

# UMC Organization

**January 18, 2024**

**January 21, 2024**



## A message from the Subcommittee



We recognize that the current times in the United Methodist Church are characterized by intense contention and difficulties. These challenges have caused significant divisions and tension within the denomination.

In response to these circumstances, we call for:

- 1 **Patience, kindness, gentleness, and love:** Let us approach one another with understanding and compassion, recognizing that people may hold differing perspectives and experiences. It is crucial to engage in respectful dialogue and foster an environment of empathy, where our actions reflect the love of Christ
- 2 **Openness to divine guidance from the Holy Spirit:** As we navigate this discord, it is vital that we remain open to the Holy Spirit. Let us humbly seek God's will, individually and collectively, relying on spiritual discernment and guidance to guide us through these turbulent times.
- 3 **Prayers for each other, the church, and our ministry:** In the face of discord, let us turn to prayer as a means of seeking solace, guidance, and unity. Through heartfelt intercession, we can lift up one another, our beloved church, and our collective mission, asking for divine intervention and wisdom.

# Preview | UMC Org Structure

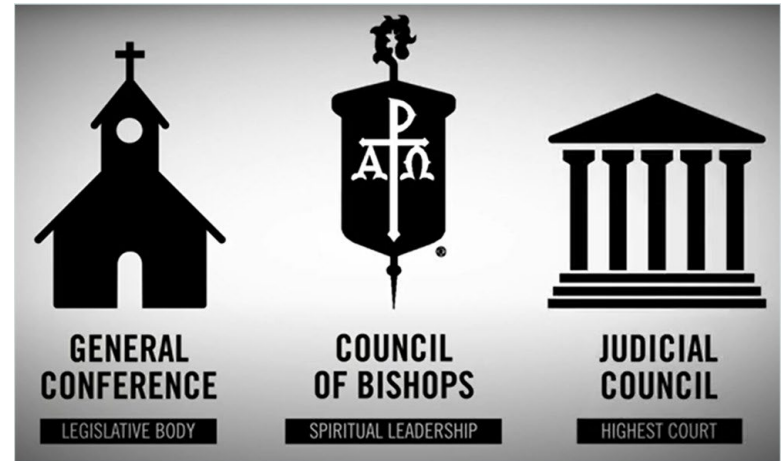
The United Methodist Church does not have a central headquarters or a single executive leader.

Duties are divided among the bodies that include:

**The General Conference:** Legislative Body that sets the official policy and speaks for the denomination; meets every four years and consists of clergy and lay delegates.

**The Council of Bishops:** Executive Body that provides spiritual leadership; not “ordained” as bishops, but clergy elected to the office of Bishop.

**The Judicial Council:** Judicial Body, or “court” comprised of the nine members made up of laity and clergy elected by the General Conference to serve.





# GENERAL CONFERENCE

LEGISLATIVE BODY

## Legislative Authority | General Conference

- General Conference is the highest legislative body in The United Methodist Church
- It meets once every four years to revise/create church law, adopt resolutions, and pass plans and budgets.
- It sets the denomination's official position on a variety of issues and cultural challenges.
- It is the only body authorized to speak for The United Methodist church.

## Executive Authority | Council of Bishops

- Bishops give general oversight to the worldly and spiritual interest of the church.
- A bishop serves as a general superintendent for the church, assigned to the geographical area (episcopacy).
- Bishops have the responsibility to see that the rules and regulations developed by General Conference (Book of Discipline) are carried out.
- Bishops set all clergy and district superintendent appointments in the episcopacy they serve.



## Judicial Authority | Judicial Council



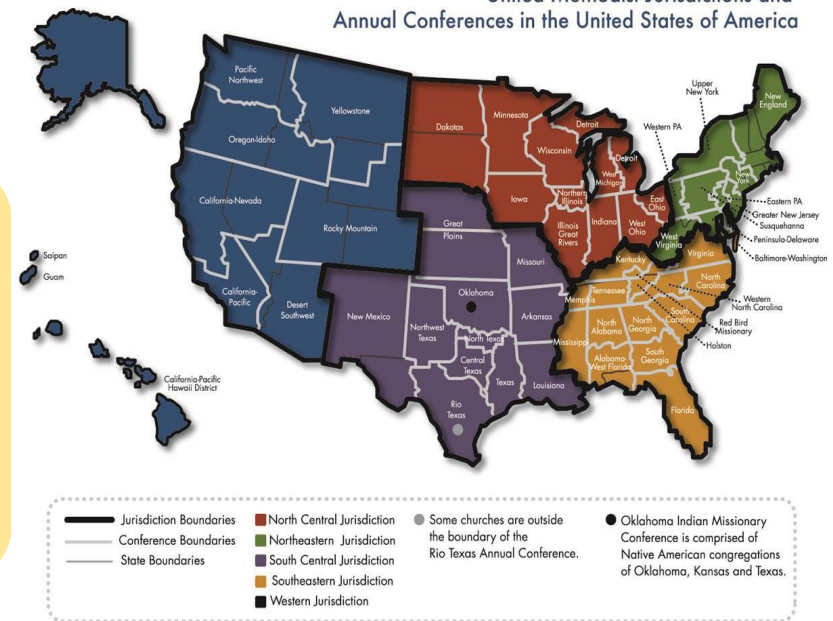
- The Judicial Council is made up of nine members who are elected during regular sessions of General Conference.
- Four clergy and four laity always serve on the Judicial Council, with the ninth seat alternating between clergy and laity.
- Authority to review and make decisions on points of law made by Bishops as well as review actions taken at General Conference for constitutionality.
- An affirmative vote of at least 6 members shall be necessary to declare any act of the General Conference unconstitutional.

# Five (5) US-based Jurisdictions

1. **Northeastern**
  - 10 Annual Conferences
2. **North Central**
  - 10 Annual Conferences
3. **Western**
  - 7 Annual Conferences
4. **South Central**
  - 12 Annual Conferences
5. **Southeastern**
  - 14 Annual Conferences

Alabama/West Florida  
 North Alabama  
 Central Appalachian  
 Missionary  
 Houston  
 Florida  
 Kentucky  
 Mississippi  
 Tennessee – Western Kentucky  
 North Georgia  
 South Georgia  
 Virginia  
 Western North Carolina  
 North Carolina  
 South Carolina (Bishop L. Jonathan Holston)

United Methodist Jurisdictions and Annual Conferences in the United States of America

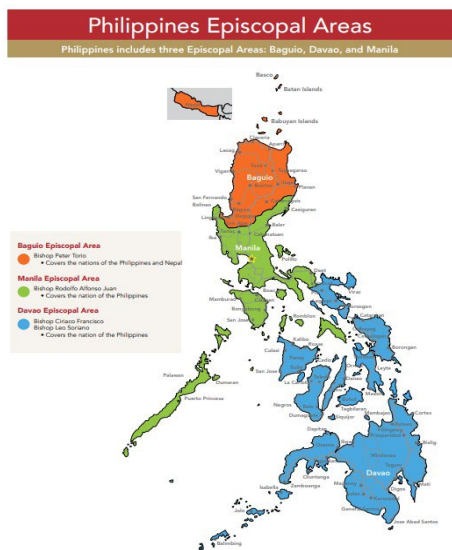


## Seven (7) Central Jurisdictions Located Internationally

**Note:** Jurisdictional and Central Conferences are responsible for the **election of new bishops and assigning bishops to their episcopacy**. These conferences meet every four years, alternating with the General Conference. The process includes forming a committee on episcopacy within each jurisdiction for receiving Episcopal Nominations from individuals, local churches, and annual conferences.



**Africa:** Contains five episcopal areas, 10 annual conferences and ministry in 11 countries;  
**Congo:** Contains four episcopal areas, 14 annual conferences, and ministry in nine countries;  
**West Africa:** Contains four episcopal areas, six annual conferences, and ministry in six countries



**The Philippines** constitutes one central conference, which has three episcopal areas, 24 annual conferences, and ministry in one country.



**Central and Southern Europe:** Contains one episcopal area, seven annual conferences, and ministry in 15 countries;  
**Germany:** Contains one episcopal area, three annual conferences, and ministry in one country;  
**Northern Europe and Eurasia:** Contains two episcopal areas, 10 annual conferences, and ministry in 14 countries.



## Regional Bodies known as Annual Conferences



*Annual Conferences are responsible for the selection and ordination of clergy and election of delegates to Jurisdictional and General Conference. Delegates are NOT representatives; they vote their conscience.*

An Annual Conference is a regional body for a specific geographic area that provides an intermediate level of governance between local churches and the general or global structures of the UMC.

- **Geographic Scope:** Size varies significantly, ranging from a few churches in a small area to a large number of churches in a larger region.
- **Membership:** Made up of clergy serving the conference and a group of elected lay members representing local churches within the conference.
- **Leadership:** Led by a resident bishop appointed to oversee the region and provide spiritual leadership. The bishop is supported by a team of district superintendents who provide administrative guidance to the churches within their districts.
- **Decision-Making:** Annual meetings held where clergy and lay members come together to make decisions related to the governance and mission of the conference.
- **Administrative Functions:** Can include appointing and assigning clergy to local churches, providing pastoral support and guidance, overseeing clergy ordination processes, and managing conference resources and finances.
- **Connectional Relationships:** Provides for collaboration, mutual support, and shared decision-making among local churches and clergy within its boundaries and fosters connections with other Annual Conferences and the broader global structures of the UMC.

# UMC SC Districts



The Districts of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church are defined by the local churches and charges assigned to them, not by specific geographic lines. This map is a general representation.

## Districts of the SC Annual Conference

Anderson	<b>Marion</b>
Columbia	Orangeburg
Florence	Rock Hill
Greenville	Spartanburg
Greenwood	Walterboro
Hartsville	Charleston

**Socastee UMC is in the Marion District.**

# Local Church Governance

**Charge Conference** is held annually to:

- Review and evaluate the total mission and ministry of the church, receive reports, **elect local church leaders**, and adopt objectives and budgets recommended by the church council
- The voting members of the charge conference are:
  - Members of the church council
  - Retired ordained clergy who elect to hold their membership in said charge conference

**Church Conferences** are normally held for special decisions requiring the vote of the total church membership:

- All members of the local church present at such meetings are eligible to vote
- The church conference **shall be** authorized by the district superintendent
- It may be called at the discretion of the district superintendent or following a written request to the district superintendent by one of the following:
  - Pastor
  - Church Council
  - 10 percent of the professing membership of the local church

# Socastee UMC | Our Structure

Five main entities lead Socastee UMC

- **Church Council**  
Responsible for setting church goals/objectives and approving the church budget
- **Board of Trustees**  
Responsible for care, management, and use of all SUMC property
- **Staff Parrish Relations Committee**  
Responsible for staffing the necessary positions at SUMC as well as consulting with the Bishop on clergy appointments
- **Nominations Committee**  
Recommends to the charge conference the name of people to serve as leaders of the church
- **Finance Committee**  
Manages church money and recommends annual budget to Church Council



*The* **BOOK** *of*  
**DISCIPLINE**  
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



2016

## The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church

- The Book of Discipline is the guiding document of the United Methodist Church. It contains our church history, constitution, doctrinal standards, church laws, organizational structure, processes/procedures, and social principles.
- Originally established in 1784 and has been published every 4 years thereafter following the meeting of the General Conference.
- Changes were made at the special called General Conference in 2019 but the last printed edition is 2016.