local church as it best serves the mission of the church, or delegate such authority to their respective annual conferences. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*. >VII: 226.004-226.007<

GBOD ¶ 226.1-2=244Intro+1; 226.3=247.2; 226.4=244.3; 226.5=259; 226.6=new

3. See Judicial Council Decisions 469, 500.

¶ 227. *Transfer of a Local Church* - A local church may be transferred from one annual conference to another in which it is geographically located by a two-thirds vote of the professing members who are present and voting in each of the following: (1) the charge conference, (2) a congregational meeting of the local church affected, and (3) each of the two annual conferences involved. Upon announcement of the required majorities by the bishop or bishops involved, the transfer shall immediately be effective. The votes required may originate in the local church or either of the annual conferences involved and shall be effective regardless of the order in which taken.

>VII: 227.001<

GBOD ¶ 227=260

Section V. The Charge Conference

¶ 228. *General Provisions*—1. Within the pastoral charge the basic unit in the connectional system of The United Methodist Church is the charge conference. The charge conference shall therefore be organized from the church or churches in every pastoral charge as set forth in the Constitution (¶ 43). It shall meet at least annually.

2. The membership of the charge conference shall be all members of the church council or other appropriate body, together with retired ordained clergy who elect to hold their membership in said charge conference and any others as may be designated in the *Discipline*, and other persons as elected by the charge conference. If more than one church is on the pastoral charge, all members of each church council shall be members of the charge conference.

3. The district superintendent shall fix the time of meetings of the charge conference. The charge conference shall determine the place of meeting.

4. The district superintendent shall preside at the meetings of the charge conference or may designate an elder to preside.

5. The members present and voting at any duly announced meeting shall constitute a quorum.

6. Special sessions may be called by the district superintendent after consultation with the pastor of the charge. 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 purposes stated in the call. Any such special session of the charge conference may be convened as a church conference (GBOD ¶ 230).

7. Notice of time and place of a regular or special session of the charge conference shall be given at least ten days in advance.

8. A joint charge conference for two or more pastoral charges may be held at the same time and place, as the district superintendent may determine.

>VII: 228.001<

GBOD ¶ 228.1+2=246.1+2; 228.3-7=246.4-8; 228.8=246.10

¶ 229. *Powers and Duties*—1. The charge conference shall be the connecting link between the local church and the general Church and shall have oversight of the church council(s).

2. The primary responsibilities of the charge conference in the annual meeting shall be to review and evaluate the total mission and ministry of the church (¶¶ 120-124), receive reports, and adopt objectives and goals recommended by the church council that are in keeping with the objectives of The United Methodist Church. The charge conference receives the report of the pastor in charge. >VII: 229.001<

3. The charge conference recording secretary shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings, and with the presiding officer, shall sign the minutes. A copy of the minutes shall be provided for the district superintendent, and a permanent copy shall be retained for church files. >VII: 229.002<

4. The charge conference shall examine and recommend candidates for licensed or ordained ministry to the Board of ordained ministry, faithfully adhering to the provisions of ¶ 309.2.c. >VII: 229.003<

5. The charge conference shall examine and recommend renewal of candidates for the ordained ministry, faithfully adhering to the provisions of ¶ 309.2.c.

6. The charge conference shall inquire annually into the gifts, labors, and usefulness of persons in specific lay servant ministries (¶ 213) and recommend persons who have met the standards set forth for such ministries. >VII: 229.004<

7. The charge conference is responsible to fulfill the apportionment according to the rules set by the annual conference and the general church. Payment of these apportionments by local churches is the first benevolent responsibility of the church. >VII: 229.005<

8. The charge conference shall receive and act on the annual report from the pastor concerning the membership.

9. In those instances where there are two or more local churches on a pastoral charge, the charge conference may provide for a charge or local church council, a charge or local church treasurer, and such other officers, commissions, committees, and task groups as necessary to carry on the work of the charge.

10. The charge conference shall promote awareness of and concurrence with the Doctrinal Standards and General Rules of the United Methodist Church, and with policies relative to Socially Responsible Investments ([BOD] ¶ 717), the Social Principles (¶¶ 160-166), and *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church*.

11. If any charge conference initiates, joins, monitors, or terminates a boycott, the guidelines in *The Book of Resolutions* should be followed. The General Conference is the only body that can initiate, empower, or join a boycott in the name of The United Methodist Church. >VII: 229.006<

12. The charge conference shall have such other duties and responsibilities as the General, central, jurisdictional, or annual conference may duly commit to it. >VII: 229.007<

GBOD ¶ 229.1=247.1; 229.2-3=247.3-4; 229.4-5=247.8-9; 229.6=247.11; 229.7-8=247.14-15; 229.9=247.17; 229.10-11=247.20-21; 229.12=247.23

¶ 230. *The Church Conference*— To encourage broader participation by members of the church, the charge conference may be convened as a church conference, extending the vote to all professing members of the local church present at such meetings, subject to the authorization of the district superintendent.

>VII: 230.001<

GBOD ¶ 230=248

¶ 231. *Elections*—Out of the professing membership, the charge conference, or church conference authorized by the district superintendent, shall elect upon recommendation by the committee on nominations and leadership development, or by nomination from the floor, at least the following:

>VII: 231.001<

1. The church council and its chairperson (see ¶ 234).

a) The church council chairperson shall be entitled to attend meetings of all boards and committees of the church unless specifically limited by the *Discipline*. >VII: 231.002<

2. The committee on nominations and leadership development, chaired by the pastor in charge. Among its members shall be the pastor, the lay leader, and a lay member of the annual conference, and representation of each local church.

a) Throughout the year, the committee shall identify, develop, deploy, evaluate, and monitor Christian leadership for the local congregation.

b) It shall recommend to the charge conference the names of officers and leaders to be elected. >VII: 231.003<

3. The committee on pastor-parish relations and its chairperson. It is composed of not fewer than five nor more than nine professing members of the local church, including the lay leader, a lay member of the annual conference, and representation of each local church. No staff member or immediate family member of a pastor or staff member may serve on the committee. Only one person from an immediate family residing in the same household shall serve on the committee.

a) It shall assist the pastor and staff of the local church in assessing their gifts, maintaining health holistically, setting priorities for leadership and service, and provides evaluation at least annually and where needed develop job descriptions.

b) It shall discern persons for ordained ministry and bring recommendations to the charge conference for candidacy.

c) The pastor shall be present at each meeting of the committee except where he or she voluntarily excuses himself or herself. The committee may be called to meet without the pastor and/or staff under consideration only by and in presence of the district superintendent who shall notify the pastor and/or staff prior to the meeting and bring them into consultation immediately thereafter.

d) The committee shall meet in closed session, and information shared in the committee shall be confidential. Its relationship to the district superintendent and the bishop is advisory only.⁴
>VII: 231.004<

4. The committee on finance and its chairperson. Among its members shall be the pastor, the lay leader, and a lay member of the annual conference.

a) It shall give stewardship of financial resources, submit a budget to the church council, and make provisions for an annual audit. >VII: 231.005<

5. The Board of Trustees as provided in chapter six on *Church Property*, unless otherwise required by civil law. >VII: 231.006<

6. The lay leader of the charge who shall function as the primary lay representative of the laity in that local church and shall have the following responsibilities:

a) fostering awareness of the role of laity both within the congregation and through their ministries in the home, workplace, community, and world, and finding ways within the community of faith to recognize all these ministries;

b) meeting regularly with the pastor to discuss the state of the church and the needs for ministry;

c) the lay leader may also be elected as lay member of annual conference. >VII: 231.007<

7. The lay member(s) of the annual conference and alternates who shall be professing members for at least two years and shall have been active participants for at least four years next preceding their election (see ¶ 32), except in a newly organized church, which shall have the privilege of representation at the annual conference session, and other exceptions allowed by ¶ 32.⁵

a) The lay member(s) of the annual conference and alternates shall, along with the pastor, serve as interpreter(s) of the actions and programs of the annual conference and the general Church.

b) If the charge's lay member of the annual conference shall cease to be a member of the charge or shall for any reason fail to serve, an alternate member in the order of election shall serve in place.
>VII: 231.008<

8. To insure for appropriate financial accountability for offerings and other income funds, there shall be elected both a financial secretary and a treasurer, if not paid employees of the local church.

a) The financial secretary records and deposits donated funds, as well as other financial assets of the congregation at the direction of the church council. The treasurer disperses funds to authorized expenditures, at the direction of the church council. Thus no one person will oversee both income and expenditures of the local church accounts.

b) No immediate family members of any appointed clergy may serve as treasurer, finance chair, financial secretary, counter, or serve in any paid or unpaid position under the responsibilities of the committee on finance, as described herein. These restrictions would apply only to the church or charge where the clergy serves. >VII: 231.009<

9. The recording secretary.

10. Additional members of the charge conference (see ¶ 228.2).

11. It is recommended that the charge conference elect a church historian in order to preserve the history of each local church.

12. All local church offices and all chairs of organizations within the local church may be shared between two persons, with the following exceptions: trustee, officers of the board of trustees, treasurer, lay member of annual conference, member and chairperson of the committee on pastor-parish relations. When two persons jointly hold a position that entails membership on the church council, both may be members of it.

13. The term of office is according to the provisions of the annual conference. It is recommended that no officer serve more than three consecutive terms in the same office.

GBOD ¶ 231 Intro+1=249 Intro+1+251.3; 231.2=249.2+258.1; 231.3= 249.3+258.2;

231.4=249.4+258.4; 231.5=249.4+258.3; 231.6=251.1; 231.7=249.5+251.2; 231.8=249.4+258.4;

231.9=249.6; 231.10 (new); 231.11=247.5; 231.12=249.8; 231.13=247.7

4. See Judicial Council Decision 701.

5. See Judicial Council Decisions 170, 305, 342, 469, 495.

¶ **232. *Removal of Officers and Filling of Vacancies***—If a leader or officer who has been elected by the charge conference is unable or unwilling to perform the duties reasonably expected of such a leader or officer, the district superintendent may call a special session of the charge conference. The purpose of such special session shall be stated as “Consideration for the removal of person(s) from office and the election of person(s) to fill vacancy(ies).”

>VII: 232.001<

GBOD ¶ 232=250

¶ **233. *Missional Potential***- In central conferences, the charge conference may organize ministries according to missional needs and potential. It may elect a coordinator or ministry group chairperson for any or all of its areas of ministry. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII: 233.001-233.005<

GBOD ¶ 233=253+254

Section VI. The Church Council

¶ **234. *The Church Council***- 1. *Purpose*—The church council shall provide for planning and implementing a program of nurture, outreach, witness, and resources in the local church. It shall also provide for the administration of its organization and temporal life. It shall envision, plan, implement, and annually evaluate the mission and ministry of the church.

2. *Mission and Ministry* — Nurture, outreach, and witness ministries and their accompanying responsibilities include:

a) The nurturing ministries include: education, worship, Christian formation, membership care, small groups, and stewardship.

b) The outreach ministries include: local and larger community ministries of compassion, justice, and advocacy.

c) The witness ministries include: developing and strengthening evangelistic efforts of sharing of personal and congregational stories of Christian experience, faith, and service; and communications.

>VII: 234.001<

3. *Meetings* — The council shall meet at least quarterly. The chairperson or the pastor may call special meetings. >VII: 234.002<

4. *Responsibilities* — It will be the responsibility of the church council to:

- a) give adequate consideration to the missional purpose of the church; encourage, plan and set the goals of the local church; determine activities and work; receive reports and evaluate the ministry;
- b) review the membership of the local church;
- c) fill interim vacancies occurring among the lay officers of the church between sessions of the annual charge conference;
- d) establish the budget on recommendation of the committee on finance and ensure adequate provision for the financial needs of the church;
- e) recommend to the charge conference the salary and other remuneration of the pastor(s) and staff members after receiving recommendations from the committee on pastor-parish relations (staff-parish relations) if these are not set by the annual conference. >VII: 234.003<

5. *Membership*—The charge conference will determine the size of the church council. The membership shall include but not be limited to the following:

- a) the chairperson of the church council;
- b) the lay leader;
- c) a lay member to annual conference;
- d) the pastor(s).
- e) the secretary of the charge conference;
- f) other members as elected by the charge conference. >VII: 234.004<

6. *Quorum*—The members present and voting at any duly announced meeting shall constitute a quorum.

7. The church council may appoint additional committees as it deems advisable.

>VII: 234.005-234.008<

GBOD ¶ 234.1+2a-c=252.1+2a-c; 234.3=252.3a; 234.4a=247.3; 234.4b-e=252.4a-d; 234.5a-d=252.5a+b+g+l; 234.5e-f=247.4+new; 234.6=252.6; 234.7=258.5