

Discipleship Ministries Legislation for General Conference 2024



Introduction

Lucky you! You have chosen to download our handy (and hopefully helpful guide) for Discipleship Ministries' legislative proposals that will be considered at the United Methodist General Conference being held in Charlotte, North Carolina in 2024. The proposals also include items submitted from the Division Ministries with Young People, which has an administrative relationship with Discipleship Ministries.

Thank you for taking a detailed interest in how the administrative order of the United Methodist Church helps to guide and shape our denominations efforts regarding discipleship. For newcomers, the legislative process and formatting of proposals can feel unfamiliar or confusing. Indeed, it can seem that way even for experienced delegates depending on rule changes and amendments that get proposed on site at the General Conference, whether in committee or on the floor.

Therefore, a few tips for understanding process and content follow this introduction. After reviewing those tips, please continue to the detailed portion of this document, which outlines Discipleship Ministries' proposals that will be considered during the legislative sessions of General Conference.

Thank you for being a faithful member of the United Methodist Church and praise God for the opportunities that you have already had to grow as a world transforming disciple of Jesus Christ. General Conference should be an opportunity for further discipleship, as representatives from around the world gather for holy conferencing.

Background

OUR MISSION: To challenge and support local church and annual conference leaders for their task of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

OUR VISION: To see a vital and vibrant church on fire to transform the world.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: *(Revised in 2020)*

1. An intentional discipleship system (or pathway) in every church rooted in our identity with Christ, focusing on explicitly anti-racist discipleship.
2. Equipping churches to engage their communities, particularly those for whom the church has become irrelevant, recognizing a diverse mission field.
3. Creating and lifting up local, contextual resources globally, working closely with the UMC ethnic plans, caucus groups, and other partners around the world.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Our "Report of The General Board of Discipleship (d/b/a Discipleship Ministries) 2017-2020" is available in the 2020 Advanced Daily Christian Advocate Volume 2, Section 1. Print edition pages 379-384. PDF pages 259-264.

Our "Report of The General Board of Discipleship (d/b/a Discipleship Ministries) 2021-2024 (Supplemental Report)" is available in the 2020 Advanced Daily Christian Advocate Volume 3, Section 1 (Supplement for 2024). Print edition pages 1368-1372. PDF pages 186-190.

Reading Our Proposals

- The proposals below are submitted for consideration at General Conference in 2024 from Discipleship Ministries. Each of these proposals was created, considered, approved of, and submitted by our Board of Directors to help refine and update Discipleship Ministries' role within the United Methodist Church, as well as sustainability for the future.

- Due to the delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and subsequent lockdowns and travel restrictions, most proposals were submitted for consideration in 2019 in preparation for a standard General Conference in 2020 (which would have been hosted in Minneapolis, MN). Since that conference was postponed to 2024, the organizers of General Conference allowed updates to be made to legislation, and some new proposals. Proposals submitted prior to 2020 and did not need updates still appear in the ADCAs that were developed and published for 2020. They retain their original assignment numbers and the names of those who submitted them.
 - Please note that some legislation from Discipleship Ministries has the signature or “submitted by” name of our former board President, Mark Webb. Bishop Mark Webb retired from his role as bishop and president of our board, then joined the Global Methodist Church. These pieces of legislation continue to be approved by the current Board of Directors of Discipleship Ministries.
 - Any proposals from Discipleship Ministries that show as submitted by Mark Webb were created and submitted prior to 2019 and did not require any updates to meet the current hopes of the board of directors.
 - Any proposals submitted after 2020 carry the name of Discipleship Ministries’ current General Secretary, Rev. Jeff Campbell and are likewise fully supported by the current Discipleship Ministries Board of Directors.
- **The heading at the top of each page** the existing paragraph number that the proposal will affect, along with the title of the proposal. The paragraph number listed corresponds to the paragraph in the most recent edition of *The Book of Discipline*. If “ND” is listed, the item is non-disciplinary. If there is a letter “R” followed by a number, that item would be found in the most recent version of *The Book of Resolutions*.
- **ADCA Location:** Lists where you can look up the proposal in the Advance Daily Christian Advocate (ADCA). As of the writing of this information, (March 2024) there are 3 editions of the ADCA published: ADCA Volume 2, Section 1; ADCA Volume 2, Section 2; and ADCA Volume 3, Section 1. The information in these columns is organized consistently for how to locate the proposal within the ADCA:
 - Proposal Identification Number
 - Version of the ADCA
 - The print-version page where the proposal begins and ends.
 - The PDF (electronic download) page where the proposal begins and ends.
- **Comments/Rationale:** Lists a brief commentary or rationale for why the proposal should be considered.
- **Petition Text:** Lists the proposal’s text in its entirety. It is formatted in the way that is required by General Conference.
 - Text that appears in normal font and appearance is language that already exists in the current *Book of Discipline* or *Book of Resolutions*. That text would remain unchanged by the action of the proposal.
 - Text that appears underlined is language that would be added. This is new language that does not appear in the current version of the paragraphs being considered.
 - Text that appears as ~~strikethrough~~ is language that would be removed by the proposal.

Our staff would be happy to connect with leaders from delegations and Annual Conferences to discuss or address any questions related to these proposals prior to and at General Conference.

Legislative Process

- Voting Delegates are representatives selected to have voice and vote at General Conference. Voice means that one has the opportunity to speak during debates and ask questions about proposals during the legislative process. Vote means that one has the opportunity to vote “Yes” “No” or “Abstain” whenever a vote is called for.
- The legislative process starts “in committee.” Legislation proposed to general conference is labeled with an identification number and sorted into a committee for first consideration. Often, legislation is grouped into its committee assignment by its area of focus. A committee is run by a committee chair, who brings legislation forward for consideration, refinement and voting by voting delegates assigned to that committee. A piece of legislation can be affirmed as it is submitted, amended to include new language or remove other language, not passed by the committee, or in some cases, not considered at all.

- When a piece of legislation passes committee, it can then be considered by the entire voting body of General Conference, or “on the floor.” The consideration and voting process is again held with the entire voting body. If a piece of legislation receives enough votes, it will be affirmed by the body and become adopted as language used by the UMC to organize itself and its areas of focus. A piece of legislation must also be reviewed to ensure that it is in line with the United Methodist Church’s constitution.
- If any of this sounds A LOT like the way that the United States Government creates and passes laws, that’s (in part) because the process of organizing the Methodist Church in America happened around the same time as the formation of the United States Government.
- The “Advance Daily Christian Advocate” (ADCA) is the printed and public resource where all legislative proposals can be found. This document is translated into multiple languages in order to help provide access and improve understanding for all delegates. This is very helpful, because often legal language is used in proposals. Having quality translations is very important.

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¶268 – Make National Plan Less U.S. Centric

ACDA LOCATION: 20118-DI-¶268-G. Volume 2. Section 1, Print Page 394. PDF Page 274.

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Broadens scope of Hispanic/Latino National Plan beyond US-specific contexts. Removes the word “national”—works together with proposal for paragraph 269.

PETITION TEXT:

Amend ¶268 as follows:

- 3c) completed a track of study for certified lay ministers relevant to the candidate’s assignment as defined by the General Board of Discipleship, or the ~~National~~ Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry in collaboration with the General Board of Discipleship, and the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries or equivalent structure;
- 3e) had all requirements for certification, including appropriate screening and assessment as defined by the annual conference, reviewed by the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries, or equivalent structure, for referral to the district committee on ordained ministry for examination of persons who have applied in writing to be certified lay ministers and to make recommendation for certification (see ¶666.11). After the district committee on ordained ministry interviews the candidate, the district committee on ordained ministry will make a recommendation to the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries for final certification by that committee.
- 4e) had all requirements for recertification reviewed by the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries, or equivalent structure, for referral to the district committee on ordained ministry for examination of persons who have applied in writing to be renewed as certified lay ministers and to make recommendations for recertification (see ¶ 666.11). After the district committee on ordained ministry interviews the certified lay minister, the district committee on ordained ministry will make a recommendation to the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries for final recertification by that committee.

¶269 – Make National Plan Less U.S. Centric

ACDA LOCATION: 20119-DI-¶269-G. Volume 2. Section 1, Print Page 394. PDF Page 274.

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Broadens scope of Hispanic/Latino National Plan beyond US-specific contexts. Removes the word “national” - works together with proposal for paragraph 268.

PETITION TEXT:

Amend ¶269 as follows:

Lay missionaries are committed laypersons, mostly volunteers, who are willing to be trained and to work together as a ministry team with their pastor-mentor, in order to develop and lead faith communities, establish community ministries, develop church school extension programs, and engage in congregational development with and into the local community.

Lay missionaries are formed according to, and follow the guidelines established by, the National Committee of the ~~National~~ Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry, working in conjunction with the annual conference. They are certified jointly by their annual conference and the ~~National~~ Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry. The ministry team is supported by and accountable to the local congregation, district or annual conference entity that assigns it to its mission. The concept of the lay missionary is based theologically on the ministry of the laity, in order to complement the work of the pastor.¹³ A certified lay missionary shall be equivalent to a certified lay servant in the processes of certification as a lay minister (¶268.3-6). ; ~~and the Module I-Module II formational sequence and Module IIIs for continuing education of the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry shall be equivalent to the track of study for certified lay ministers relevant to the candidate's assignment, and the advanced course or approved continuing education events described therein.~~

The modular formational sequence and continuing education requirements of the Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry for lay missionaries shall be equivalent to the track of study for certified lay ministers relevant to the candidate's assignment, and the advanced course or approved continuing education events described therein.

¶533 – Update Jurisdictional Young People’s Ministries to Reflect Proposed Changes to Division on Ministries with Young People

ACDA LOCATION: 20120-DI-¶533-G. Volume 2. Section 1, Print Page 394-5. PDF Page 274-5.
21093-DI-¶533. Volume 3. Section 1. Print Page 1379-80. PDF Page 197-8.

PREFERRED ACTION: Withdraw to Resubmit, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Proposed changes to the Global Young People’s Convocation and Division on Ministries with Young People require updates to responsibilities of jurisdictional, or equivalent bodies, for nominations.

PETITION TEXT:

1. Jurisdictions shall engage youth, young adults, and adults who work with them in creative partnership to: a) Network youth, young adults and young people’s ministries throughout the region, b) Support young people’s ministries in the annual conferences, and c) Provide a process by which representatives nominees are chosen ~~and sent to~~ to send applications to the Global Young People’s Convocation and the Division on Ministries With Young People Young People’s Connectional Network.
2. Jurisdictions are encouraged to organize their Young People’s Ministries in creative ways that work best for their context. The jurisdictional young people’s ministries coordinator shall help design, maintain, and revise any processes to accomplish this work. In any process or coordinating group for Jurisdictional Young People’s Ministries, the following representation is encouraged: a) Participants from each conference in the jurisdiction. b) Racial/ethnic representation that reflects the demographic make-up of the jurisdiction. c) Participants who bring a variety of theological and cultural perspectives. d) Youth and young adults who may or may not also be serving on Conference Councils of Youth/Young Adult Ministry. e) Adult workers who may or may not also be conference youth/young adult staff or similar designee.
3. There shall be a jurisdictional young people’s ministries coordinator who shall be accountable to the jurisdictional council on ministries or equivalent structure and the jurisdictional young people’s ministries coordinating team. This coordinator may or may not be the same person as the adult representative nominee to the ~~Division on Ministries With Young People~~ Young People’s Connectional Network.
4. Responsibility to Choose Representatives Nominees to the ~~Division on Ministries With Young People~~ Young People’s Connectional Network—Using a process appropriate to each jurisdiction’s context, the Jurisdictional Young People’s Ministries shall: a) ~~Choose~~ Nominate one youth, one young adult, and one adult worker member to apply to serve on the ~~Division on Ministries With Young People~~ Young People’s Connectional Network of the General Board of Discipleship for a four-year term. Youth ~~chosen~~ nominated to serve on the apply to ~~Division on Ministries With Young People~~ shall be age sixteen or younger at the time of ~~appointment~~ nomination. Young adults nominated to apply shall be age 30 or younger at the time of nomination. b) ~~Nominations shall come from annual conference councils on youth ministry or equivalent structure, local churches, districts, conference youth coordinators, or other interested clergy or laity.~~ c) The Jurisdictional Young People’s Ministries should ensure that either the youth or, young adult, or adult worker nominated representative (who is elected in the jurisdictional election) will be a racial/ethnic young person. d) As far as possible, ~~members of nominees to~~ nominees to the ~~Division on Ministries With Young People~~ Young People’s Connectional Network from each jurisdiction shall be from ~~two different~~ more than one annual conferences in that jurisdiction.
5. ~~Responsibility to Choose Representatives to Attend the Global Young People’s Convocation—In the year prior to the Global Young People’s Convocation, Jurisdictional Young People’s Ministries shall choose five youth and one adult to serve as voting delegates to the Global Young People’s Convocation.~~
5. Other suggested responsibilities for the Jurisdictional Young People’s Ministries: a) Initiate and support jurisdictional events (camps, conferences, workshops, and so forth). b) Recommend priorities, concerns, and/or policies to the ~~Division on Ministries With Young People~~ Young People’s Connectional Network. c) Promote the establishment and awareness of the ~~needs, concerns, issues, and so forth,~~ of racial and ethnic persons through caucuses, camps, and consultations, ~~and so forth.~~ d) Promote the spiritual growth of participants in the jurisdictional young people’s ministry events and activities. e) Promote an evangelistic outreach with young people and through young people by providing educational opportunities and resources that increase their awareness, exposure, and engagement in the areas of mission, social justice, discipleship, leadership development, and spiritual formation as they relate back to their annual conference and local church. f) Provide training and supportive experiences for conference young people’s ministries personnel. g) Enable communication between general and conference levels of young people’s ministries.

¶547.4 – Update 547.4 to Reflect Proposed Changes to Division on Ministries with Young People

ACDA LOCATION: 20518-ST-¶547.4-G. Volume 2. Section 2. Print Page 817. PDF Page 233.

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Update to reflect proposed changes to Division on Ministries with Young People, creating a nominations process (as opposed to a naming process) for representatives to the Young People's Connectional Network.

PETITION TEXT:

Amend ¶547.4 as follows:

4. A central conference may have a standing committee on young people's ministry. This committee shall be composed of youth, young adults, and adult leaders of youth or young adult ministry from each annual conference in the central conference. The duty of this committee shall be to study the relation of young people to the Church and to devise ways and means of developing the Church's ministry for, with, and by young people. The committee shall make recommendations to the central conference regarding youth and young adult organizations within its areas as well as nominate one youth, one young adult, and one adult worker to apply to serve on the Young People's Connectional Network of the General Board of Discipleship for a four-year term (¶1206). ~~elect delegates to the Global Young People's Convocation (¶1210).~~

¶1101 – Update Language for General Board of Discipleship

ACDA LOCATION: 20125-DI-¶1101-G. Volume 2. Section 1. Print Page 397. PDF Page 277.

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Update language to reflect current mission of the denomination.

PETITION TEXT:

¶1101. Purpose

1. There shall be a General Board of Discipleship, ~~the purpose of which is found within the expression of the total mission of the Church.~~ Its primary purpose shall be to assist annual conferences, districts, and local churches of all membership sizes to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world in their efforts to win persons to Jesus Christ as his disciples and to help these persons to grow in their understanding of God that they may respond in faith and love, to the end that they may know who they are and what their human situation means, increasingly identifying themselves as children of God and members of the Christian community, to live in the Spirit of God in every relationship, to fulfill their common discipleship in the world, and to abide in the Christian hope.
2. The board shall use its resources to enhance the meaning of membership as defined in ¶¶ 216-220, which emphasizes the importance of the identification of church membership with discipleship to Jesus Christ. The board shall seek to enable congregations to carry out their primary task and shall provide resources that support growth in Christian discipleship. In doing its work, the board shall listen to the needs and requests of the Church, conduct research, design and produce resources, offer training, and deliver resources. All of this is to support congregations in their primary task of reaching out and receiving all who will respond, encouraging people in their relationship with God and inviting them to commitment to God's love made known in Jesus Christ, providing opportunities for them to be nurtured and formed in the Christian faith, and supporting them to live lovingly and justly in the power of the Holy Spirit as faithful disciples. The board, through all activities, shall lead and assist congregations in becoming inclusive communities of growing Christians, celebrating and communicating to persons of every age, racial and ethnic background, and social condition the redeeming and reconciling love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.
3. Members of the Board of Directors of the General Board of Discipleship shall assume fiduciary, strategic, and generative governing functions. Fiduciary responsibilities include ensuring financial, legal, and ethical stewardship of tangible assets; accountability for stated performance standards; ensuring the annual evaluation of the general secretary; and providing counsel to the general secretary regarding evaluation and deployment of staff. Strategic responsibilities include ensuring that priorities, goals, achievement markers, and agency resources are aligned with the mission, vision, and values of the agency. Generative responsibilities include long-range analysis and planning in accordance with agency mission, vision, and values; setting direction and priorities for the agency; and exploring options in order to amend priorities when needed.
4. Members of the Board of Directors of the General Board of Discipleship are to be dedicated Christian leaders who have a heart for the local church and a passion for making disciples. They must be willing to invest time and skills to support the work of the board, including interpreting and articulating the GBOD strategy in a variety of contexts. ~~They must engage in regular and intentional conversation with networks and individuals throughout the church to ensure that the wide diversity of people and perspectives present in The United Methodist Church are considered as the board carries out its responsibilities. They must be committed to supporting and implementing the mandates and foci of the general church as well as the General Board of Discipleship.~~

¶1102 – Eliminate Redundancy in 1102

ACDA LOCATION: 20126-DI-¶1102. Volume 2. Section 1. Print Page 397-8. PDF Page 277-8.

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Combining information to eliminate redundancy.

PETITION TEXT:

¶1102. Responsibilities – All the responsibilities assigned to the units within the board shall be considered to be the responsibilities of the board. In addition to these, the board shall have authority to:

1. Provide for special publications directed toward the local church nurture, outreach, witness ministries, age-level and family ministries, ministry group representatives, the ministry group chairpersons, the pastor, and the other local church officers for whom the board has primary responsibility.
2. Manage and produce *The Upper Room* daily devotional guide and a wide range of other resources to help people grow in their relationship with God.
3. Facilitate arenas that broker knowledge, convene strategic conversations, provide for contextualized ministries, and build upon Wesleyan theology and traditions for local church and annual conference clergy and lay leadership in the
3. ~~Provide systems of resources and support to users of resources that will assist people in the historic disciplines of the Church, i.e., Christian education, evangelism, lay ministries, spiritual growth, stewardship, and worship. The board's response will address faith formation and discipleship systems for: These resources will address ministry concerns across a.) all ages and stages of life, including support for comprehensive, specific ministries with children, youth, and adults including resources that ensure their safety and care; ages and family groupings and across programmatic and administrative functions of the congregation in order to improve ministry and the quality of Christian leadership for the future ministry of the Church.~~
4. ~~Develop and provide resources, training, and consultation for pastors of congregations. These resources will focus on equipping pastors for their spiritual and visioning b.) clergy and lay leadership roles with their in congregations; and their role as partners with the laity.~~
5. ~~Develop and provide resources, training, and consultation for pastors and congregational leaders as they enhance and evaluate the c.) ministries of the laity and initiate new forms of ministry that nurture faith, build Christian community, and equip people for ministry in daily life;~~
6. ~~Provide resources and training that will assist annual conference leaders in building, improving, and sustaining systems that develop spiritual leaders for congregations.~~
7. ~~Provide resources and training that will assist leaders in planning and administering comprehensive children, youth, young-adult, adult, and older-adult ministries that encourage lifelong learning and growth in faith, that strengthen understanding of God and relationship with God and other people, and that lead to spiritual maturity in faith and in practice.~~
8. ~~d.) Provide representation in cooperation with ecumenical and interdenominational partners agencies as they relate to the work of the board;~~
9. ~~e.) Respond to requests and needs for mutual ministries throughout the world, in consultation with annual conferences and appropriate agencies;~~
10. ~~Engage in f.) needed research, experimentation, innovation, and the testing and evaluation of programs, resources, and methods to discover more effective ways to help persons achieve the purpose set forth in ¶ 1101. This responsibility will include authority for experimentation and research in all areas of ministry assigned to the General Board of Discipleship and will encourage cooperation with other agencies in the conduct of such research and experimentation. This research and experimentation may be assigned to appropriate units within the board.~~
11. 4. Ensure that ethnic local church concerns shall be an integral part of the total life of the board, providing guidance, resourcing, and training as appropriate so that these concerns are incorporated in all areas of discipleship in the local church.

¶1106.4 – Broaden the Idea of Christian Education

ACDA LOCATION: 20128-DI-¶1106.4-G. Volume 2. Section 1, Print Page 398-99. PDF Page 278-9.

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Broaden the Idea of Christian Education.

PETITION TEXT:

4. In the discharge of its responsibility for Christian education in The United Methodist Church, the board may establish and provide for participation by ~~church school groups~~ local churches in a fund (or funds) for missions and Christian education in the United States and overseas. Plans for the allocation of, administration of, and education for this fund(s) shall be developed cooperatively by such means as the board shall determine in consultation with the General Board of Global Ministries.

¶1108 – Broaden the Idea of Faith Formation

ACDA LOCATION: 20129-DI-¶1108-G. Volume 2. Section 1, Print Page 399. PDF Page 279.

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Add for clarity “Faith Formation, Intentional Discipleship and Christian Education.” Streamline and add to previous paragraphs, including small group and intentional discipleship ministries and eliminating ¶ 1117.

PETITION TEXT:

¶1108. *Faith Formation, Intentional Discipleship and Christian Education*

1. The board shall have general oversight of the educational interests of the Church which includes small group and intentional discipleship ministries as directed by the General Conference. The board shall be responsible for the development of a clear statement of the biblical and theological foundations of Christian education, small group and intentional discipleship ministries consistent with the doctrines of The United Methodist Church and the mission of the board. The board shall devote itself to strengthening and extending the teaching ministry of the Church through research; testing new approaches, methods, and resources; evaluation; and consultation.
2. Through the ministry of Christian education, small group and intentional discipleship ministries, United Methodist congregations shall reach out to people of all ages as they are, encourage them to commit themselves to Christ and membership in his church, provide opportunities for them to grow in faith and to connect that faith with their daily lives, and equip them to live as God’s people in the world. Opportunities for Christian education, small group and intentional discipleship ministries shall include formational educational aspects of all the general areas and interests of the denomination, such as evangelism, stewardship, missions, Christian social action, and Bible instruction. The ministry of Christian education, small group and intentional discipleship ministries shall be developed as a comprehensive, unified, and coordinated program for children, youth, adults, and families in local churches. It shall be promoted and administered by the board in cooperation with those agencies responsible for Christian education, small group and intentional discipleship ministries in ~~jurisdictions~~, annual conferences, districts, and local churches. It shall give careful consideration to the needs of all churches, such as small and large membership churches, rural and urban settings, and ethnic populations.

¶1109 – Broaden the Idea of Christian Education

ACDA LOCATION: 20130-DI-¶1109-G. Volume 2. Section 1. Print Page 399-400. PDF Page 279-280.

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Updated language while eliminating detailed lists since ministry areas can change with need and the broader description allows both inclusion and change.

PETITION TEXT:

¶1109. *Faith Formation, Intentional Discipleship, and Christian Education Responsibilities and Standards* – The board shall organize as may be necessary for carrying on the educational ministry throughout the whole life span of persons. The board shall:

1. Formulate and interpret the philosophy of Christian education and faith formation based on biblical, theological, and educational foundations (consistent with the Doctrinal Standards and General Rules of The United Methodist Church, ¶ 104) as they relate to teaching and learning; the church school and related activities; individual or group study; fellowship, education, and action groups for children, youth, and adults; related educational programs provided by civic youth-serving agencies; weekday preschools and kindergartens; daycare centers; choirs, drama groups, mission studies; education for leisure; outdoor education; camping; education of persons with developmental disabilities and others of special need; special Bible study groups; confirmation and church membership training.
2. Develop Promote contextual educational approaches in a variety of settings that appeal to persons of different ages, lifestyles, learning needs, and theological perspectives.
3. ~~Develop educational approaches that will enable persons of different~~, racial, ethnic, and cultural groups ~~to appropriate the gospel for their own life situations~~; with particular attention given to the needs of persons with disabilities.
4. ~~Promote church school extension in a variety of ways, such as providing resources and training that help persons in sponsoring new church schools, starting new church school classes, and expanding teaching and learning opportunities in the congregation and the community.~~
5. ~~3.~~ Provide resources and support services for clergy and lay leadership ~~pastors, parents, educational leaders, teachers, and others who are~~ responsible for teaching and learning with persons across the life span at the local church, district, and conference levels. These resources may include:
6. ~~Provide resources and support services for a.) teacher recruitment, development, and training in biblical, theological, and ethical thinking, as well as in; b.) procedures and methods for teaching and learning; work with the colleges and seminaries of the Church wherever possible to forward the common interest in the training of professional Christian educators and the training of ministerial students in local church Christian education; provide national camp training events and assist jurisdictions and annual conferences in designing, guiding, and resourcing camp training programs and outdoor Christian education.~~
7. ~~Set c.) standards and provide guidance concerning programming, leadership, and grouping for the various educational settings of the Church, including the church school.~~
8. ~~Establish and d.) guidelines for the organization and administration of the church school; for recording and reporting membership and attendance in educational settings. of the church school; and for the equipment, arrangement, and design for church school buildings and rooms, with particular attention given to the needs of persons with disabilities.~~
9. ~~Provide resources and services related to the training and work of local church directors, ordained and diaconal ministers, and associates of Christian education and educational assistants.~~
10. ~~4.~~ Provide assistance and information for groups and organizations with direct oversight for United Methodist-related camp/retreat centers and ministries, to help them with their responsibility to establish standards, policies, and procedures related to physical facilities, program, and leadership. To the extent possible, all camps/retreat centers shall be accessible to persons with disabilities.
11. ~~5.~~ Cooperate with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry as they develop standards for certifying professional ministry careers as provided in ¶ 1421.2c and promote the continuing growth of local church staff related to educational ministries.

- ~~12. Provide resources, models, and training to support annual conferences and local churches as they help people make decisions related to their general Christian vocation as well as their specific occupations or careers.~~
- ~~13. 6. Review and recommend for approval the curriculum plans developed in cooperation with the other boards and agencies in the Curriculum Resources Committee and interpret and support the curriculum developed by the committee.~~
- ~~14. 7. Promote the observance of Christian Education Sunday (¶¶ 265.1, 1806.12).~~
8. Promote the General Rule of Discipleship “to witness to Jesus Christ in the world, and to follow his teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit”²² by advocating the formation of Covenant Discipleship Groups or equivalent models applicable to varied contextual settings for all ages.

¶1110 – Examples in 1110 Eliminated for Clarity

ACDA LOCATION: 20131-DI-¶1110-G. Volume 2. Section 1. Print Page 400. PDF Page 280

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Eliminated the many examples while retaining cooperation as a necessary duty.

PETITION TEXT:

¶1110. Cooperation

1. The board shall cooperate with other general boards and agencies and ecumenical partners in the promotion of stewardship, evangelism, worship, mission education, and social action, and in the evaluation of these ministries from the perspective of sound educational procedure.
2. ~~The board, in cooperation with the General Board of Global Ministries, shall be responsible for developing a unified program of mission education for all age groups in the local church. The mission education program shall include provisions for the following:~~
 - a) ~~Linking emerging philosophies of mission and of education through information flow and cooperative work of the respective staffs and boards;~~
 - b) ~~Developing and interpreting varied styles of mission education appropriate to different groups, including age groupings and the various racial and ethnic cultures;~~
 - c) ~~Curriculum planning for education in mission, providing mission information about projects supported by The United Methodist Church (including ecumenical projects) through the church school resources, and preparing curricular and other materials for mission education;~~
 - d) ~~Participating with various agencies in the design, development, and promotion of ecumenical mission education resources;~~
 - e) ~~Developing and interpreting educational approaches and channels for mission giving of children, youth, and adults, such as the Children's Fund for Christian Mission;~~
 - f) ~~Developing and interpreting models for new approaches to mission study and educational participation in mission;~~
 - g) ~~Providing information regarding educational criteria to the staff of the General Board of Global Ministries for use in certifying leaders for schools of mission;~~
 - h) ~~Disseminating a comprehensive listing of mission resources for leaders;~~
 - i) ~~Cooperating with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the General Board of Global Ministries in providing an emphasis on mission education in the schools of theology through United Methodist courses on history, polity, and doctrine now required for candidates considering ordination or consecration.~~
3. ~~The board shall have authority to cooperate with other agencies of the Church, with defined organizations, and with ecumenical agencies to promote the ministry of Christian education.~~
4. ~~The board is authorized to cooperate with the General Board of Global Ministries in the planning and execution of programs for the strengthening and development of the town and country, urban, and ethnic local church ministries of The United Methodist Church and of interdenominational cooperation in these fields.~~

¶1111 – Eliminate Duplication

ACDA LOCATION: 20132-DI-¶1111-G. Volume 2. Section 1. Print Page 401. PDF Page 281.

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Words stricken are not necessary because wording is included under responsibilities.

PETITION TEXT:

¶1111. *Evangelism* – The board shall have general oversight of the evangelism ministries of the Church as directed by the General Conference. Evangelism is central to the mission of the Church. *Evangelism* is defined in the *Book of Discipline*, ¶ 630.1. ~~The board shall share the blessing of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ with people of all age groupings and the various racial and ethnic cultures by the development, promotion, and support of all phases of evangelism throughout The United Methodist Church.~~

¶1112 – Eliminate Duplication

ACDA LOCATION: 20133-DI-¶1112-G. Volume 2. Section 1. Print Page 401-2 PDF Page 281-2.

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Redundant language eliminated.

PETITION TEXT:

¶1112. *Evangelism Responsibilities* – ~~In response to God's love in Jesus Christ, the board shall have general oversight of the evangelism ministries of The United Methodist Church by the envisioning and developing of resources and by training and consultation in various settings. The board shall:~~

1. Set forth an adequate biblical and theological basis and understanding for the personal, corporate, and social aspects of evangelism, consistent with the doctrine and tradition of The United Methodist Church, and it shall communicate and interpret the same to the membership of the Church.
2. ~~Promote contextual ministries~~ Give emphasis to the development, interpretation, and promotion of ministries of evangelism at the conference, district, and local church levels so that persons who are not active Christian disciples through any local church will be invited and cared for by a United Methodist church.
3. Provide to clergy and laity resources and training for strategies, ministries, and programs in evangelism, including resources for the local church ministry of evangelism (¶ 255).
4. Cooperate with other program agencies of the Church in supporting and equipping both clergy and laity at all levels in involvement in evangelism, church growth, and new congregational development.
5. Provide and encourage research in what creative congregations of various membership sizes and settings are doing in effective evangelism that can serve as models for other churches, and foster experimentation and demonstration of additional evangelistic approaches, consistent with the nature of the Christian gospel and the Church, at all levels of the Church's life, including new congregations and all racial and cultural groups.
6. ~~Provide resources and services for those serving as pastors, diaconal ministers, directors of evangelism, general evangelists, and other professionals in evangelism in local churches.~~
7. 6. Set standards for elders desiring to serve as general evangelists. The board shall send copies of these standards quadrennially to the bishops, district superintendents, conference boards of discipleship, and general evangelists. An elder who feels called by God to be a general evangelist should prepare definitely for such service under the guidance of the annual conference to which that person belongs.
8. ~~Relate and provide liaison services to~~ 7. Foster cooperation with: a.) denominational and ecumenical associations and fellowships of evangelism.
9. Seek mutual cooperation among and with the; b.) seminaries of the Church and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry in the training and nurturing of persons for ministry and in continuing education where the responsibilities intersect.
10. ~~Communicate with; c.) other agencies in whose programs the subject matter of who have an interest in evangelism would be included, and provide counsel, guidance, and resources for the implementation of such programs.~~
11. ~~Participate in and cooperate with the work of the Curriculum Resources Committee of the board for the inclusion of evangelism concepts and resources in local church study curriculum.~~
12. ~~Provide consultation with; d.) leaders of conferences, districts, local congregations, and other agencies to develop strategies in evangelism for outreach, church revitalization, and new congregational development.~~
13. ~~Work with the; and, e.) General Board of Global Ministries for the extension of the Church To this end there shall be a Joint Committee on Congregational Development with equal representation of members from the General Board of Discipleship and the General Board of Global Ministries, which shall meet regularly for mutual learning; through~~ developing strategies for Church extension, and

providing resources and assistance to conferences and districts in the field of new congregational development and congregational revitalization.

¶1113 – Clarify Responsibilities

ACDA LOCATION: 20134-DI-¶1113-G. Volume 2. Section 1. Print Page 402-3. PDF Page 282-3.

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Add so that each area of responsibility is parallel in language. Broadens inclusion.

PETITION TEXT:

¶1113. *Worship Responsibilities* – The board shall have general oversight of the worship interests of the Church as directed by the General Conference. The board shall:

1. Set forth and interpret the biblical and theological basis for corporate worship with people of all age groupings and the various racial and ethnic cultures through resources, programs, and training materials consistent with the doctrines of The United Methodist Church, and cultivate the fullest possible meaning in the corporate worship celebrations of the Church to the glory of God, including liturgy, preaching, the sacraments, music, related arts, and the observance of the liturgical seasons of the Christian Year.
2. ~~Develop standards and~~ Promote contextual resources for the conduct of public worship in the churches, including liturgy, preaching, the sacraments, music, and related arts.
3. Make recommendations to the General Conference regarding future editions of a book of worship and a hymnal and, as ordered, provide editorial supervision of the contents of these publications, which shall be published by The United Methodist Publishing House. The hymnals of The United Methodist Church are *The United Methodist Hymnal* (1989), *Mil Voces Para Celebrar: Himnario Metodista* (1996), and *Come, Let Us Worship: The Korean-English United Methodist Hymnal* (2000). The ritual of the Church is that contained in *The United Methodist Hymnal* (1989), *The United Methodist Book of Worship* (1992), *Mil Voces Para Celebrar: Himnario Metodista* (1996), and *Come, Let Us Worship: The Korean-English United Methodist Hymnal* (2000).
4. Prepare revisions of the ritual of the Church and approved orders of worship for recommendation to the General Conference for adoption.
5. Work with other North American Christian denominations through the Consultation on Common Texts in the continuing development of a common calendar and lectionary and encourage the voluntary use of the *Revised Common Lectionary* and resources based upon it.
6. Prepare and sponsor the publication of supplemental orders and texts of worship.²⁶
7. Maintain a cooperative but not exclusive relationship with The United Methodist Publishing House in the preparation and publication of worship resources.
8. Advise the general agencies of the Church in the preparation, publication, and circulation of orders of service and other liturgical materials bearing the imprint of The United Methodist Church, encouraging use of racial ~~and ethnic~~, ethnic, and cultural worship resources and incorporation of language that recognizes the several constituencies of the Church. (See ¶ 4.)
9. ~~Counsel with the editors of the periodicals and publications of The United Methodist Church concerning material offered in the fields of worship, including preaching, music, and the other liturgical arts.~~
10. ~~Participate in and cooperate with the Curriculum Resources Committee of the board for the inclusion of worship concepts and resources in local church study curriculum.~~
11. ~~9.~~ 9. Encourage in the schools of theology and pastors' schools, and other settings, the offering of instruction in the meaning and design of worship. This should include the worship practices and expressions of various styles (i.e., traditional, contemporary), cultures, and races.
12. ~~10.~~ 10. Counsel with those responsible for planning and conducting the worship services of the General Conference and other general assemblies of the Church.

- ~~13.~~ 11. Give guidance to, provide resources for, and encourage the continuing growth of those persons responsible for music and worship arts leadership in the local church, ~~i.e., directors, ordained ministers, associates, music assistants, and those volunteering in music and the other worship arts.~~ (See ¶ 1405.7.)
- ~~14.~~ 12. Cooperate with the Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts and The Order of St. Luke in affirming the sacramental life embracing liturgy, preaching, music, and other arts appropriate for the inclusive worship life of the Church.
- ~~15.~~ 13. Develop performance standards for associates, directors, and ministers of music in cooperation with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and cooperate with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry in the development of standards and requirements for certification of directors, associates, and ministers of music as provided in ¶ 1405.6.

¶1114 – Clarify Responsibilities

ACDA LOCATION: 20135-DI-¶1114-G. Volume 2. Section 1. Print Page 403. PDF Page 283.

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Add language parallel to other areas of responsibility.

PETITION TEXT:

¶1114. *Stewardship Responsibilities* – The board shall have general oversight of stewardship interests of the Church as directed by the General Conference.

1. To interpret the biblical and theological basis for stewardship through programs, resources, and training materials for people of all ages consistent with the doctrines of The United Methodist Church.
2. ~~To provide education, counsel, resourcing, and training for the local church stewardship ministry group chairperson, commission on stewardship, board of trustees, endowment and permanent fund committees, wills and estate planning committees, memorial committees, committee on finance, committee on finance chairperson, financial secretaries, and treasurers, and to develop program resources and training materials for use with and by the above-named persons and/or groups (see ¶1807.17). Matters relating to procedures involving official records, forms, and reporting of statistical and financial information shall be the responsibility of the General Council on Finance and Administration.~~
3. 2. To convene strategic conversations and broker knowledge regarding the ~~To create within The United Methodist Church a~~ deepening commitment to personal and corporate Christian stewardship, which includes the use and sharing of talents and resources, ~~and the practice of a Christian lifestyle.~~
4. ~~To develop strategies, provide resources, and implement actions that lead to a continuing improvement in the level of, and financial giving of United Methodists in providing adequate support for the mission of the Church: for the purpose of strengthening intentional discipleship.~~
5. 3. To counsel in the area of stewardship and finance with jurisdictional and annual conference program agencies relative to their organizational structure and program responsibilities and assist them in their interpretation of program and resources.
6. 4. To provide counsel, resources, and guidance to conference and area foundations as they fulfill their stewardship functions and to associations such as the National Association of United Methodist Foundations and the National Association of Stewardship Leaders.
7. 5. To call together regularly United Methodist general agency leaders whose programs include the subject matter of stewardship to work toward common language, consistent stewardship theology, and cooperative efforts, in cooperation with the General Council on Finance and Administration.

¶1116 – Clarify Responsibilities

ACDA LOCATION: 20136-DI-¶1116-G. Volume 2. Section 1. Print Page 403-4. PDF Page 283-4.

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Updated language and adapted into other paragraphs.

PETITION TEXT:

¶1116. Ministry of the Laity —~~The board shall interpret and spread~~ The board shall organize as necessary for interpreting and spreading through the Church all the rich meanings of the universal priesthood of believers, of Christian vocation, and of the ministry of the laity in daily life. ~~The United Methodist Church has~~ While the whole Church has the responsibility of training and enabling the *laos*—the whole body of its membership—to enter into mission and to minister and witness in the name of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. ~~Although all units of the Church have some responsibility for this imperative,~~ the General Board of Discipleship has a preeminent responsibility in that it is charged with developing discipleship. To this end, the board shall:

1. Help develop an adequate understanding of the theological and biblical basis for ministry of the laity.
- ~~2. Develop and interpret ministry of the laity both inside and outside the institutional Church.~~
- ~~3.~~ 2. Provide resources and support services for the development and improvement of leadership in the local church, except as specifically delegated to other agencies, and especially for those persons who serve as members of charge conferences, church councils, councils on ministries, committees on pastor-parish relations, personnel committees, committees on lay leadership, those who serve as lay leaders, lay members of annual conferences, and leaders of related organizations in local churches, districts, annual conferences, and jurisdictions.
- ~~4. Assist congregations, districts, and annual conferences in equipping persons for leadership in community ministries.~~
- ~~5.~~ 3. Provide resources and suggested plans for the observance of Laity Sunday in the local church.
- ~~6.~~ 4. Provide support to conference director and district director of Lay Servant Ministries, to conference and district committees on Lay Servant Ministries, and to the Association of Conference Directors of Lay Servant Ministries. In consultation with the conference directors, set standards for certified lay servants, certified lay speakers, and certified lay ministers and provide teaching resources for use by annual conference and district committees.
- ~~7.~~ 5. Provide support services to conference and district lay leaders and conference and district boards of laity or equivalent structures, to the Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders, and to other appropriate associations and conference and district officers and agencies. +D126:D134
- ~~8. Initiate a process of coordination and collaboration in developing a comprehensive approach to leadership development and training within all program areas for which the General Board of Discipleship has responsibility.~~
- ~~9.~~ 6. Encourage the selection and training of ordained elders to select and train laity to distribute the consecrated Communion elements to sick or homebound persons following a service of Word and Table. This distribution also may apply to laypersons who have been assigned pastoral roles in a church or in more than one church by the district superintendent.

¶1117 – Adapted and Moved to 1108 and 1109

ACDA LOCATION: 20138-DI-¶1117-G. Volume 2. Section 1. Print Page 404. PDF Page 284.

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Adapted and moved to ¶¶ 1108 & 1109.

PETITION TEXT:

¶1117. *Christian Discipleship Formation Responsibilities*—The board shall interpret and promote group ministries in local congregations in order to support the formation of Christian disciples focused on the transformation of the world:

1. *Small Group Ministries*—Recognizing the diverse means of grace necessary in forming Christian disciples, the General Board of Discipleship shall assist local congregations in developing a comprehensive system of small-group ministries by:
 - a) providing resources, training, and support services for leaders of small-group ministries that support people in their search for God, in their yearning for community, and in their desire to be formed as Christian disciples;
 - b) providing resources and support services for groups such as cell groups, life groups, care groups, or small groups that equip people throughout the life span for faithful Christian living in the world, and especially those areas for which the General Board of Discipleship has responsibility. When developing resources, attention should be given to the impact of the oral and visual cultures in which we live and to the importance of stories of transformation.
2. *Accountable Discipleship*—Affirming that our Wesleyan heritage embraces a distinct emphasis of mutual accountability, the General Board of Discipleship shall encourage accountability in congregations by:
 - a) promoting the General Rule of Discipleship: “To witness to Jesus Christ in the world, and to follow his teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit”²⁷;
 - b) advocating the formation of Covenant Discipleship Groups or equivalent models applicable to the cultural context of the Central Conferences for all ages throughout the church by providing resources, training, and support services that ground leadership in the richness of our Wesleyan tradition;
 - c) providing resources, training, and support services for revitalizing the role of class leaders so that they may interpret the General Rule of Discipleship to all church members and assist the pastor in fostering mutual accountability throughout the congregation and other ministries;
 - d) providing consultative services to jurisdictions, conferences, and districts in the introduction and development of Covenant Discipleship Groups and class leaders in congregations.

¶1118 – Covered in 1102.11

ACDA LOCATION: 20139-DI-¶1118-G. Volume 2. Section 1. Print Page 404. PDF Page 284.

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Already covered in ¶ 1102.11.

PETITION TEXT:

~~¶1118. *Ethnic Local Church Concerns* — The board shall function as an advocate for programs and concerns of ethnic local churches. It shall coordinate efforts to keep the needs of the membership of ethnic churches uppermost in the minds of its membership. The board will ensure that adequate resources—fiscal, human, and programmatic—are used to support and encourage the ministries of the ethnic local churches.~~

¶1119 – Covered in 1102.3

ACDA LOCATION: 20140-DI-¶1119-G. Volume 2. Section 1. Print Page 404. PDF Page 284.

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Incorporated in ¶ 1102.3.

PETITION TEXT:

¶1119: *Age-Level, Life-Span, and Family Ministries* — The board will provide for an integrated and coordinated approach in development of resources and service support for ministries with children, youth, adults of all ages, and families. Through its services to administrative and coordinating leaders, the board will assist congregations and conferences to:

- a) Build knowledge for development of ministries that support the primary task of the local congregation;
- b) Provide for the development and nurture of persons at all age levels and stages of growth and for families in diverse configurations;
- c) Assist individuals and families in spiritual development and growth; and
- d) Promote the making and keeping of covenants as foundations for family living.

The board will also engage in research and testing, consultation and training, and collaborative planning so as to enhance the delivery of resources and services to leaders with age-level and family ministries responsibilities:

1. *Comprehensive Children's Ministries* — The board will assist congregations and conferences in developing comprehensive ministries for and with children. Such ministries may include, but shall not be limited to, the following: Sunday school and vacation Bible school; weekday ministries for preschool and elementary ages; fellowship and neighborhood groups; scouting ministries; and short-term studies and activities within and outside the church facilities. Ministries should focus on biblical foundations, prayer and spiritual formation, community service, personal worth through Jesus Christ, human sexuality, values, United Methodist studies, creative and fine arts, multicultural awareness, outreach to others, and celebration of significant moments in children's lives. Responsibilities may include such supportive tasks as: assisting congregations to be advocates on behalf of children; identifying the needs and concerns of children, their families and congregations; assessing the status of ministries with children in The United Methodist Church; collecting and disseminating pertinent data on issues, models, and programs that inform the leaders in congregations and church structures to strengthen the quality of life of children.
2. *Comprehensive Young People's Ministries* — There shall be a comprehensive approach to development and implementation of youth and young adult ministry programming at all levels of the Church. The comprehensive approach is based on the understanding of the primary task of young people's ministry: to love young people where they are, to encourage them in developing their relationship to God, to provide them with opportunities for nurture and growth, and to challenge them to respond to God's call to serve in their communities. Four component parts undergird this comprehensive ministry:
 - a) *Curriculum* — Through the Curriculum Resources Committee (¶ 1121), the General Board of Discipleship shall ensure the availability of curriculum and leaders' guides for use in a variety of settings suitable for the needs of all young people, age specific depending on the U. S. or central conference definitions;
 - b) *Program Resources* — Additional and supplemental guidebooks and other program aids shall be developed and promoted for effective young people's ministries programs in the local church and at the district, conference, jurisdictional, and general Church levels;
 - c) *Leadership Training and Networking* — Leadership training shall be provided to encourage and support adult workers with young people in their roles as teachers, counselors, advisers, and enablers at all levels of the Church. Networking shall be developed through ongoing communication to include workshops, social media, online platforms and publications between leaders in young people's ministries across the denomination for the enhancement of skills and the sharing of effective models and resources;
 - d) *Structures* — Active and effective structures for young people's ministries programming shall be promoted and maintained at all levels of the United Methodist connection, as identified in the U. S. and central conferences. These structures will encourage the full involvement of young people in leadership and membership and for the advocacy of young people's concerns in all areas of Church life, planning, and administration.

3. *Comprehensive Adult Ministries* — The board will assist congregations and conferences in developing comprehensive ministries by, with, and for adults. In keeping with the primary task of the board, adult ministries may include but need not be limited to: education and ministries with young adults, middle adults, older adults, and single adults (i.e., widowed, always single, separated, and divorced), and intergenerational programs involving adults. Such a plan would include biblical foundation and study, developmental stages and tasks of adults, faith development and spiritual formation, and leadership training in various models of adult educational ministries.
4. Responsibilities may include such supportive tasks as: identifying the needs and concerns of adults (i.e., young adults, middle adults, older adults, and single adults); assessing the status of ministries by, with, and for adults in The United Methodist Church; collecting and disseminating pertinent data on issues, models, and programs that inform the leaders in local congregations, districts, conferences, boards, and agencies to strengthen the quality of faith and life of adults.
5. *Comprehensive Family Ministries* — The board will assist congregations and conferences in developing comprehensive ministries with families. In alignment with the primary task, the ministries may assist families in the following areas: spiritual formation and development, marital growth ministries, parenting, human sexuality, care giving, and issues affecting the quality of family life. Such a plan would include: biblical exploration and study, as well as theological and experiential understandings of family life and the evolving patterns of family living. Ministries with families will focus on persons rather than structures.

The board may organize and administer a Committee on Family Life. The committee will provide an arena for information sharing, collaborative planning, and/or cooperative programming in alignment with the purpose and responsibilities of representative participants. The committee will serve as advocates for ministries with families in all boards and agencies.

Responsibilities may include such supportive tasks as: identifying the needs and concerns of families and of congregations, assessing the status of ministries with families in The United Methodist Church, collecting and disseminating pertinent data on issues, models, and programs that inform the work of the boards and agencies to strengthen the quality of family life. The committee will relate to and provide liaison services to ecumenical and interdenominational agencies in the area of family life.

¶1120 – Eliminate Duplications

ACDA LOCATION: 20141-DI-¶1120-G. Volume 2. Section 1. Print Page 404. PDF Page 284.

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Eliminate Duplication previously stated.

PETITION TEXT:

General Provisions for the Committee on Older Adult Ministries

1. There shall be a Committee on Older Adult Ministries, which shall be administratively related to the General Board of Discipleship.
2. *Purpose* — The committee will provide a forum for information sharing, cooperative planning, and joint program endeavors as determined in accordance with the responsibilities and objectives of the participating agencies. The committee shall serve as an advocate for older-adult concerns and issues and shall serve to support ministries by, with, and for older adults throughout The United Methodist Church and its affiliated agencies and in the larger society.
3. *Responsibilities* — The responsibilities of the committee shall include the following:
 - a) Identify the needs, concerns, and potential contributions of older adults.
 - b) Promote a plan of comprehensive ministry by, with, and for older adults in local churches that includes spiritual growth, education, training, mission, service, and fellowship.
 - c) Encourage and support the development of resources and programs that will undergird local church ministries by, with, and for older adults.
 - d) Advocate development and implementation of policies and service designed to impact systems and concepts that adversely affect older adults.
 - e) Educate and keep before the Church the lifelong process of aging, with emphasis on the quality of life, intergenerational understanding and interaction, and faith development.
 - f) Encourage and support the development of resources and programs that can be used by annual conferences, jurisdictions, central conferences, and the denomination at large in training and equipping older adults for new roles in the ministry and mission of the Church.
 - g) Serve as focal point for supplying information and guidelines on older-adult ministries to local churches.
 - h) Encourage coordination and networking opportunities among agencies responsible for the development of resources, programs, and policies relating to older-adult ministries.
 - i) Support and advocate the provisions contained in The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church related to aging.
 - j) Support and encourage resource development for the celebration of an annual Older Adult Recognition Day.
 - k) Develop and administer a program of financial grants for older-adult ministries throughout The United Methodist Church.
4. *Membership* — The committee shall be composed of one board member and one staff member from each of the following agencies: the General Board of Discipleship, the General Board of Global Ministries, the General Board of Church and Society, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits; one member (board or staff) from each of the following: the Commission on the Status and Role of Women, the Commission on Religion and Race, the General Commission on United Methodist Men, The United Methodist Publishing House, the General Commission on Communication, United Methodist Women; one active or retired bishop representing the Council of Bishops, and one central conference representative; five older adults, one to be selected by each jurisdictional College of Bishops; and no more than three members to be selected by the committee for expertise and/or professional qualifications, and no more than three additional members to be selected by the committee for inclusiveness (racial/ethnic, disability, age, gender, laity, clergy, or geographic distribution). Staff and/or board

members will provide appropriate liaison and reports to their respective agencies. Board members and central conference and jurisdiction representatives shall serve no more than two consecutive terms (one term equals four years). Each board and agency will be responsible for travel, lodging, and other expenses incurred by representatives attending meetings of the Committee on Older Adult Ministries.

5. *Meetings* — The committee will meet at least once a year in conjunction with a meeting of the General Board of Discipleship.

¶1201 – Eliminate Redundancy, Clarify, and Rename Division on Ministries with Young People

ACDA LOCATION: 20143-DI-¶1201-G. Volume 2. Section 1. Print Page 404-8. PDF Page 284-8.
21092-DI-¶1201. Volume 3. Section 1. Print Page 1380-3. PDF Page 198-201.

PREFERRED ACTION: Withdraw to Resubmit, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Updates to paragraph 1206 regarding membership, as well as 1201 and all other places where the name “Division on Ministries with Young People” appears.

PETITION TEXT:

Amend ¶1201 and all other places where name “Division on Ministries with Young People” appears:

¶1201. ~~There shall be a Division on Ministries With Young People of the General Board of Discipleship.~~ There shall be a Young People’s Connectional Network.

¶1202

PETITION TEXT:

¶1202. *Purpose* – ~~The purpose of the Division on Ministries With Young People is to empower young people as world-changing disciples of Jesus Christ, to nurture faith development, and to equip young leaders by:~~

- ~~1. — Developing youth/young adult spiritual leaders of local congregations to transform lives by making disciples of Jesus Christ;~~
 - ~~2. — Challenging The United Methodist Church to embrace, confirm, and celebrate God’s call on the lives of young people;~~
 - ~~3. — Cultivating and nurturing life-giving ministries where influence and worth are not limited by age or experience;~~
 - ~~4. — Advocating for the issues and concerns of young people in the church and the global community;~~
 - ~~5. — Empowering young people to work as agents of peace, justice, and mercy; Building a network of support and providing resources that connect the diverse experiences of youth and young adults in local ministries and communities across the globe. The Young People’s Connectional Network will advocate for the full participation of young people in all levels of the United Methodist Church, build global partnerships, and empower young people to make world-changing disciples of Jesus Christ.~~
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¶1203

PETITION TEXT:

¶1203. *Responsibilities* — ~~The responsibilities of the Division on Ministries With Young People shall be:~~

- ~~1. — to promote and maintain active and effective systems for youth and young-adult ministry programming at the local church, district, conference, jurisdictional/central conference, and general church levels for the full involvement of young people in leadership and membership;~~
 - ~~2. — to advocate for the needs and concerns of young people throughout all arenas of church life, planning, and administration. Attention shall be given to the vast array of the life realities of young people;~~
 - ~~3. — to develop and support three constituency networks: a Network for United Methodist Youth, a Network for United Methodist Young Adults, and a Network for United Methodist Workers With Young People (may include youth workers, youth pastors, campus ministers, conference staff, chaplains, young adult workers, and so forth). These networks will provide ongoing communication and connectional links between local churches and other arenas of church life, relational ties to the denomination and one another, and resources for the spiritual formation of young people;~~
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4. to provide leadership training models and resources that will support youth, young adults, and adult workers with young people to be full and active participants in the life and mission of the Church;
5. to plan and carry out a quadrennial global young people's convocation and to provide program resources and support services for regional and national convocations;
6. to provide administrative oversight to the grants for ministries with young people distributed in consultation with the General Board of Church and Society, General Board of Discipleship, General Board of Global Ministries, and General Board of Higher Education and Ministry;
7. to provide administrative oversight to the Youth Service Fund;
8. to recommend youth and young adults to nomination committees of general boards and agencies, considering suggestions from annual conference councils on youth and young-adult ministry (§§ 649.3e and 650.3e) and other appropriate organizations;
9. to collaborate with appropriate boards and agencies to provide young people with effective strategies and opportunities to live out their faith through ministries of peace, justice, and mercy in vocational choices and other avenues of service;
10. to collaborate with appropriate boards and agencies to strengthen the church's challenge for young people to respond to God's call to licensed and ordained ministry and to support young clergy through the development of networks and other appropriate resources;
11. to collaborate with appropriate boards and agencies to encourage the participation of young people in appropriate denominational, ecumenical, and interreligious relationships and deliberations.

Administrative Order

1. To advocate for the varied concerns of all young people;
2. To assist in planning and carrying out a quadrennial global young people's gathering;
3. To provide administrative oversight of grants for ministries with young people distributed in consultation with the General Board of Church and Society, General Board of Discipleship, General Board of Global Ministries, and General Board of Higher Education and Ministry;
4. To promote grants for ministries with young people and the Youth Service Fund;
5. To recommend young people to nomination committees of general boards and agencies;
6. To collaborate with boards and agencies to provide young people with opportunities to listen, discern and respond to their vocational call whether laity or clergy.
7. To encourage the participation of young people in denominational, ecumenical, and interreligious relationships and deliberations.

¶1204

PETITION TEXT:

¶1204. Authority and Accountability – ~~The Division on Ministries With Young People~~ Young People's Connectional Network shall be accountable to the General Board of Discipleship in programming, personnel, and administration. The ~~division~~ Network shall have the authority to determine and interpret program directions that support its mandate. ~~These program directions shall be in harmony with the charter of the General Board of Discipleship (GBOD) and have the GBOD's approval.~~

¶1205

PETITION TEXT:

¶1205. *Relationship of the ~~Division on Ministries With Young People~~ Young People's Connectional Network to the General Board of Discipleship* — The ~~Division on Ministries With Young People~~ Young People's Connectional Network shall be related to the General Board of Discipleship as follows: Two members of the ~~Division on Ministries With Young People~~ Young People's Connectional Network shall be elected to the board, one youth and one young adult as defined by the age qualifications for the ~~Division on Ministries With Young People~~ Young People's Connectional Network in accordance with ¶ 1207 1206.

¶1206

PETITION TEXT:

¶1206. *Structure* — The Division on Ministries With Young People shall be organized around three basic units: United Methodist Youth, United Methodist Young Adults, and United Methodist Workers with Young People.

¶1207

PETITION TEXT:

¶1207 1206. *Membership* — The membership of the ~~Division on Ministries With Young People~~ Young People's Connectional Network shall be inclusive with respect to geography, gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, lay/clergy, and vocation.

1. Membership shall be as follows:

- a) ~~Twelve youth — 1 youth, elected by the youth organization of each central conference~~ 7 Youth (according to the age definition of each central conference, but not to exceed the age of 24); 1 youth, sixteen or younger at the time of election, elected by the jurisdictional youth convocation;
- b) ~~Twelve young adults — 1 young adult elected by the young adult organization of each central conference~~ 7 Young Adults (according to the age definition of each central conference, but not to exceed the age of 35)
- c) ~~Twelve adult workers with young people — 1 adult from each central conference, appointed by the central conference nominating committee; 1 adult from each jurisdiction, elected by the jurisdictional conference;~~ 4 Adult Workers
- d) Additional Members:
 - (1) One member of the General Board of Discipleship;
 - (2) ~~Two members of the United Methodist Student Movement steering committee (¶ 1412.2g);~~ Four additional members who, as determined by the Network, may be nominated to ensure inclusiveness
 - (3) ~~up to 5 additional members who, as determined by the General Board of Discipleship, may be nominated by the division to ensure inclusiveness and expertise~~ One bishop selected by the Council of Bishops

2. *Nomination of Potential Network Members* — 1 youth (according to the age definition of each central and jurisdictional conference, but not to exceed the age of 24 in central conferences or 16 in jurisdictions), 1 young adult (according to the age definition of each central and jurisdictional conference, but not to exceed the age of 35 in central conferences or 30 in jurisdictions), and 1 adult worker shall be nominated by the process outlined by each Jurisdictional Young People's Ministry and by central conference youth organizations.

3. Selection of the Network – Nominated potential network members will submit applications to the nominations committee of the current Division on Ministries with Young People. The nominations committee will select the members of the network ensuring representation of all jurisdictions and central conferences.
4. Resource People – The ~~division~~ Network shall be responsible for connecting and highlighting the work of general agencies and other United Methodist entities in youth and young-adult ministry. In order to effectively carry out that charge, one staff person (or board member when staff are not available) from the following entities shall be present (with voice but not vote) at meetings of the ~~division~~ Network. These representatives shall attend at the expense of the sending agency and shall relate the priorities of the ~~division~~ Network to their agency and serve as resource people to the ~~division~~ Network:
- A. General Board of Church and Society;
 - B. General Board of Discipleship;
 - C. General Board of Global Ministries;
 - D. General Board of Higher Education and Ministry;
 - E. General Board of Pension and Health Benefits;
 - F. General Commission on Archives and History;
 - G. General Commission on Religion and Race;
 - H. General Commission on the Status and Role of Women;
 - I. General Commission on United Methodist Men;
 - J. General Council on Finance and Administration;
 - K. Connectional Table;
 - L. United Methodist Communications;
 - M. United Methodist Publishing House;
 - N. United Methodist Women
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¶1208

PETITION TEXT:

¶1208 1207. *Youth Service Fund* – There shall be a Youth Service Fund.

1. *Organization* – The Youth Service Fund shall be a means of stewardship education and mission support of youth within The United Methodist Church. As a part of the Fund’s cultivation, youth shall be challenged to assume their financial responsibilities in connection with the total program and budget of the church of which they are members. Local church treasurers shall send the full amount of Youth Service Fund offerings to the treasurer of the annual conference, who shall retain 70 percent of the amount for distribution by the annual conference council on youth ministry. The annual conference treasurer shall send the remaining 30 percent monthly to the treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration to be forwarded to the General Board of Discipleship, ~~Division on Ministries with Young People~~ Young People’s Connectional Network. All other Youth Service Fund money raised in the annual conference shall be divided in the same manner and distributed in the same way.
2. *Project Review* – The youth of the Young People’s Connectional Network shall constitute a project review committee to advise the total body in the selection of projects. The project review committee shall be comprised of youth and adult worker members of the Young People’s Connectional Network as determined by the Young People’s Connectional Network. The projects shall be chosen according to the policies and criteria established by the ~~The Division on Ministries with Young People~~ Young People’s Connectional Network. All projects chosen by the network will be communicated back to the annual conferences who contributed funds.
3. A minimum of ~~70~~ 80 percent of the general portion of the Youth Service Fund shall be used to fund Youth Service Fund projects; the remaining amount shall be used for office resourcing and Youth Service Fund promotion and interpretation. United Methodist Communications shall assist the ~~The Division on Ministries with Young People~~ Young People’s Connectional Network in the promotion and interpretation of the Youth Service Fund.

¶1209

PETITION TEXT:

¶1209 1208. *Grants for Ministries with Young People* – There shall be grants made available to local churches, affiliated organizations, campus ministries, districts, annual conferences, provisional conferences, jurisdictional conferences, and central conferences of the United Methodist Church.

1. *Purpose* – The purpose of these grants is to fund dynamic, creative ministries with young people that can serve as model programs for other organizations throughout the connection.
 2. *Project Review* – ~~The Division on Ministries with Young People~~ Young People's Connectional Network shall constitute a project review committee as determined by the group, made up of youth, young adults, and adult workers with young people who are members of the body. The committee may also include a staff representative and one board member each from the General Board of Church and Society, the General Board of Discipleship, the General Board of Global Ministries, and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. ~~The Division on Ministries with Young People~~ Young People's Connectional Network shall establish criteria in consultation with the four participating program boards and in relation to the purposes of the network and the program boards.
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¶1210

PETITION TEXT:

¶1210 1209. *Global Young People's Convocation* Global Youth and Young Adult Quadrennial Event – There shall be a Global Young People's Convocation global young people's gathering every quadrennium.

1. *Purpose* – ~~Global Young People's Convocation shall be a global event held once every four years for the purpose of celebrating the mission and vitality of young people in The United Methodist Church, raising the joys and concerns of young people from the global community, developing~~ Developing young people as leaders for effective ministry in local churches and communities of faith, highlighting emerging trends in youth and young-adult young people's ministry, and provide ~~ing a common forum~~ shared space that embraces the global to raise the joys and concerns of a global community. reality of the church.
 2. *Legislation* – During the convocation there shall be opportunities for jurisdiction and central conference delegations and individuals to propose legislation in an appropriate forum. This forum shall be made up of delegations as defined under "Voting members." Legislation brought to the forum shall relate to issues of concern to young people. Legislation adopted by the forum may be referred to the Division on Ministries With Young People or sent to the General Conference of The United Methodist Church carrying the name "United Methodist Young People's Convocation." All legislation, petitions, and programming must be in accordance with ¶806.9 and ¶806.11. *Participation* – The global young people's gathering shall be inclusive in nature. It shall have equal representation of youth, young adults, and adult workers from each jurisdiction and central conference.
 3. *Membership* – The membership at the forum of the United Methodist Young People's Convocation shall be inclusive in nature and selected as follows:
 - a) *Voting members*
 - (1) Five youth (ages 12-18) from each jurisdiction and five youth from each central conference according to the age definition of each central conference. These youth shall be chosen by the process outlined by each Jurisdictional Young People's Ministry and by central conference youth organizations in the year preceding the Global Young People's Convocation.
 - (2) Five young adults (ages 19-30) from each jurisdiction and five young adults from each central conference according to the age definition of each central conference. These young adults shall be chosen by the process outlined by each Jurisdictional Young People's Ministry and central conference young adult organizations.
 - (3) Two adult workers with young people from each jurisdiction and two youth and young-adult workers from each central conference. These adults shall be chosen by the process outlined by each Jurisdictional Young People's Ministry and by central conference youth organizations in the year preceding the Global Young People's Convocation.
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b) ~~Nonvoting members (In all cases, nonvoting members will have the status of voice without vote.)~~

(1) ~~Youth and young-adult members of the general agencies~~

(2) ~~Members and staff of the Division on Ministries With Young People~~

(3) ~~Additional members from jurisdictions, central conferences, and ecumenical partners.~~

4. 3. *Expenses* – The expenses for the Global Young People’s Convocation are to be borne by participants wherever possible. An adequate funding plan shall be devised by the Division on Ministries With Young People to ensure the full participation of elected delegates to Global Young People’s Convocation. It is strongly recommended that jurisdictions, central conferences, and annual conference councils on youth and young adult ministries, or equivalent structures, secure funding for Convocation participants who are elected from said conference. A limited amount of need-based scholarships shall be made available through the Division on Ministries With Young People to promote the full participation of the body.

¶1211

PETITION TEXT:

~~¶1211~~ 1210. *Staff*

1. The ~~The Division on Ministries with Young People~~ Young People’s Connectional Network shall have as its chief staff officer an Associate General Secretary. This staff officer shall be nominated by the personnel committee of the General Board of Discipleship for election by the Board. The search committee shall be chaired by the General Secretary of the General Board of Discipleship and composed of equal representation from the General Board of Discipleship and the ~~The Division on Ministries with Young People~~ Young People’s Connectional Network.
2. All other staff members of the ~~Division~~ Network will be elected or appointed in a manner prescribed by the Board (¶ 714).

¶1212

PETITION TEXT:

~~¶1212~~ 1211. *Division Funding* – The operating funds for the division shall be derived from three main sources: World Service Fund, self-funding programs, and the general portion of the Youth Service Fund.

NON-DISCIPLINARY – Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century

ACDA LOCATION: 20532-DI-NonDis. Volume 2. Section 1. Print Page 411-9. PDF Page 291-9.

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century (SBC21) partnership, leadership, and support for Black congregations as existing congregations are strengthened and new faith communities are formed for fulfilling the mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

PETITION TEXT:

It is recommended that the 2020 General Conference of the United Methodist Church approve the continuation of Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century through the 2021-2024 quadrennial. Approval for the continuance of SBC21 will strengthen existing programs and enable new program development around three of the four General Church Foci:

- Developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world
- Engaging in ministry with the poor
- Creating new places for new people and revitalizing existing congregations

Within these three foci, we propose including goals for the expansion of models for strengthening youth and young adult ministries.

WHEREAS, the United Methodist Church strives to be the beloved community that addresses the needs of the poor and the incarcerated; positioned to increase multicultural and multi-generational understanding in our mission fields; and is able to gather its youth and young adults into the active fold of ministry; and where the need for training, coaching and mentoring is paramount to rethink church in new places with new people. We are being called to do a new thing God is doing...we perceive it!

WHEREAS, the Black church has been the mission post providing for the total development of Black people for generations; from all ranks and stations of life, declaring the good news of the Gospel, and supporting causes for the good of all people, without regard to race, creed, or color. The Black church stands against injustice and evil wherever it exists. We believe we have come this far by Faith!

WHEREAS, faith, love, and hope, rooted and grounded in the gospel of Jesus Christ, has kept the Black church in a general disposition to be responsive to the Spirit of God, Historically, the Black church is the community's center for spiritual development and social justice in the world. We open our minds, hearts, and eyes to see all the people.

WHEREAS, the Black church has been resilient despite all odds, and clearly sustained by the grace and power of God; and her uniqueness has yet to come to a full magnitude for transformation, growth, and revitalization; so that more people will commit their lives to Jesus Christ.

WHEREAS, (SBC21) Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century currently builds strong partnerships and alliances with leading ministries, pastors, congregations, conferences and leaders throughout the United Methodist Church who are presently offering innovative models and expertise to strengthen lay and clergy. SBC21's infrastructure provides custom-designed training to generations of lay and clergy leaders; providing varied mediums of conferencing and coaching to enhance accountability. We declare to thrust forward through (NNYA) National Network of Young Adults to engage youth and young adults in ministry, creating a culture of call exploration, and clearing a path for them to lead the church into its future.

WHEREAS, we still believe in the transformative, resurrecting life and the sustaining power of Jesus Christ and we decree that the church will grow and live! The Black church stands firm in its faith that our God is a restoring God of grace, hope, and liberation. We declare that God's beloved kingdom on earth is triumphant over anything that comes against it, now and forever. The Black church testifies and proclaims this good news from the pulpit, in the community, and in the darkest, troubled streets; so that the peace and grace that Jesus offers is still available to all.

The following Plan of Action shall be adopted as a basis to continue Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century:

The Vision

2021-2024 Quadrennial: Faith in Action

A bold vision stretches our imagination. Vision activates our faith to sail boldly into uncharted waters. A vision paints a picture of a future state that is not here yet. The vision calls us to step out unto the unknown, trusting God each step of the journey.

The work of SBC21 began in 1996 and became a National Plan of The UMC. The name, SBC21 casts the God-given vision of strengthening churches in this century, now with 81 years left. This is a huge God-given vision.

This work is just beginning, yet so far, even with minimal resources, has proven to be an effective, evolving, organic, systematic, innovative, and creative process. This God-given vision behind our name: *Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century*, proclaims that God has declared our future as a church will be alive, well, and healthy.

Our vision is powerful: We envision all churches with healthy vitality, faithful determination, and fruitful ministries; led by strong and competent leadership. We envision the Black church to be equipped, prepared, and unapologetic in building the beloved kingdom of God on earth and resisting any form of evil and injustice anywhere.

This vision activates our FAITH to believe, imagine, and work diligently toward the realization of strong, vital congregations transforming the world through the power and grace of Jesus Christ.

Our hope is grounded in love, for only love can last longer than a century. Generations before us have paved the way, and we will do our part tilling the soil in our time, so generations after us will stay the course.

Mission

Our mission is to transform and sustain vital Black congregations and Black Clergy including those in cross racial appointments for making disciples of Jesus Christ who are sent to serve in a hurting world.

Our mission moves SBC21 among lay and clergy, as well as seekers and the lost, to encourage, equip, train, coach, and strengthen congregations and build a community where the love of God is demonstrated.

Our work is carried out in the mission fields beyond walls, connecting and equipping leaders to follow Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

We go into the difficult places; churches who may be losing their zeal and want to regain their focus. We move inside the Criminal Justice System and communities to partner with those who want to end mass incarceration and other oppressive systems.

We go into places where young adults gather to build a secure strong network, engaging them in church leadership and equipping and encouraging them to live out the call of God on their lives.

In this second decade of the twenty-first century, we continue to offer unique services and gifts to equip our partner churches with practical tools and skills needed for vibrant worship, evangelism, discipleship, stewardship, outreach, and effective administration.

We strategically collaborate with the Council of Bishops, The Connectional Table, Annual Conference Cabinets and Connectional Ministries, General Agencies, National Plans, Councils and Commissions in this work.

Direction

In this quadrennial, we are moving quickly in the direction of prioritizing our program and ministry goals under one primary banner, the expansion of the SBC21 National Network of Young Adults (NNYA) to include a youth component ranging from ages 13-18. Our programmatic efforts will mainly focus on this target audience ranging from ages 13-35.

As we continue to serve Annual Conferences and partner and collaborate with other UM agencies, we believe it is essential to identify, nurture and train young adult leaders capable of educating the next generation, perpetually and systematically during this 21st century.

The primary focus of SBC21 would be to assist annual conferences and local churches of the United Methodist Church to become more effective in reaching, connecting and engaging youth and young adults, particularly Blacks and other racial and ethnic groups

(multiethnic, multicultural) into the fold of active traditional and non-traditional churches. To create new and innovating ways for nurturing spiritual formation and making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

In partnership with young dynamic clergy and lay as well as with other appropriate entities within the United Methodist Church (general program agencies, annual conferences, HBCUs, campus ministers, local churches, etc. we are building a pipeline of effective servant leaders (lay and clergy) to serve and participate at every level in the denomination.

- **2021-2024 Leadership Development**

We identify four areas of leadership development as our focus for this quadrennial 2021-2024.

- National Network of Young Adults (NNYA)
- Collaborative Coaching and Training Network (CCTN)
- Cultural and Generational Competency Partnership
- National Prison Ministry Movement.
- SBC21 National Network of Young Adults (NNYA)

The Strengthening the Black Church for the Twenty-First Century (SBC21) National Network of Young Adults (NNYA) initiative provides an essential infrastructure designed to recruit, equip and train the highest potential of African American leaders/clergy and leaders/clergy of other ethnicities. The initiative promises to offer young adult leaders (ages 18-35) with a full variety of experiences throughout their various stages of development as they continue to hear, discern, and respond to the call of God upon their lives. The National Network of Young Adults is committed to equipping leaders with the skills and competencies needed to transform, revitalize, and establish vital congregations, campus ministries and serve as leaders within the United Methodist Church (UMC). According to data retrieved from The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Loan and Scholarship office for the 2015/2016 academic year; in 2015 merely 8 African American scholarship recipients reported they were a certified candidate or in pursuit of candidacy towards ordination in the UMC under the age of 35. In 2016 following the launch of the National Network of Young Adults that number almost doubled to 15 African American scholarship recipients who reported they were a certified candidate or in pursuit of candidacy under the age of 35. As the United States continues to diversify rapidly, there will continue to be an increased demand for clergy leaders to minister to African American and ethnic communities. By expanding the National Network of Young Adults, the initiative is fortifying the UMC and the Church Universal to develop a wave of disciplined young leaders to serve communities of color and transform the world. The National Network of Young Adults upholds the highest convictions that by supporting young adult African American and ethnic clergy the initiative promises to resource transformational pastoral leaders. In light of recent deaths, violence, vitriolic, and divisive speech in the nation, NNYA is convinced that the church and institutions of higher education are essential pillars of this society. This initiative organizes with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), campus ministries, and seminaries as the critical components of building an organic pipeline and partnership among local congregations, colleges, and the church to engage and train young adults for pastoral ministry nationally.

Goals

1. The SBC21 National Network of Young Adults provides an essential infrastructure designed to equip the highest potential of African American and Ethnic young adult leaders to transform, revive and establish new vital congregations to serve as pastoral leaders within the United Methodist Church. Through Discernment Covenant Groups, Transformational Leadership Development, Tuition Assistance and Loan Forgiveness, as well as Mentoring and Coaching we have created a national network of support to attend to the principal professional and personal transitions within African American and Ethnic leader's lives.
2. By 2022 The National Network of Young Adults will increase the number of undergraduates within the network entering seminary to at least 30 persons. Will develop a Transformational Leaders Training cohort of 20 young adults (10 seminarians and 10 young adults in first time pastoral appointments) to increase the total number of ordained African American clergy (under the age of 35) in the United Methodist Church to 30. And will increase our Financial Empowerment Resourcing by assisting 10 seminarians with tuition assistance and 10 young adult pastoral leaders with loan forgiveness.
3. Engaging youth, as well as young adults in exploring models of pastoral ministry and Christian leadership committed to transforming the world, is an additional priority of the National Network of Young Adults. Studies show millennials are rapidly leaving the church, and are more likely to not affiliate with any form of principled spiritual practice. This is an urgent time not only in predominately African American and ethnic congregations but in the body of Christ at large. NNYA has a vision

and mission at this time to aggressively engage youth in addition to young adults and make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of this world.

Moreover, transformational leaders need various experiences and opportunities to thrive and effectively lead, whether in pastoral, community, or non-traditional settings. The National Network of Young Adults believes that pastoral leaders should be provided the highest quality of training, support, mentoring and coaching to thrive within even the most challenging contexts. NNYA's goal is to not merely help young adult leaders to survive the various stages of the pastoral journey but to also introduce youth to the transformational leadership skills needed to navigate wherever God is calling them to serve.

The National Network of Young Adults guides the discernment process to cultivate a culture of call. This initiative believes hearing, discerning, and responding to God is a lifelong process and commitment. According to one of the National Network of Young Adults Discernment Covenant Group Leaders, Reverend Kevin Kosh, University Chaplain at Rust College in Holly Spring Mississippi, "Calling is not a destination one arrives at nor a task accomplished. Calling is a journey where one continues to explore and discover." Therefore, NNYA young adult and youth leaders are provided a safe space to develop, engage in critical conversations, and are surrounded by loving peers, mentors and coaches. NNYA believes it is essential to ensure youth a network of support, connecting them with peers, as well as experienced clergy who demonstrate transformational leadership. Our vision for programming is always to be holistic. NNYA promises to journey with youth and young adult leaders through the various stages and transitions of leadership development, from high school to undergrad, from undergrad to seminary, and from seminary to pastoral ministry and beyond.

Program Deliverables

Discernment Covenant Groups: NNYA cultivates a culture of call and builds a pipeline of effective pastoral leaders to serve the church by walking with young adults from undergraduate school to theological exploration. Currently, the National Network of Young Adults resources 15 undergraduate campus ministries, seminaries and local churches with curriculum, virtual training, and quarterly resource newsletters to promote theological exploration within their respective ministry contexts. The Campus Ministers and pastors leading the Covenant Groups of the network are African American clergy (average age 33), local pastors, and ministry candidates serving first time appointments in communities of color, predominantly on the campuses of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). NNYA partners include; Wiley College, Rust College, Alcorn State University, Grambling State University-Wesley Foundation, Tennessee State University-Wesley Foundation, Florida A&M University-Wesley Foundation, Fisk University-Wesley Foundation, Howard University-Wesley Foundation, Paine College, Clark Atlanta University, Claflin-Orangeburg Wesley Foundation, Philander Smith, Southern University-Wesley Foundation, Tuskegee University-Wesley Foundation, Gammon Theological Seminary and St. Luke CME Church Nashville. NNYA partners provide spiritual support while working with SBC21 to cultivate meaningful opportunities for collegial conversations to develop principled leaders who are hearing, discerning, and responding to the call of God upon their lives. NNYA is seeking the Lilly Foundation Thriving in Ministry grant to expand funding to resource more partnerships and increase the number of undergraduates entering seminary from 10 to 30.

This network will strengthen collegial relationships among clergy by resourcing young adult pastoral leaders to attend the national Ebony Exploration discernment training at Gammon Theological Seminary. Ebony Exploration is a space where young clergy and scholars from United Methodist affiliated Historically Black Colleges, and Universities (ages 18-35) can hear, discern, and respond to God's call and claim upon their lives. It is an opportunity to explore the possibilities of theological education and consider Gammon Theological Seminary at the Interdenominational Theological Center as a place for spiritual and vocational development. In 2018 NNYA could only assist four campus ministers and 15 young adult undergraduate leaders to attend Ebony Exploration at Gammon Theological Seminary. By increasing the number from four to eight, and 14 to 30, NNYA is not only fulfilling the mission of the Thriving in Ministry initiative to inspire young people to explore calls into Christian congregations, but the program is also helping young clergy transition from student to pastoral leaders. By increasing the resources provided to respective Covenant Discernment Groups and the participants of Ebony Exploration the National Network will be able to meet the goal of increasing the number of undergraduates within the network entering seminary to at least 30 persons by 2022.

Transformational Leaders Cohort: NNYA is committed to journeying with African American young adult leaders throughout the various stages of ministry, especially from seminary to candidacy and from candidacy to ordained ministry/first pastoral appointment. Currently, the Young Adults hosts the National HBCU Leading in Transformation (LIT) Conference at Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, GA. The LIT Conference is designed to meet the spiritual, academic, and professional development of HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) young adult campus ministries and young clergy through vibrant worship experiences, relevant workshops, and engaging conversations. LIT supports campus ministers and students with resources that assist on campus

and post-graduate development. Thus, building a pipeline between young adult leaders and the United Methodist Church. LIT helps young adult leaders develop an awareness and action plan to address social justice needs on campuses and within their respective ministry settings. Within just one year LIT has garnered the excitement of over 200 participants. In 2018 NNYA witnessed an increasing number of LIT participants making a total of more than 350 conferees.

The National Network of Young Adults initiative is being encouraged to apply for a grant from the Lilly Foundation Thriving in Ministry. If approved the grant will enable NNYA to expand the LIT Conference experience into a national Transformational Leaders Cohort that will assist 20 young adults (10 seminarians and 10 young adults in first time appointments) to increase the total number of Ordained African American Clergy (under the age of 35) in the United Methodist Church from 15 to 30 by 2022. By expanding the LIT Conference into a peer supportive, coaching and mentoring cohort, NNYA is building accountability, and practical leadership application to assist young adult leaders as they prepare for the Board of Ordained Ministry. This cohort will offer an organic discipleship experience based on community and faithful service.

This initiative will develop and test new patterns for clergy to build and sustain collegial relationships by providing a cohort of peers that consists of seminarians and recent seminary graduates serving in pastoral appointments. The National Network of Young Adults will also challenge the traditional forms of one-on-one mentor relationships by also developing a cohort of experienced transformational clergy leaders to serve as mentors and coaches. Mentoring and coaching is the cornerstone of achieving NNYA goals. The Bible illustrates many mentoring and coaching relationships from which NNYA draws wisdom: Moses and Joshua, Naomi and Ruth, Elijah and Elisha, Paul and Timothy. In each of these examples, the primacy of relationship and time invested as the ingredients for making a significant impact on young adults. The effect is especially in their spiritual values and beliefs, which will enable them to grow in their walk with the Lord.

In each relationship, the goal of the mentor and coach is to see his or her mentees grow to spiritual maturity and be used by God in a mighty way. Jesus had this goal in mind in mentoring the 12 disciples. He looked beyond their present circumstances as fisherman, tax collectors, and ordinary people and saw them as leaders of the kingdom of God.

The National Network of Young Adults is using the discipleship model to assure the young adults, and experienced clergy of the Transformational Leaders Cohort maximizes its potential for developing relationships amongst colleagues. By offering two intensives (two days) Training Retreats, NNYA will create group settings that provide an opportunity to learn and grow from one another, as well as create smaller intimate intergenerational groups which represent various stages of ministerial career to foster beneficial mentoring and coaching relationships. Our program believes experienced clergy can serve the purpose of not only a mentor, but as a coach to instruct/share practical wisdom on how to achieve ministry goals, and advocate for young clergy with district and conference Boards of Ordained Ministries throughout the process from candidacy to pastoral appointment. By expanding the National LIT Conference into a Transformational Leaders Cohort NNYA is not only fulfilling the mission of the Thriving in Ministry initiative to develop intergenerational groups clergy but challenging traditional forms of one-on-one mentorship to include discipleship and coaching. NNYA anticipates that this cohort of 10 seminarians, young adult leaders in first-time appointments, and experience transformational clergy (active or retired) will be the catalyst from increasing the current numbers of ordained African American Clergy (under the age of 35) from 15 to 30 by 2022.

Financial Empowerment Resourcing: NNYA is determined to prepare transformational young adult leaders to serve effectively and confidently, particularly within communities of color. This initiative undergirds a leader's holistic development of mind, body, soul, and spirit to prepare them to serve ministry settings facing particular socio-economic challenges. Currently, NNYA offers multimodal training via social media platforms "Live at Five" to help leaders navigate resources from scholarships to student loan debt management. NNYA provide leaders with the tools necessary to make wise financial decisions such as credit improvement, acquire pastoral internships and develop budgeting plans. This network understands that the path to ordained ministry in the United Methodist requires candidates for ordination to demonstrate sound financial stewardship. According to the *Book of Discipline* ¶347.3 page 289-90, Certified Candidates seeking approval for provisional membership in the annual conference must submit a full copy of their current credit report. Some districts and conferences even require a candidate to have at least a 650-credit score also to be considered to express interest in ordination. NNYA is seeking funding with the Thriving In Ministry initiative to expand the current Financial Empowerment Resourcing from social media platform training sessions into a strategic plan providing tuition assistance and debt relief for pastoral leaders serving first time appointments in communities of color.

This network understands that the Endowment supported initiatives that "have helped religious organizations address key barriers, such as excessive educational debt, that impair the ability of pastors to lead congregations effectively." According to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) *Seminary Attendance Among UMC Ordinands* report, only four of all seminary

graduates ordained in the UMC in 2015 attended the denominations only Historically Black Seminary, Gammon Theological Seminary (less than 1%) in comparison to 34 (8.23%) from Candler School of Theology, a UMC seminary serving the same geographical location of Atlanta, GA. The study also shows; Candler School of Theology significantly report greater frequency than other United Methodist schools. This research suggests seminarians are more likely to frequent seminaries with ample resources to provide scholarships and tuition assistance. We are excited for the opportunity to partner with the Thriving in Ministry initiative to expand current Financial Empowerment Resource Training and assist/recruit young adult leaders into our principal seminary partner Gammon Theological Seminary to equip 10 African America leaders (ages 18-35) with tuition assistance for three years, as well as first time pastoral leaders with loan forgiveness to effectively serve communities of color. NNYA believes by expanding the Financial Empowerment Resourcing program; this initiative is reversing the current trends of decreasing number of African American young adult pastoral leaders and preparing them to serve in communities of color confidently.

A Story of Transformation

Amber Jones is a recent graduate of Wiley College who began seminary this Spring at Perkins School of Theology. She is a certified candidate with the Texas Annual Conference. Amber joined the design team of NNYA unsure about her call to ordained ministry however, as with the support of her peers, the encouragement of her mentor and the backing of her church/conference Amber is a confident leader pursuing her call by God. While sharing about her summer internship she says, “Today I had the opportunity to deliver a message to Quillian Summer Camp Chapel!! A Fearless Life is Built in Prayer.” As an NNYA design team member, a Wiley Pathway Intern and a candidate for ordained ministry Amber says, “I didn’t know exactly what the path would be like when God called me, but as I allowed God to lead and order my steps, God never led me astray.”

- **Collaborative Coaching and Training Network**

SBC21 coaches are trained to challenge and support pastors and teams to find their voices, listen deeply to others, and exercise leadership on behalf of stronger, healthier and more vital congregations. We do not fix churches or pastors! We help Pastors create environments where communication and strategic planning improves, team development can flourish, leaders can emerge, ministries meet real needs, and the power of the Holy Spirit transforms lives.

In partnership with SBC21, progressive leaders within annual conferences are identified and coached to plan and implement Leadership Development for their own context to inspire, inform, encourage and equip clergy and lay leaders with new skills for transforming congregations. SBC21 equips and resources these training experiences with master trainers and field experts.

Our methodology involves guiding churches through a comprehensive strategic planning process of visioning, goal setting, creating structures for effectiveness, and creating intentional paths for discipleship making, revitalizing Christian Education in the life of the church and systematic leadership development. We provide resources so congregations can explore their demographics, build community relationships, evaluate ministry, and refine operational and administrative management to increase accountability.

Goals

- To train and build a network of master trainers and coaches and deploy them to local churches and conference design teams to offer specific skills development leadership training, coaching and strategic planning and implementation.
- To deploy coaches, facilitators, experts, and team builders to work with lay and clergy in local congregational settings to assess community needs, identify opportunities for ministry, enhance worship experiences and to plan, implement and evaluate the engagement of the congregation in missions.
- To create, develop and implement leadership training webinars for local church access and to assist Annual Conferences with curriculum design suited for the black church culture and context.
- To identify, train and deploy young adult trainers, coaches, mentors and consultants to assist the church in developing innovative ideas for ministry, space planning, marketing, and social media technology.
- To provide guided internships for young adults in a variety of ministry settings.

Program Deliverables

A developed collaborative SBC21 network of lay and clergy experts, community leaders and professionals who are dedicated and deployed to serve within the United Methodist church to create learning environments in ministry.

Training is delivered through various mediums to increase knowledge, change attitudes, and sharpen skills of clergy and lay leadership to strengthen the congregation's capability to understand its community and engage in ministry and service.

Coaching, training, consulting and facilitating is deployed to share best practices, assess and solve problems hindering ministry, and to create spaces for healing, inspiration, and reconciliation, so that congregations can move forward.

Outcomes

- The SBC21 Collaborative Coaching Network builds partnerships in Annual conferences and partner churches to strategically strengthen churches.
- Black churches are unified in purpose and partner together in ministry for increased results in ministry, disciple-making, and resourcing.

Transformation Story

In the Kentucky Annual Conference, a recent partnership began with SBC21. A master coach was deployed to develop a conference design team of African American leaders from various local church and ministry settings. Both lay and clergy worked with their SBC21 Design Coach through a strategic planning process of visioning, listening, building relationships and partnerships, setting smarter goals, and strategies. They are now launching to implement the action steps in collaboration with all the local churches to strengthen their ministries, groom young adult leadership and to resource struggling congregations. Two of their local churches now have SBC21 coaches to work with their congregations in developing their strategic plan. Additional training is being deployed when needed.

- **Building Cultural Competence – A Partnership**

Since the dissolution of the UM Central Jurisdiction in 1968, there remains multiple layers of societal racism, sexism, and economic oppression affecting the black church and communities in America. Despite these struggles; our perseverance, courage, and resiliency to overcome is evident in our faith journey.

The UMC has come a long way with still a long way to go to become the beloved community of God. We all strive to be a community that boldly resists sin, evil and injustice everywhere and to love God fully with all our hearts and souls. In response to the great commandment and commission of Jesus Christ to love one another, we strive to transform into new creatures, witnessing, serving and worshipping in new ways and new places with new people.

Community is the ultimate goal of human existence. Our Christian purpose is to love and to work towards understanding and harmony in God's creation, and this requires more than a change of heart. We must produce evidence of this love in the way we invite, include and serve. As disciples of Christ, we believe we are known as the church by our love.

In our church today, we need to increase our cultural competence to build genuine relationships beyond our backyards. Most of our exposure to cultures different than our own is often limited and short-sighted. Most of our daily interactions and friendships have not broadened to include persons from diverse backgrounds. It is harder to understand folk you have not broken bread with and whose ethnic background or culture is different.

Cultural incompetence is becoming a hindrance when our churches experience rapidly changing demographics, migration, or gentrification. We find it difficult to invite and include new people. Within The UMC today, we still resist integrating our congregations or building multicultural faith communities.

There are also generation gaps we can close. Each generation brings its own identity and needs to be met. In the life of the church, multiple generations gather to be part of the church family, yet sometimes there is misunderstanding, disconnect, and judgment.

Research reminds us that the timeframes in which people are born affect attitudes, values, and behaviors regarding meaning. This is evident in the life of the church. People differ based on many characteristics—class, race, gender <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/gender>, region, and generation. In most congregations, we lack generational understanding and appreciation.

SBC21 believes the National Plans with other UM agencies can partner together to close this gap of understanding and increase the church's capacity to love all people. The plans have always helped the church value diversity. Each plan by its mission seeks to help the general church understand and appreciate the distinct cultures we all come from.

SBC21 is positioned to lead the National Plans in this collaboration and agency partnership in specific ways to offer the church, specific, custom-designed training in cultural and generational competence and to provide master coaches and facilitators to create environments in which groups of persons can have healthy dialogue and communion to increase understanding.

Goals

- To increase cultural competence in The United Methodist Church.
- To increase effective communication, understanding, healing, and reconciliation, and appreciation among staff, lay and clergy leaders, families, and guests involved in ministry.
- To increase our interactions within diverse communities with authenticity, respect, and appreciation and understanding of our unique cultures, views, perspectives, and generational values and behaviors.

Program Deliverables

- United Methodists are able to coordinate, work, or interact with other people that are of different cultures and social backgrounds and has awareness of personal views and culture and understands how cultural competence also involves the total perception of a person's own beliefs and culture to understand and appreciate other people in order to build authentic positive relationships.
 - Local congregations, annual conferences, and agencies are prepared for significant and profound change in order to embrace new leadership, new neighborhoods, and partners.
 - SBC21 is positioned and equipped to provide coaching and training in congregational transformation to churches who are ready to grow particularly in engaging the community, through leadership development, space planning, strategic planning, and gaining cultural and generational competence.
- **SBC21 National Prison Ministry Movement**

Did you know that more than 600 thousand people are released from prison annually? Are you aware that more than 11 million people cycle through jails each year?

The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world, and its prisons, jails, and juvenile facilities are overwhelmingly filled with African Americans and Latinos. The paths to prison for young African American and Latino men and women are many, but the starting points are often local schools.

This very alarming narrative highlights a glaring argument that children are being pushed into prison in what has become known as the cradle or school to prison pipeline.

The mission of the SBC21 Prison Ministry is to equip and engage annual conferences and the local church with collaborative resources, cutting-edge training, and development to allow them to disciple persons impacted by mass incarceration.

The SBC21 National Prison Ministry program believes that growth in local congregations is directly correlated to one of the largest mission fields and that would be returning citizens and persons impacted by mass incarceration.

The SBC21 National Prison Ministry program is laser-focused on its purpose. Fulfilling our mission is simple—by seeing all the people God has called us to reach. We have created intentional partnerships that have allowed our infrastructure in the national office to strengthen and resource African American congregations around the area of ministry to the poor.

National Prison Summit Review and Planning

The SBC21 National Prison Summit on Mass Incarceration is held every other year. It is an ecumenical teaching summit that provides transforming training, inspiration, awareness, and resource services to equip congregations with fundamental strategies on how to reach and engage persons who have been impacted by incarceration.

SBC21 has developed national partnerships with entities doing exceptional work in the area of the prison, juvenile, and correctional ministries. Our partners' networks are also inclusive of UM general agencies, annual conferences, and the local church, school districts, and other entities.

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Goals

- The launch of 4 Webinar (ABCs of Starting a Prison Ministry, How Expungement Revitalized Mission on a Small Church, Stay Woke: Faith and Juvenile Justice Reform, Understanding the Cradle/School to Prison Pipeline)
- Upper Room/Resource Guide development
- Activation of Awareness and Community Engagement (*#SeeAllthePeople*) events to help local churches reach new people. This will be the activation of the RIKERS film showing beginning in April 2019 and continuing through April 2024 (and after that).
- Provide training to the National BMCR and United Methodist Men on The National Prison Ministry
- Research and write at least two grants for program funding
- Continue cultivating existing agency partnerships and relationships for ongoing collaborations, i.e., UMW, UM Justice, GCORR, etc.

Methodology

Education & Training

Focusing on providing information and training to churches on basic jail/prison facts to increase awareness and to offer different ways the church can partner in ministry with incarcerated persons.

Resourcing

Providing practical assistance for successful collaboration between partners, ongoing ministries with contact people, various agencies/transitional housing, and family support ministries to aid in the transition of persons released and reentering society.

Advocacy

Providing practical and technical resources needed to advocate for the rights of the incarcerated and persons impacted.

Network

SBC21 has developed national partnerships with entities doing exceptional work in the area of prison, juvenile, and correctional ministries. Our partnering networks are also inclusive of UM general agencies, annual conferences, and the local church, school districts, and other entities. Our network includes the following partners:

- Saint Mark UMC, Wichita
- St. Johns Downtown
- Houston Concord Church
- Destiny Point
- Cathedral of Praise
- Dallas County Juvenile Detention Center
- Gordon Memorial UMC
- Preston Crest Church of Christ
- Prison Fellowship Children's Defense Fund
- Global Ministries

- Discipleship Ministries
- Church and Society
- Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools
- The Potter's House
- TORI Hamilton Park UMC
- Dallas Crossroads UMC, Compton, California
- Nashville Davidson County Sheriff's Department

Program Deliverables

SBC21 National Prison Ministry will directly resource dozens of United Methodist annual conferences and other ecumenical partners.

- National Prison Summits
- Ending Mass Incarceration Training for annual conferences, local churches, parachurch organizations, and community social justice advocates
- Town Hall Meetings
- Expungement Clinics

Outcomes

- National Prison Ministry has directly resourced more than 20 states, about a half-dozen United Methodist annual conferences
- Create multiple ecumenical partnerships
- Equip lay and clergy leadership with tools, information, and understanding on ways to build or partner within a local prison ministry.
- Developed intentional inter-agency partnerships with UMW, Church and Society, Upper Room, Discipleship Ministries, and United Methodist Communications

Measure of Effectiveness

We will use the 2018 National Prison Summit and the work being done in 2018–2019 with the various annual conferences and local congregations to implement the effectiveness measurement tool created by our partners with Exodus Foundation.org.

Exodus Foundation.org has developed an evaluation tool with metrics. This tool focus is to qualitatively define and measure our successes, identify weaknesses and improve the provision of services to congregations and communities as needed. The tool also requires appropriate reports as required for each project.

The SBC21 National Prison Summit on Mass Incarceration is for motivated clergy leaders and team members from various churches who have expressed an interest in ministry development around prison or restorative justice ministries at their church. These leaders attend the National Prison Summits and receive training and are coached to develop a ministry plan based on their community context.

SBC21, in partnership with our ministry partners at Exodus Foundation.org, has trained and equipped UMC teams from 2017–2018 at:

- St. Johns Downtown in Houston
- Crossroads UMC in Compton, California
- Saint Mark UMC in Wichita
- Hamilton Park UMC Dallas
- St. Luke "Community" UMC Dallas
- St. Paul UMC Dallas
- Saint Mark UMC in South Carolina

While the measurement tools were not in place for the work done in 2018, however, there was a significant impact with some of our churches.

- Directly reached more than 1,000 people in 2018 through the National Prison Summit, RELEASED, Mass Incarceration Training for North Carolina/South Carolina/ Western North Carolina Annual Conference Black Pastors Retreat, Cal-Pac Mass Incarceration Town Hall Meeting, Expungement Clinics
- Mass Incarceration 101 Training for North/South Carolina—100 were trained
- Crossroads UMC Expungement Clinics continue and new this year (September 2019) Mass Incarceration Town Hall Meeting—100 attended
- National Prison Summit on Mass Incarceration—500 over the course of the summit

Story of Transformation

SBC21 provided a unique, safe, and transforming space at the 2018 National Prison Summit on Mass Incarceration for incarcerated women to tell their stories. Our effort to bring the summit participants to experience real life stories and conditions of incarcerated persons was played out in real time.

Summit participants were able to hear the firsthand testimonies of what landed 8 women behind bars for various sentences. The Davidson County sheriff's office approved the daytime release of these women to kick off the National Prison Summit on Mass Incarceration. It was our centering experience that allowed everyone present to understand our WHY!

The stories of transformation first were shared with an opening video that set the stage of the ladies introducing themselves, followed by a panel discussion that engaged the women in a discussion around who they were before receiving an inmate number. The moderated discussion allowed a perspective that allowed the summit participants to see mothers, daughters, aunties, and friends instead of the red jumpsuits they wore.

Summary

SBC21 Equips God's People

How do we build up the body of Christ for serving in a hurting world? This is the question progressive or struggling churches seek to answer for themselves in a variety of ministry settings. Often, Black churches in diverse and changing communities, must deal with this question; while navigating through a myriad of critical social injustices and issues.

How can the church become more relevant in times such as this? Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century (SBC21) is dedicated to helping predominately Black congregations become more effective and fruitful in mission and ministry. This is done by offering specific services to collaborating churches based on needs identified by annual conference bishops and cabinets, local congregations, clergy, and laity. SBC21 partner churches receive relevant tools, coaching, training, strategic planning, hope, inspiration, and encouragement to go forward with a fresh vision the Lord has given the church.

The United Methodist Church believes in social justice action. The SBC21 Prison Ministry movement creates a more sane, humane, and safe world where color and class discrimination cease to contaminate justice and its resources and punishment as the answer to criminal activity is replaced by atonement, reconciliation, restorative justice, and secured mental health treatment. This movement transforms lives, the church, and the community.

How can the church create a culture of call exploration for young people of color and groom them for leadership? SBC21 is building a strong network that will connect young, gifted, and Black leaders into the life of The United Methodist Church. SBC21 moves forward with the National Network of Young Adults (NNYA) initiatives setting the pace.

SBC21 understands the importance of developing leaders for now and in the future, who are ready to take risks, launch into uncharted waters, and cast fresh visions. As we continue to claim and celebrate our unique identity and heritage, SBC21 believes in collaborative relationships. We can all work together in ministry and produce results.

We believe in the transformative power of God through the work and guidance of the Holy Spirit as we move towards 2021–2024.

NON-DISCIPLINARY – Native American Comprehensive Plan

ACDA LOCATION: 20533-DI-NonDis. Volume 2. Section 1. Print Page 424. PDF Page 300-4.

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE:

PETITION TEXT:

Native American Comprehensive Plan The United Methodist Church Quadrennial Plan 2021-2024

Mission, Purpose, and Description

The Native American Comprehensive Plan (NACP) is one of the six racial-ethnic plans of The United Methodist Church. The mission of NACP is to make Native American disciples of Jesus Christ, to work toward the positive transformation of the world with emphasis on the Native American/Indigenous Nations of the United States and relating to the broader Indigenous peoples communities of the world, and to offer the gifts of Native Americans to the global United Methodist Church, the ecumenical community and to other Native American entities. The purpose of NACP is to be a mechanism through which the Native American constituency of the United Methodist Church can access culturally relevant resources and training for respective leaders interacting within the context of Native American ministries. The NACP is to serve as a resourcing entity for efforts addressing the work of the denomination among Native American people. In addition, the NACP, will relate to relative ecumenical communities of Native American constituents as it prepares annual conferences, general agencies and respective denominations on developing healthy and life-giving relationships with Indigenous communities within Christianity and beyond. The Native American Comprehensive Plan will assist in developing culturally appropriate models of Christian discipleship in ways that embrace the cultural diversity possessed by Indigenous peoples, it will serve as a crossroads where Native Americans and non-Native American disciples may find the Creators gifts in one another but also will serve as a place for Native American Christians and non-Christians to explore contemporary understandings of spirituality as each community recovers from centuries of missionary endeavors.

The work of the NACP is carried out through two staff positions: the executive director and administrative assistant. NACP Task Force members guide the work of the Plan and also assist in carrying out the mission of NACP. The Native American Comprehensive Plan Task Force is made up of the following representatives:

- One bishop assigned by the Council of Bishops,
- Two Native American representatives from each of the five U.S. jurisdictions, chosen by each College of Bishops,
- Two Native American representatives from the Native American International Caucus,
- Two Native American representatives from the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference, • One Native American representative from the Alaska Conference, • One Native American youth, and
- One Native American young adult.
- One representative from each of the general boards and agencies attend Task Force meetings as non-voting liaisons.

Within the framework of honoring both Native American culture, identity, and cosmology, the Christian faith heritage, the following are core values for NACP:

- Living out of both our Native American and Christian identities.
- Cooperation, collaboration, and partnership with conferences, general agencies, and other UM structures, and with Native American Tribal Nations, government and secular organizations and others serving the Native American/Indigenous communities.
- Respect for the peoples we have been sent to serve.
- Truth-telling, even when that truth is difficult to hear.
- Integrity in our programmatic and fiscal endeavors.
- Honesty in our relationships.

Native American Comprehensive Plan Executive Summary

NACP seeks to be an entity of the Church, that serves as a means of connection between two specific populations of persons in the U.S. The first is the Native American Comprehensive Plan seeks to connect the church with the Native American constituency of the UMC and connect the church to the broader Native American communities of the United States in general. Second, it is hoped that the NACP can connect the church to persons of the Native American constituency who are suffering from situations of poverty and its many forms. The Native American/Indigenous community we serve have unique needs embedded within their racial, cultural, socioeconomic, and historical identities. Examples of these unique needs include but are not limited to the vast epistemological and cosmological views of many Native American tribal communities that include a continued emphasis on oral traditions and forms of communications that possess an equal amount of wisdom and spiritual guidance as many publications in society today. Many cultures continue to value face-to-face interactions as primary forms of consultation and often experience a lack of resources to engage in information technology, such as internet and remote access, that would allow the exchange of information that can lead to community/church development and sharing of cultural exchanges. In addition, many Native American tribal communities have been the recipient of numerous missionary endeavors of the Christian church and are searching for accountability from faith communities as they each are recovering from historical and intergenerational trauma and the long-lasting impact of displacement. In order to reach beyond the boundaries of the broader culture of The UMC in the United States, offer Christ in a meaningful way to Native Americans, and receive the amazing, God-given gifts that Native peoples have to offer, a special means is needed. The Native American Comprehensive Plan strives to serve as this means of ministry for The UMC.

The following narrative describes NACP's objectives and the outcomes/impacts for annual conferences and local churches as they seek to live out their ministries in the four areas of focus and within disciplinary mandates.

Leadership Development

- (1) The first objective is the provision of consultant/support services to persons in leadership positions (both clergy and lay) within Native American churches, fellowships, ministries, faith communities and in society in general in order to develop, improve, and enhance leadership skills of those Native American persons working in local communities. This objective is essential because of the unique needs and cultural context of Native American churches. NACP will achieve this objective by providing consultation on any matter related to the development and enactment of leadership: provision of information/training resources and referrals, and support through encouragement, advocacy, and facilitation of connections with others in leadership. Consultation and support services may be offered online, by phone, via written and printed resources, and/or in-person/ on-site and by referral to appropriate partnering agencies and/or denominations. Persons in leadership will receive consultation and support services that enable them to function in an enhanced manner as leaders within their Native American churches, The UMC and in society.
- (2) The sponsorship of a Leadership Training Conference for clergy and lay leadership for Native American churches, fellowships, ministries and community partners. Leadership skills will be enhanced for participants who will represent a cross section of Native American churches; networks of communication and support will be established and enhanced; and Native American local churches, fellowships, and ministries will be strengthened. Also, the relationship between the Native American constituency within the UMC and with those beyond the Christian faith will also be strengthened.
- (3) The third objective is sponsorship of a Native American Lay Servant School for Native laypersons. Participants will successfully complete a lay servant/lay speaking course and will follow through with their local church and conference to become certified lay servants/lay speakers; participants will represent a cross section of Native American churches; networks of communication and support will be established and enhanced; and Native American local churches, fellowships, and ministries will be strengthened via the ministries of these persons called forth by the Creator. Participants will examine various forms of ministry that can potentially address the numerous concerns that manifest in working with Native American and Indigenous peoples.
- (4) Next is the sponsorship of a training event for Native American adult workers with children and youth. Training these Native American clergy, lay persons and community partners will not only impact their abilities as leaders, but will allow their talents to be shared with the children and youth they will mentor. This objective empowers and enables adults and young persons in the local church to serve as more effective leaders. Children and the protection of their place in Indigenous society is at the heart of many Native American/Indigenous cosmologies. A healthy young peoples program is essential to the work of the UMC amongst communities in the U.S. and across the world. This training will assist the participants in understanding the local cosmologies of the tribal communities, the social-economic challenges they face and the need to continue to work with community partners in providing safe sanctuaries and environments for the most innocent of our world.

- (5) The fifth objective that contributes to leadership development is the sponsorship of a Native American clergywomen's gathering. Native American clergy, particularly clergywomen, serve in far-flung appointments across the U.S. It is a rare occurrence for these clergy sisters to have the opportunity to gather together, learn, share, and experience their calling within the context of their Native identity. This objective strengthens Native American clergywomen to serve as effective leaders and therefore strengthens their churches and appointments. In society across the world, there is not a community more marginalized than that of the Indigenous Woman. It is hoped that this gathering will allow the venue for the Native American Clergywomen to have an opportunity to speak freely about challenges that exist in serving the church as well as strategies to remedy those challenges.
- (6) In addition to the clergywoman's gathering, it is hoped that a broader summit on the role of Native American/Indigenous Women in our society will be held. Building on the conversations found within the Native American clergywomen's gathering it is hoped that a gathering celebrating the role of Indigenous Women and their contributions to societal and environmental well-being can be convened. In this venue it will also be discussed and examined the conditions of Indigenous women today as well as strategies to remedy these challenges.
- (7) A Native American Men's project will be convened to assist in the discipleship development and spirituality development of today's Indigenous Male population. As a result of the evaluation process conducted in 2014 by the Connectional Table, the recommendation was made that the GCUMM engage with the national racial-ethnic plans and general agencies in a coordinated effort. While the details of this objective have not yet been decided, it will be a unique and first-time partnership aimed at bringing forth new Native American men into leadership and enhancing the leadership skills of current Native American male leaders.
- (8) A Native American Clergy Mentorship program will be developed between Native American clergy and those beginning in ministry within the UMC. This training will be provided for mentors who possess the experience, education and literacy to provide guidance to those entering into ministry with Native American people. Persons from throughout the U.S. will be recruited as potential mentors as well as persons who may wish to be mentees. A gathering for the group will be planned as well as respective curricula developed in hopes that it will assist in the long term support for Native American leaders who may be isolated in local ministry settings.

Church Growth

- (1) The first objective is the provision of consultation/ support services to annual conferences and persons engaged with new and prospective church plants, new fellowships, new ministries, and existing churches/ministries in need of revitalization. NACP will partner with annual conferences/CONAM's (Committees on Native American Ministries) in efforts to establish new Native American fellowships/churches/ ministries and to revitalize existing Native churches/ministries.
- (2) The second objective is the sponsoring of a School of Discipleship and Evangelism for Native American clergy and laity. Participants' skills will be enhanced and information imparted related to Native American discipleship and evangelism; participants will represent a cross section of Native American churches; networks of communication and support will be established and enhanced; and Native American local churches, fellowships, and ministries will be strengthened
- (3) The next objective for NACP is sponsorship of a Native American New Church Starts Summit for clergy and lay leadership from new church starts, fellowships, and ministries in the Native American community, and representatives from annual conferences desiring to begin new Native American churches/ministries. Due to unique cultural and historical factors, starting new Native American churches, fellowships, and ministries requires specialized skills, education, and training. Skills related to growing new Native American churches will be developed and enhanced for the majority of participants who will represent a cross section of Native churches; networks of communication and support will be established and enhanced; and new Native American local churches, fellowships, and ministries will be started and strengthened.
- (4) A new resource will be developed that will assist Committees on Native American Ministries conduct ministry with the UMC and with the unique cultures of Native American tribal communities. This objective will impact the confidence and skill of CONAM's and give them the necessary support and connection to succeed in ministry.
- (5) The fifth objective is the hosting of regular webinars on Native American Spirituality and Social Justice among Native American and Indigenous Peoples communities. It is hoped that these digital gatherings will be utilized by leaders in the UMC but also community members who are stakeholders in the community. Recent movements such as Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW), Loss of Indigenous Languages, and Indigenous Food Sovereignty will be examined. These opportunities will also be utilized as continuing education opportunities for those searching for opportunities.

- (6) An emphasis will be placed on working with the broader ecumenical community and its respective Indigenous People's gathering, namely the World Council of Churches and its Indigenous People's Reference Group. By connecting with the greater Indigenous community worldwide, deeper connection to Indigenous identity can be cultivated and common relationships with the world-wide community can be created.
- (7) An emphasis on Theological education will be developed in hopes of providing a venue for Native American clergy and lay or those engaging with Native American communities the opportunity to examine understandings of theology, ecclesiology and cosmologies of Indigenous people. In addition, these discussions will examine healthy Biblical hermeneutics that can assist in creating healthy relationships with contemporary Native American and Indigenous people.

Ministry with the Poor is the third area of focus. Due to extensive poverty impacting Native Americans, all the NACP goals and objectives are considered to be ministry with the poor.

Global Health

- (1) NACP will sponsor a Native American Health Summit that shall educate and empower Native American local churches to engage in preventive and/or rehabilitative health activities within their local community. Native Americans in the U.S. are widely recognized to be at-risk in many major health categories such as substance abuse/ dependence, suicide (especially youth and young adults), domestic violence, diabetes, and many others. Education and information will be imparted related to these health issues and ways to positively impact them; representatives from local churches will take the information and materials back to share with their churches in order that a plan for sharing this information within their communities can be developed and carried out; participants will represent a cross section of Native American churches; and networks of communication and support will be established/enhanced.

Disciplinary Mandates

- (1) In this objective, NACP will provide consultation and support services to annual conferences in the development and effective use of annual conference Committees on Native American Ministries (CONAM); and to CONAMs in the effective implementation of ¶ 654 of the Book of Discipline (describes ministries of CONAM). This objective is essential because CONAM is the singular structure within annual conferences, as defined by the Book of Discipline, that deals exclusively with Native American churches and ministries. NACP will achieve this objective by providing consultation on any matter related to the development and ministry of CONAM including provision of information/training resources and referrals; and support through encouragement, advocacy, and facilitation of connections with others engaged in CONAM ministry. Consultation and support services may be offered online, by phone, via written and printed resources, and/or in-person/on-site. Persons from annual conferences/ CONAMs will receive consultation and support services that enable them to function in an enhanced manner in fulfilling the Disciplinary mandate.
- (2) The final objective is sponsorship of a CONAM Training Conference. NACP will achieve this objective by holding this event early in the first year of the new quadrennium when most CONAMs have new membership appointed to their committees. The knowledge and skills needed to effectively serve on a conference CONAM will be enhanced for participants who will represent a cross section of Native American nations; networks of communication and support will be established and enhanced; and Native American ministries through the annual conference will be strengthened.

The Native American Comprehensive Plan of the United Methodist Church will work closely with all annual conferences, committees on Native American Ministries and general agencies to fulfill these goals. The NACP is thankful for the continued presence of the UMC amongst the Indigenous Peoples of the United States and looks forward to the ministry of 2021-2024 with great excitement.

R8031 – By Water and Spirit: A United Methodist Understanding of Baptism

ACDA LOCATION: 20528-DI-R8031-G. Volume 2. Section 1. Print Page 425. PDF Page 305.

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Re-adopt “By Water and the Spirit”

PETITION TEXT:

WHEREAS, the 1996 and General Conference adopted “By Water and the Spirit: A United Methodist Understanding of Baptism” and the 2004 General Conference reaffirmed and continued it as an official teaching statement for the church; and

WHEREAS, it provides a theological and pastoral basis for understanding our ritual as contained in “Services of the Baptismal Covenant” in our hymnals and Book of Worship; and

WHEREAS, it has shaped and guided legislation related to our understanding of church membership and mission, including amendment of the constitution (particularly ¶ 4);

Therefore, be it resolved that “By Water and the Spirit: A United Methodist Understanding of Baptism” be continued in The Book of Resolutions for the ensuing two quadrennia (2021-2024 and 2025-2028).

R8032 – This Holy Mystery

ACDA LOCATION: 20528-DI-R8032-G. Volume 2. Section 1. Print Page 425-6. PDF Page 305-6.

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Re-Adopt “This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion” as an official teaching document of the Church Resolution 8032.

PETITION TEXT:

WHEREAS, the 2000 General Conference directed the General Board of Discipleship in collaboration with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, and the Council of Bishops, to develop a comprehensive interpretive document on the theology and practice of Holy Communion in United Methodism and report their findings and recommendations to the 2004 General Conference; and

WHEREAS, in developing its report the Holy Communion Study Committee took intentional steps to heed our United Methodist heritage and history, remain sensitive to the ecumenical church, and hear the voices of United Methodists in the United States as well as in central conferences in the Philippines, Africa, and Europe;

WHEREAS, The General Conference adopted “This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion” in 2004 as an authoritative contemporary statement of its understanding of Holy Communion; and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church has used this document to strengthen our interpretation and practice of the Lord’s Supper in its congregations and ministries and as a basis for deepening our ecumenical conversations and relationships with other denominations;

Therefore, be it resolved that “This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion” be continued in the Book of Resolutions as an official interpretive statement of theology and practice in The United Methodist Church for the next two quadrennia (20121-2024 and 2025-2028); and

Be it further resolved that This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion be used by the Council of Bishops, Church School Publications of The United Methodist Publishing House, The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and the General Board of Discipleship as a guide for teaching and formation of both clergy and laity in relation to Holy Communion; and

Be it further resolved that This Holy Mystery be used by The General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns and the Council of Bishops in interpreting United Methodist understandings and practices in ecumenical dialogue; and Be it further resolved that the **2020** General Conference commend to the church the principles, background, and practices in *This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion* for the interpretation and use of the services of Word and Table in our hymnals and The United Methodist Book of Worship; and

Be it further resolved that This Holy Mystery be published in The Book of Resolutions, and that the General Board of Discipleship continue to offer it **online and** in study editions with a leader’s guide.

NEW RESOLUTION – Abuse of Older Adults

ACDA LOCATION: 20630-CB-R9999-G. Volume 2. Section 1. Print Page 260. PDF Page 140.
21095-CB-R9999. Volume 3. Print Page 1250. PDF Page 68.

PREFERRED ACTION: Withdraw to Resubmit, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Recognition of statistics related to the abuse of older adults (above 60) as well as a call for General Agencies to provide resources and materials to address the issues.

PETITION TEXT:

WHEREAS, up to 5 million older adults are maltreated annually in the US; and

WHEREAS, only one in every fourteen of these cases is reported; and

WHEREAS, 15.7% of people 60 years and older are subjected to abuse globally; and

WHEREAS, 8.5% of people worldwide are age 65 and older, with that number to double by the year 2050; and

WHEREAS, elder abuse and neglect take many forms, such as beatings, sexual abuse, improper use of restraints, improper use of medications, verbal abuse, isolation abuse, stealing possessions, misuse or waste of assets, and a failure to provide food/fluids, medication, medical care, shelter, and clothing,

Therefore, be it resolved, that we call on The United Methodist Church to break the silence and to address this social ill through education and awareness, information, counselling and referral services, support systems, and reports to the proper authorities when abuse is suspected.

Therefore, be it further resolved, that the Committee on Older Adult Ministries and the appropriate general agencies provide resources and materials to address the issue.

NEW RESOLUTION – Aging in the United States: The Church's Response

ACDA LOCATION: 20610-CB-R9999. Volume 2. Section 1. Print Page 249-53. PDF Page 129-33.
21090-CB-R9999-\$

PREFERRED ACTION: Withdraw to Resubmit, Adopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Recognition of older adult membership growth in the UMC in the US and inclusion of a theological response for continued discipleship. Includes calls to action for society, as well as all levels of the church, with specific guidelines for those calls to action.

PETITION TEXT:

I. The Situation

Older adult membership in The United Methodist Church is growing rapidly. In the past, the role of older people in congregations was limited, either by choice or circumstance. Congregations often viewed older adults as a liability rather than emphasizing the potential for a renewed or visionary ministry. Many of the myths and stereotypes of aging and older persons are changing.

According to the US Social Security Administration, the number of persons 65 years of age and older has grown from 3.1 million in 1900 (4 percent of the total population) to 47.8 million in 2015 (14.9 percent) to 55.9 million (16.8 percent) in 2023. By 2040, there will be about 80.8 million older persons, over twice their number in 2000 (35 million). This increase is due both to an increased life expectancy and to the aging of the Baby Boom Generation (persons born between 1946 and 1964). In 1935 persons reaching age 65 had an average life expectancy of an additional 12.5 years; while in 2015 the life expectancy of persons reaching age 65 is an additional 19.4 years (20.6 years for females and 18 years for males).

Between 1980 and 2015, the centenarian population experienced a larger percentage increase than did the total U.S. population. There were 76,974 persons aged 100 or more in 2015 (0.2% of the total 65+ population). This is more than double the 1980 figure of 32,194.

The US Census Bureau also indicates that the racial and ethnic minority populations have increased from 6.7 million in 2005 (18% of the older adult population) to 10.6 million in 2015 (22% of older adults) and are projected to increase to 21.1 million in 2030 (28% of older adults).

As a result of medical advances, better health care, nutrition, and job safety, many more Americans are living into older adulthood. However, the constantly rising cost of health care in the US puts a considerable strain on the budgets of the older population. In 2015 older adults averaged out-of-pocket health care expenditures of \$5,756, an increase of 37% since 2005 (\$4,193). In contrast, the total population spent considerably less, averaging \$4,342 in out-of-pocket costs. Older Americans spent 12.9% of their total expenditures on health, as compared with 7.8% among all Americans. Health costs incurred on average by older adults in 2015 consisted of \$3,893 (68%) for insurance, \$967 (17%) medical services, \$672 (12%) for drugs and medication, and \$224 (4%) for medical supplies. Inflation in the early 2020s has increased the costs of healthcare for all age ranges.

Medicare is a health insurance program primarily for persons over the age of 65. Medicaid provides a supplement to Medicare primarily for low-income persons. However, with cuts in federal and state funding, older adults are experiencing a growing hardship in the cost of healthcare. Older adults who have need for specialized residences, or their families, often have no choice but to opt for a nursing home that is covered by Medicaid. This is costly and often not the choice of the parties involved.

Although most older persons live in urban places, they also comprise a large proportion of rural populations where facilities and resources for them are extremely limited. Health care availability, transportation, and job opportunities are often lacking in rural areas. This condition is complicated further by a disproportionately low allocation of federal funds to meet the needs of the rural older adults.

Race and ethnicity are important determinants of the residential patterns of older adults. While about one third of all older persons live in central cities, one half of all African Americans and Hispanics over 65 is heavily concentrated in urban areas. The demographic shifts in housing patterns brought about by urban renewal and gentrification (higher-income persons buying property in formerly poor neighborhoods), the lack of low-cost housing, and the resultant increase in homeowner taxes have a major impact on older adults, especially minorities. Houses that have been paid for are lost because of the tax increases, or low rents rise astronomically.

We need to dispel the common misunderstanding that aging is synonymous with senility and dementia, and that older persons are unable or unmotivated to learn, grow, and achieve. Opportunities for continuing education and growth have long been unmet by a system geared to the needs of the young. Hearing and vision loss and other physical or biological changes may impede or change the way an older adult learns; however, old age can be a time of continual learning.

Like society, faith communities are “graying,” but at an even faster rate. It isn’t unusual to find many local churches having an older adult membership that represents over 60 percent of their total membership, with some even much higher! This is due in part to younger and middle-aged adults choosing not to participate in congregations.

Some problems that beset older persons are the result of the social and physical process of aging. These include changes in work, family, and community roles; the reduction of energy; and the increase in chronic illness and impairments. These conditions can lead to increased dependence on others for life’s necessities. Other problems faced by older adults are the result of subtle and overt discrimination by social and political institutions. Being old today is not easy, in either the church or society. If the situation of older persons is to be improved, the church must act.

II. A Theological Response

Aging is a process involving the whole life span from birth to death. The response of the church begins with a theological understanding of aging concerned with the whole life process rather than with only its final stages. The meaning of life, rather than death, is the central point from which to theologize about aging. In The United Methodist Church, there are many legitimate theological understandings of the meaning of life in its progression from birth to death. The position presented here is one attempt to express this meaning.

1. All of creation is God’s work (Genesis 1). Human beings are only a small part of the totality of life forms. The aging process is universal in all life forms. Birth, aging, and death are all part of divine providence and are to be regarded and taught as positive values.
2. As Christians, the mystery of God’s involvement in the person of Jesus Christ provides us with a unique source of divine help (grace) in our passage through life’s successive stages. This is especially significant in the later stages, when spiritual maturation and well-being can be experienced even in times of physical decline. The power of the cross is a special revelation of how suffering can be reconciling and redemptive. Faith in the Resurrection provides us with an assurance of the abiding presence of the Risen Lord (Matthew 28:20) and the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-19; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; Romans 8:9-11), and the permanence of our relationship with God beyond the mystery of death. In this spiritual presence we also find the source of the potential of all persons for self-transcendence. God’s act in Christ was for life abundant (John 10:10) in all stages of life. Christ also gives us our traditional Wesleyan vision of the goal of ultimate perfection (Matthew 5:48). The grace of God in Christ is therefore important throughout life, including its last stages.
3. In response to this saving grace, we believe in the inevitable need to walk in the ways of obedience that God has enabled (Ephesians 2:8-10). These ways are defined by love for God and neighbor (Mark 12:28-31; Romans 13:8-9). It is therefore the privilege of Christians to serve all persons in love, including older persons with their special needs. Furthermore, since God’s grace is not conditioned by any human standards of worthiness or usefulness (2 Corinthians 5:19), all persons are valuable to God (Matthew 6:25-30). In the larger pattern of human needs and rights, those of older adults must be consciously and intentionally included.
4. Older persons are not simply to be served but are also to serve; they are of special importance in the total mission of the church. Since the Christian vocation has no retirement age, the special contributions of older adults need conscious recognition and employment. The experience of all older persons, and the wisdom of many, is a special resource for the whole church.
5. The church as the body of Christ in the world today (1 Corinthians 12:27) is God’s method for realizing the reconciliation accomplished by Christ (Colossians 1:16-20). As such, it intentionally sponsors institutional forums that help reconcile persons of all ages to one another and to God. This especially includes those institutions designed to meet the needs of older adults and to keep them fully incorporated into the body of Christ. The church also is charged with an abiding concern for justice for all. It should work tirelessly for the freedom of all persons to meet their own fullest potential and to liberate those who are captive to discrimination, neglect, exploitation, abuse, or poverty.

III. Calls to Action

A. By society at all levels

United Methodists are called to advocate for the elimination of age discrimination in personal attitudes and institutional structures. We should pursue this advocacy vigorously and in cooperation with appropriate private and public groups, including all levels of government. Our efforts should be based on the following:

1. Religious institutions make a unique and significant contribution to human life. Living involves ethical issues and value decisions. Therefore, a religious presence is important to the quality of total community life.
2. Governments should play a critical role in ensuring that all appropriate benefits are available to all older adults to improve their quality of life. Christians should support governmental policies that promote sharing with those who are less fortunate. This does not absolve either the institutional church or individual Christians from responsibility for persons in need.
3. A standard of basic survival support systems should be accepted and established in our society and made available to all persons. These systems should include: health care, transportation, housing, livable communities, and income maintenance at a minimum. Christians need to identify and promote those facilities and services that ensure opportunities for prolonged well-being. These services need to be provided within the financial means of older adults, with appropriate public subsidy when necessary. They include the following:
 - a) universal comprehensive health insurance program;
 - b) elimination of an “age tax” for older adults related to their health insurance (if adopted by Congress)
 - c) health-resources systems special to the needs of older adults that are comprehensive, accessible, and feasible within available resources (these include long-term care, hospice care, home health care, and health maintenance organizations);
 - d) health-education systems that emphasize proper nutrition, proper drug use, preventive health care, and immunization as well as information about the availability of health resources within the community;
 - e) training for medical and social service personnel concerning the special cultural, physical, psychosocial, and spiritual aspects and needs of older adults;
 - f) livable communities with adequate housing that is both affordable, safe, and secure, with protections that massive tax and rental increases will not create displacement, and transportation systems that meet the special needs of older adults;
 - g) national legislation correcting the disparity in Medicare’s failure to cover either assisted living residences or dementia-specific housing, or home nursing care;
 - h) a basic governmental income-maintenance system adequate to sustain an adequate standard of living affording personal dignity;
 - i) basic pension systems benefit levels adequate to meet economic needs at least equal to the defined poverty level, supplementation by benefits from public funds;
 - j) continuing educational and counseling opportunities for older adults in pre-retirement planning, in work-related training, in interpersonal retirement relationships, and in personal enrichment;
 - k) formal and informal community associations such as public and private centers that foster social, recreational, artistic, intellectual, and spiritual activities to help persons overcome loneliness and social isolation;
 - l) continuing employment opportunities for those who desire them in flexible, appropriate work settings related to varying lifestyles; and,
 - m) opportunities for volunteer work and paid employment that best utilize the skills and experiences of older adults.
4. Finally, our society is called upon to respond to a basic human right of older adults: the right to faithful care in dying and to have personal wishes respected concerning the number and type of life-sustaining measures that should be used to prolong life. Living wills, requesting no heroic measures be used, and other such efforts to die with faithful care should be supported.

B. By the church at all levels

1. All levels of the church are called to:

- a) practice nondiscrimination in the church on the basis of age in hiring, deployment, and promotion of older workers, including the appointment of clergy;
- b) include ministries by, with and for older adults as an essential and intentional component of the church and its mission;
- c) promote flexible retirement and eliminate mandatory retirement for clergy and church-employed lay persons based solely on age;
- d) develop theological statements on death and dying recognizing the basic human right to faithful care of the dying;
- e) address the questions raised by the declining quality of life; stimulate research to connect the improvement of the quality of life with longevity of life, raised by increased longevity;
- f) develop ethical guidelines for dealing with difficult medical decisions that involve the use of limited resources for health and life insurance;
- g) authorize appropriate research, including a demographic study of members of The United Methodist Church, to provide greatly needed information on the psycho-social and spiritual aspects of aging; and,
- h) establish a properly funded pension system with an adequate minimum standard for all clergy and church-employed lay persons and their spouses, including the divorced spouse.

2. Each local church is called to:

- a) become aware of the needs and interests of older people in the congregation and in the community, including the places in which they reside, and to express Christian love through person-to-person understanding and caring;
- b) intentionally sponsor ministries in institutions designed to meet the needs of older adults, such as nursing homes, assisted living residences, and dementia-specific housing as well as the homes of older adults living alone, as we keep these older persons fully incorporated in the body of Christ;
- c) affirm the cultural and historical contributions and gifts of ethnic older adults;
- d) acknowledge that ministry by, with, and for older adults is needed in congregations of all sizes;
- e) support, equip, and train lay volunteers with a dedication for this important ministry;
- f) develop a barrier-free environment in which older adults can function in spite of impairments;
- g) develop an intentional ministry with older adults that:
 - ensures life maintenance for each person related to adequate food, health service, mobility, personal security, income, and other personal services;
 - offers opportunities for life enrichment including intellectual stimulation, social involvement, spiritual cultivation, and artistic pursuits;
 - encourages life reconstruction when necessary, including motivation and guidance in making new friends, serving new roles in the community that help people cope with loss, and providing support systems for older adults experiencing losses;
 - affirms life transcendence, including celebration of the meaning and purpose of life through worship, Bible study, personal reflection, and small-group life;
 - recognizes that older persons represent a creative resource bank available to the church and to involve them in service to the community as persons of insight and wisdom (this could include not only ministry to one another, but also to the larger mission of the church for redemption of the world, including reaching the unchurched);
 - relates to secular retirement communities within its boundaries;
 - fosters intergenerational experiences in the congregation and community including educating all age groups about how to grow old with dignity and satisfaction;

- ensures that the frail are not separated from the life of the congregation but retain access to the sacraments and are given assistance as needed by the caring community;
 - provides support and information for adults caring for aging parents;
 - cooperates with other churches and community agencies for more comprehensive and effective ministries with older persons;
 - accepts responsibility for an advocacy role in behalf of older adults; and
3. Each annual conference is called to:
- a) provide leadership and support for an intentional ministry to older persons in its local churches, with special attention to the needs of women and minorities;
 - b) develop a conference committee, council or team with representation from each conference district with the responsibility for overseeing intentional older adult ministry within the conference;
 - c) develop a program of job counseling and retirement planning for clergy and lay employees;
 - d) share creative models of ministry and a data bank of resources and “best practices” with the local churches and other agencies;
 - e) define the relationship between the annual conference and United Methodist-related residential and nonresidential facilities for older adults, so that the relationships can be clearly understood and mutually supportive;
 - f) recruit persons for professional leadership in working with older adults;
 - g) serve as both a partner and critic to local church and public programs with older adults, promoting ecumenical linkages where possible;
 - h) support financially, if needed, retired clergy and lay church workers and their spouses who reside in United Methodist long-term care settings;
 - i) promote Golden Cross Sunday and other special offerings for ministries by, with, and for older adults; and,
 - j) recognize that older persons within the conference, both lay and clergy, represent a significant and experienced resource that should be utilized in both the organization and mission of the conference.
4. General boards and agencies are called to:
- a) examine the pension policies of the general church and their impact related to the needs of those who are single (retired, divorced, or surviving dependents of pensioners);
 - b) create specific resource materials for ministry by, with, and for older adults;
 - c) prepare intergenerational and age-specific materials for church school and for other special studies in the local church;
 - d) promote advocacy on behalf of all older adults, but especially those who do not have access to needed services because of isolation, low income, or disability (this might include advocacy for health care, income maintenance, and other social legislation);
 - e) assist institutions for older adults to maintain quality care and to develop resource centers for ministry with and by older adults;
 - f) create a variety of nonresidential ministries for older adults;
 - g) coordinate general church training in ministry with older adults;
 - h) assign specific staff and/or board members to participate as members on the Committee on Older Adult Ministries and to provide for formal coordination on aging issues;
 - i) advocate the special concerns and needs of older women and minorities; and utilize older persons as a creative resource bank in the design and implementation of these objectives.

5. Retirement and long-term care facilities related to the church are called to:
 - a) develop a covenant relationship with the church to reinforce a sense of joint mission in services with older adults;
 - b) encourage the provision of charitable support and provide a channel for the assistance of the whole church;
 - c) serve as a resource for older adult needs within the community at large; and,
 - d) encourage both residential and nonresidential institutional settings that emphasize the spiritual, personal, physical, and social needs of older adults.
6. Finally, seminaries and colleges are called to:
 - a) provide seminarians with instruction on aging and experiences with older persons in the curriculum;
 - b) provide classes and continuing education courses on intentional ministry by, with, and for older adults
 - c) prepare persons for careers in the field of aging;
 - d) develop special professorships to teach gerontology, and to provide continuing education for those who work with older adults;
 - e) engage in basic and applied research related to aging, and communicate the findings;
 - f) develop a system for sharing research results with the church;
 - g) enable older adults to enroll in courses and degree programs and to participate generally in the life of educational institutions; and,
 - h) develop and offer lay courses in locations accessible to older persons.

VII. Summary

Concern for older persons in the church is theologically grounded in the doctrine of Creation, in the meaning of God's work in Christ, in the response to grace that leads us into service, in the continuing value of older persons in the larger mission, and in the nature of the church as an agent of redemption and defender of justice for all.

Older adults deserve respect, dignity, and equal opportunity. The United Methodist Church is called to be an advocate for older adults, for their sense of personal identity and dignity, for utilization of experience, wisdom, and skills, for health maintenance, adequate income, educational opportunities, and vocational and avocational experiences in cooperation with the public and private sectors of society.

The aging process is part of God's plan for life, with the good news of Christ's redemption giving hope and purpose. United Methodists are called to live this message through words and deeds in the church and in society.

NEW RESOLUTION – Support for the Upper Room’s Emmaus Ministries at All Levels of the Church

ACDA LOCATION: 20631-DI-R9999-G. Volume 2. Section 1. Print Page 426. PDF Page 306.
21094-CB-R9999. Volume 3. Section 1. Print Page 1249-1250. PDF Page 67-8.

PREFERRED ACTION: Withdraw and Resubmit

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Resolution that encourages the church at all levels to further support and engage in the family of Emmaus Ministries, including: Walk to Emmaus, Chrysalis, Face to Face, and Journey to the Table.

PETITION TEXT:

WHEREAS, the Emmaus Ministries; including Walk to Emmaus, Chrysalis, Face to Face, Journey to the Table, and Discovery Weekend, is given to us from the Upper Room; and

WHEREAS, the mission of Emmaus Ministries is “Renewing Christian Disciples, Strengthening Local Churches”; and

WHEREAS, this ministry brings a spiritual awareness of Jesus Christ to many life-stages in a unique, loving, patient, and kind way; and

WHEREAS, we rejoice in the truth which is revealed in this effort; and

WHEREAS, this ministry involves many of our members in a very important ministry; and

WHEREAS, this ministry enables and encourages members to return to their local churches and be present and future leaders of the church,

Therefore, be it resolved, that General Conference:

1. urges all annual conferences to increase their efforts and resources in support of Emmaus Ministries so that the members of our churches know and are in touch with Christ;
2. encourages churches to enlist and involve their members; older adults, men and women, young adults, youth, boys and girls, in the life and work of Emmaus Ministries so that they may return and be leaders within their own congregations; and
3. encourages the General Board of Discipleship and The Upper Room to continue their emphasis on enhancing the reach of Emmaus Ministries.

R2024 – May as Christian Home Month

ACDA LOCATION:

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Readopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE:

PETITION TEXT:

Whereas, many families throughout our world suffer because of poverty, inequities in society, financial struggles, inadequate health care, violence in the home, violence in their communities, lack of knowledge for developing healthy relationships, and inadequate resources for times of transition or crisis; and

Whereas, according to the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church, “We believe the family to be the basic human community through which persons are nurtured and sustained in mutual love, responsibility, respect, and fidelity”; and

Whereas, we recognize that support from a faith community can help every family, no matter what its configuration, to more effectively provide safety, nurture growth, and sustain healthy relationships;

Therefore be it resolved, that General Conference declare the month of May Christian Home Month, with emphasis on ways congregations can support families within the congregation and within their communities, encourage worship and faith formation in the home, participate in prayer on behalf of all families, and provide ministries for forming and strengthening healthy relationships in the home.

We call upon pastors and congregations to offer classes and opportunities for forming and maintaining healthy relationships, parenting, communication skills, marriage preparation and

enrichment, faith formation in the home, and coping with crises.

We call upon annual conferences to assist congregations through the development, identification, and promotion of ministries and resources in support of families and of faith formation in the home.

We call upon the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to offer resources for clergy in marriage preparation and marriage enrichment, as well as resources to aid clergy in developing and maintaining healthy relationships within their own families.

We call upon seminaries to train clergy in forming and maintaining healthy relationships within the family, in marriage preparation, marriage counseling, and marriage enrichment.

We call upon The United Methodist Publishing House to continue publication of materials in support of healthy relationships within the family, parenting, sexuality education, and family life.

We call upon the General Board of Discipleship to produce resources for the support of Christian Home Month for use in the congregation and in the home, as well as to continue to develop, identify, and promote resources and materials for forming and sustaining healthy relationships in the home, as well as for faith formation in the home.

R2027 – Putting Children and Their Families First

ACDA LOCATION: 20795-CB-R2027. Volume 3. Section 1. Print Page 1206-8. PDF Page 24-6.

PREFERRED ACTION: Updates, Readopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE:

PETITION TEXT:

Paragraph 161 of the Social Principles affirms that “We believe the family to be the basic human community through which persons are nurtured and sustained in mutual love, responsibility, respect, and fidelity,” and ¶ 162 affirms that children are “acknowledged to be full human beings in their own right, but beings to whom adults and society in general have special obligations” and that “children have the rights to food, shelter, clothing, health care, and emotional well-being as do adults, and these rights we affirm as theirs regardless of actions or inactions of their parents or guardians. In particular, children must be protected from economic, physical, emotional, and sexual exploitation and abuse.” The Problem Growing up whole and healthy is increasingly difficult for children. They face weakening support systems throughout society, from home to school to church, at the very time they are struggling with unprecedented stresses. They are forced to grow up too quickly, to make significant life choices at a younger and younger age.

The percentage of children in poverty is the most widely used indicator of child well-being. Growth in the ranks of poor children in the United States during the past few decades is attributed to the growing ranks of the working poor. ~~The number of children living in extreme poverty (income below 50 percent of the poverty level) rose from 8 percent in 2006 to 18 percent in 2008, and continues to rise (2010 Kids Count Data Book). While the number of children living in poverty declined from 22% to 18% in 2018, the most recent data does not include the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.~~

Globally, children are increasingly at risk from the effects of poverty. In its State of the World’s Children Report, UNICEF reported the Gross National Income of households in the least developed countries in the world as 1.43 percent of the Gross National Income of households of industrialized countries. Nearly 9 million children under the age of five die each year from common illnesses and malnutrition associated with poverty. Poverty undermines the health, abilities, and potential of millions more children.

In its State of the World’s Children 2021 Report, UNICEF notes the reciprocal link between poverty and mental health and cites that “Globally, nearly 20 percent of children younger than 5 live in extreme poverty.” The report also references the impact of COVID-19 which has increased stress among children and adolescents.

Public Policy Implications

Too often we engage in public policy debate, make new laws and cut budgets and programs without putting the highest priority on how any change or policy will affect children and their families. In light of the critical nature of this issue, The United Methodist Church should press for public policies that:

1. Guarantee basic income for all families that include children;
2. Provide basic support services for families in economic crisis, including food and nutrition programs, crisis respite care, and home care services;
3. Mandate full and complete access to health and medical care, including health maintenance, prenatal care, well-baby services, care for minor children, and mental health services for all family members;
4. Assure safe and affordable housing for families without regard to number and ages of children; and
5. Safeguard protective services for children at risk of all forms of abuse.

Church Program and Policy Implications

Churches must strengthen and expand their ministry and advocacy efforts on behalf of children and their families. Every church and community needs a coordinated ministry that serves families with children in the congregation and in the larger community that works hand-in-hand with human service providers and ecumenical colleagues and that addresses the public policy concerns listed above.

The church has traditionally emphasized the integrity of the institutions of marriage and family and the responsibilities of parenthood. While these emphases should be maintained, a holistic ministry with families must, of necessity, be based on the broadest possible definition of family so that the great variety of structures and configurations will be included. Grandparents often function as parents, and many families are headed by single parents or “blended” through divorce and remarriage. Adoption, fostering, and extended family structures are among those that need the church’s ministry.

Churches need to understand that all the problems described here happen to individuals and families inside the congregation as well as in the community. It is critically important that each congregation deal openly with the needs of its members and its community, and develop appropriate ministry responses for children and their families.

A network of child-serving institutions and agencies, from community centers to residences for at-risk children and youth, exists across the church. Many are local expressions of national or international mission, and others are related to annual conferences. These agencies meet critical needs and urgently require the financial, volunteer, and prayer support of congregations.

We call upon The United Methodist Church to:

1. Generate a plan in every local church for assessing ministry with children (in the congregation and in the community) and implementing a vision for ministry with children and their families that takes seriously the facts and perspectives presented above. This plan is to be overseen by the official decision-making body of each local church.
2. Celebrate the Children’s Sabbath in every local church each October. Utilize the resource manual developed annually by the Children’s Defense Fund (www.childrensdefense.org).
3. Continue and strengthen a task force formed of persons from general Church agencies who work on issues of child and family advocacy, in order to coordinate work. The task force is convened annually by the Office of Children’s Ministries of the General Board of Discipleship.

R2101 – Support for Chrysalis at All Levels of the Church

ACDA LOCATION:

PREFERRED ACTION: None, RE Line 28

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Allow to expire as Resolution in Line 28 Covers.

PETITION TEXT:

WHEREAS, this is a ministry given to us from the Upper Room; and WHEREAS, this brings a spiritual awareness of Jesus Christ to our youth in a unique, loving, patient, and kind way; and WHEREAS, we rejoice in the truth which is revealed in this effort to involve our youth in a very important ministry in the Chrysalis movement; and WHEREAS, youth may return to their local churches and be present and future leaders of the church, Therefore, be it resolved, that:

1. The General Conference urge all Annual Conferences to increase their efforts and resources in the Chrysalis movement so that the youth of our churches know and are in touch with Christ; and
2. The General Conference urge each conference to work in connection with the General Conference Council on Ministries, and that adequate funding be provided within each annual conference budget for Chrysalis ministries as outlined in the manuals from the Upper Room for this extremely important ministry; and
3. The General Conference encourages churches to enlist and involve their youth, girls and boys, in the life and work of Chrysalis so that they may return and be leaders within their own congregations. Furthermore, General Conference encourages the General Board of Discipleship and Upper Room ministries to continue their emphasis on Chrysalis.

R2102 – Support for Walk to Emmaus at All Levels of the Church

ACDA LOCATION:

PREFERRED ACTION: None, RE Line 28

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Allow to expire as Resolution in Line 28 Covers.

PETITION TEXT:

WHEREAS, the Walk to Emmaus is given to us from the Upper Room; and WHEREAS, his ministry brings a spiritual awareness of Jesus Christ to all adults in a unique, loving, patient, and kind way, and WHEREAS, we rejoice in the truth which is revealed in this effort, and WHEREAS, this ministry involves our members in a very important ministry; and WHEREAS, this ministry enables members to return to their local churches and be present and future leaders of the church, Therefore, be it resolved, that General Conference:

1. urges all annual conferences to increase their efforts and resources in the Walk to Emmaus so that the adults of our churches know and are in touch with Christ;
2. encourages churches to enlist and involve their adult members, men and women, in the life and work of the Walk to Emmaus so that they may return and be leaders within their own congregations; and
3. encourages the General Board of Discipleship and Upper Room ministries to continue their emphasis on Walk to Emmaus.

R2103 – Lay Responsibility for Growth of the Church

ACDA LOCATION:

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Readopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Allow to expire as Resolution in Line 28 Covers.

PETITION TEXT:

Whereas, The United Methodist Church has steadily lost membership for many years in its country of origin; and,

Whereas, in the most recent year’s totals, The United Methodist Church lost 70,000 members, thus exceeding the previous year’s losses of 60,000 members; and,

Whereas, the historic strength of The United Methodist Church lay in well-equipped laity who were passionate in their beliefs; and,

Whereas, the clergy of The United Methodist Church continue to equip the laity for the task of winning commitments for Christ through witness, service, and transforming ministry; and,

Whereas, too many of our laity no longer claim that core responsibility of every Christian to find those who are lost and lead them into a church home,

Therefore, be it now resolved, that we, the laity, working with the clergy, accept primary responsibility for the growth and vitality of The United Methodist Church.

R3023 – Older Adult Recognition Day

ACDA LOCATION:

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Readopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Allow to expire as Resolution in Line 28 Covers.

PETITION TEXT:

Whereas, special observances in The United Methodist Church are intended to illustrate the nature and calling of the church and are celebrated annually; and

Whereas, special observances are placed on the calendar to make clear the calling of the church as the people of God; and

Whereas, both the population in the United States and throughout the world is increasingly aging and growing older as more people are living longer; and

Whereas, the average age of the membership in The United Methodist Church is comprised of persons 60 years of age and older; and

Whereas, older adults make significant and important contributions in the life of The United Methodist Church and to the spreading of the gospel throughout the world; and

Whereas, the scripture commands us to “honor your father and your mother”;

Therefore, be it resolved, that The United Methodist Church observe an annual Older Adult Recognition Day; and

Be it further resolved, that an Older Adult Recognition Day may be observed annually, preferably during the month of May. The day is to recognize and celebrate the gifts, talents, and contributions older adults make within and beyond the local church. The day should also provide congregations with the opportunity to learn more about the issues and concerns related to aging and older adulthood. The Committee on Older Adult Ministries will have responsibility for the supervision and promotion of the observance of this special day.

R3024 – Mission and Aging of the Global Population

ACDA LOCATION:

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Readopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE: Allow to expire as Resolution in Line 28 Covers.

PETITION TEXT:

Throughout the world, many older persons look to religion for meaning in life, for opportunities to serve, and for a way to address human suffering. The achievement of long life among increasing numbers of global citizens holds possibilities for an invigorated ministry by, for, and with older persons. In taking action, older people challenge discriminatory perceptions of the aged and reveal abundant talents and capacities. From the earliest days reported in our Scripture, the stories of our faith have looked at aging realistically but positively. Ecclesiastes 12 catalogues the physical miseries of old age with the warning to “remember your creator in your prime, before the days of trouble arrive” (12:1). Nevertheless, the patriarchal stories, depicting individuals who lived hundreds of years, expressed the belief that life itself was good and, therefore, extended life was very good. Age was presumed to bring wisdom, and the elders of Israel were looked to for guidance (Exodus 12:21, etc.), as were, later, the elders of the church (Acts 20:17). Age brings its own pleasures, including grandchildren (Proverbs 17:6), and is marked by the beauty of gray hair (Proverbs 20:29). A life well lived, that is righteous in the sight of God, gives purpose to our aging; Psalm 92 vividly pictures the righteous elderly, who “will spring up like a palm tree . . . they will bear fruit even when old and gray; they will remain lush and fresh” (92:12, 14). Those who survive to old age are, therefore, to be honored, especially one’s father and mother (Deuteronomy 5:16; Mark 10:19). It can be assumed that when Paul spoke of giving “honor [to] those you should honor” (Romans 13:7), he meant to include respect for older persons. A sign of the coming of the Lord is that not only young but also old shall be merry (Jeremiah 31:13). Zechariah’s vision of a truly restored Jerusalem was one in which not only would once again the streets be full of boys and girls playing, but of old men and old women, who “will have a staff in their hand because of their great age” (Zechariah 8:4-5).

Through the centuries, the church has held varying attitudes toward older persons, but the prevailing tradition accords dignity to persons in old age. This tradition underpins our United Methodist Social Principles statement on rights of the aging, in which social policies and programs are called for “that ensure to the aging the respect and dignity that is their right as senior members of the human community” (¶ 162E).

Advances in public health and education, as well as control of infectious diseases, have contributed to these changes. Nevertheless, the extreme conditions of poverty, war and hunger, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic prevent realization of the biblical hope for a blessed old age. In situations of armed conflict, combatants increasingly target older persons. All too frequently, families and other caregivers abuse older persons in domestic and institutional settings. Income support and access to health care in old age apply only to a small minority in many countries. Age and gender discrimination often blocks access to the participation and involvement throughout the world. In these challenging situations, a greater proportion of older persons now take their own lives.

Many older persons live in vulnerable situations. They live in rural areas, working the land, and are predominantly female. Older persons are heavily concentrated in agriculture, with manufacturing jobs ranking a distant second. Women outlive men in virtually all countries. Most women past age sixty-five are widows, a trend likely to continue. They suffer low incomes and chronic illnesses. Less than 10 percent of older women in many poor societies read or write. Across the globe, traditional social support based on family structures continues to erode, leaving many elders in isolation with no one to care for them in their last years.

In some developing countries, older persons attract love and respect precisely because of their experience and their place as wise leaders and survivors within the community. Contrast this love and respect with some attitudes in the United States and other Western nations that deprecates old age because it is less “productive,” or because physical energy and commercial images of beauty replace spiritual energy and the beauty of the inner soul. For this reason, the United States and other developed societies can learn much from other societies.

The United Methodist Church therefore calls upon

A. Local churches to:

1. involve older adults intergenerationally and in ways that empower and encourage them to use resources for skills, knowledge, experience, and spiritual insight; and

2. use resources from general agencies of The United Methodist Church that suggest actions and models for learning from other cultures and countries in their understanding of and appreciation of older persons.
- B. Annual conferences to:
1. involve older adults in the full range of programs of the conference, including Volunteer in Mission (VIM) projects; health ministries in which able older adults care for the frail elderly; public advocacy; and use of resources and action suggestions from the Committee of Older Adult Ministries of The United Methodist Church;
 2. ask itinerating missionaries to speak to constructive ways churches in the United States can:
 - (a) learn from the customs, values, and practices of churches in other countries and cultures; and
 - (b) support older persons in other countries and cultures through Advance Specials, VIM projects, and mission support; and
 3. study the United Nations International Plan of Action on Ageing adopted in 2002 as a basis for action initiatives and guide to programming.
- C. All general program agencies of The United Methodist Church to:
1. develop resources and programs that support and undergird the faith development of older adults and encourage their full participation in ministry;
 2. identify specific actions in their ongoing programs and ministries by which families on a global basis can be assisted in caring for their frail elderly;
 3. include older persons in training for caregiving in relation to mission and ministry globally; and
 4. provide analysis and advocacy training to equip older adults to defend and expand public policies and programs that serve all elders.
- D. The General Board of Church and Society and the General Board of Global Ministries to:
1. advocate support for older persons' needs and capacities in governmental and nongovernmental organizations, including the United Nations, the US government, and ecumenical and other nongovernmental international organizations; and
 2. study and share with the whole Church pertinent issues related to the well-being of older persons, such as allocation of governmental resources for support and care, end-of-life issues, and avoidance of age discrimination in employment and community life.
- E. The General Board of Global Ministries to include in mission education:
1. positive images of older persons in all countries and cultures, along with images realistically depicting the difficulties many of these persons have under conditions of poverty and isolation;
 2. information about the "double bind" in which many poor societies find themselves by virtue of the demands of a growing young population and the demands of a growing older population; and
 3. resources for annual conferences and local churches that provide models for appropriate mission and ministry on the local level, and specific action and program suggestions.
- F. All general agencies and all episcopal leadership to:
1. include older persons as full participants in programs and ministries from planning through decision making and evaluation;
 2. seek opportunities by which The United Methodist Church can affirm its aging members, and offer ways that older members can collaborate with younger persons in evangelism and renewal of the whole church, to the end that persons of all ages are called to the discipleship of Jesus Christ; and
 3. lift the prophetic voice of Christian faith to proclaim a vision of human community in which older persons are accorded respect and dignity as those made in the image of God and part of the human family.

R3061 – Black Family Life

ACDA LOCATION:

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Readopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE:

PETITION TEXT:

Our Social Principles state that “we believe the family to be the basic human community through which persons are nurtured and sustained in mutual love, responsibility, respect, and fidelity” (§ 161B).

Families of all types in the United States are vulnerable to social and economic change.

Black families today face a myriad of challenges including violence within their geographical community, higher than average high school drop-out rates, single parent households, Black males serving jail and prison terms, health problems, higher than average

unemployment rates, and economic stress that contribute to many of our families living without a future of hope.

We call upon GBOD (General Board of Discipleship) to identify resources and materials to assist local churches. These resources will be posted on the GBOD website and promoted at meetings, events, and conferences. We call upon local churches to develop programs of mentoring, counseling, conflict resolution or strategies to strengthen Black family life germane to the community in which it resides.

R3063 – Resourcing Black Churches in Urban Communities

ACDA LOCATION:

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Readopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE:

PETITION TEXT:

Whereas, the struggle for social, economic, and political survival of Black people in the United States is manifested in their historical migration to urban centers; and

Whereas, the problems that have evolved through the decades now face this population of people, isolated from access to the material resources needed to unleash its power and creativity in a manner that will build rather than destroy communities; and

Whereas, United Methodist Black churches in urban communities have historically been centers of spiritual nurture and social and political action that have cared for the youth and offered viable alternatives to the negative aspects of decaying urban centers; and

Whereas, there is a demonstrated need in all urban communities in this country for strong, vital Black congregations to reach into the hurts and pains of the community and provide the spiritual revival that is needed in order to reclaim individuals and communities and manifest the healing power of God to combat drugs, violence, and a growing sense of hopelessness; and

Whereas, the gospel mandates that we “promote the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because your future depends on its welfare” (Jeremiah 29:7); and

Whereas, United Methodist Black congregations in urban communities are called, as are all churches, to minister to the needs of persons in the communities where the church is located; and

Whereas, while the conditions in urban communities for the Black diaspora continue to worsen, including anti-Black violence, and the need for grounding in a faith and reliance on the power of God for the strength and vision to reclaim and rebuild strong, proud, faith-centered communities grows daily, the resources and persons in Black urban congregations decrease;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the General Conference direct the General Board of Discipleship to develop resources, programs, and strategies that will enable the development of Black leadership, such as the Convocation for the Pastors of Black Churches, and specific programs and strategies that will foster financial self-sufficiency, such as launching a stewardship education program.

Be it further resolved, that the training events designed and implemented by the General Board of Discipleship and General Board of Global Ministries (School of Congregational Development, Path1 trainings, Convocation for the Pastors of Black Churches, and others) include training components that address the needs of Black churches and communities.

Be it further resolved, that the General Board of Global Ministries work with emerging and existing Black churches in urban communities to develop and maintain vital congregations providing practical ministries and missions that address the spiritual, social, and economic decline in these communities.

Be it further resolved, that the General Board of Global Ministries and the General Board of Discipleship coordinate their work in relation to strengthening urban Black congregations with the annual conferences and urban ministry units of annual conferences, and the Strengthening the Black Church for the Twenty-First Century initiative.

R3081 – Childcare and the Church

ACDA LOCATION:

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Readopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE:

PETITION TEXT:

As people of faith, we are called to teach children through scripture, our tradition as Methodists, the Social Principles, the ritual of baptism, and our concern for families. In responding to the call set before us, we will provide environments for children to be nurtured in the faith and to grow as children of God.

Scripture tells us to teach children the words of God (Deuteronomy 4:10; 6:7) and not to prevent them from discovering Jesus (Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16). We can also help children to grow as Jesus grew, “strong . . . filled with wisdom; and God’s favor was on him” (Luke 2:40b).

John Wesley set the example for us as Methodists as he began health clinics and schools for the children to learn to read and encouraged the pastors to meet with the children regularly. His call to meet the needs of people where they were stands as a marker for us today. Using our buildings that otherwise might sit empty six days a week to meet the physical, mental, and emotional needs of children and their families clearly meets Mr. Wesley’s expectations.

Our Social Principles (§ 162C) state, “Once considered the property of their parents, children are now acknowledged to be full human beings in their own right, but beings to whom adults and society in general have special obligations. . . .” This Social Principle calls us to take responsibility for meeting the needs of children, including education and protection. Additionally, it calls us to meet the needs of not just our children but all children.

In our service of infant baptism in The United Methodist Church, we promise to “surround these persons with a community of love and forgiveness, that they may grow in their service to others. . . .” (The United Methodist Hymnal, page 40). In recognition of this promise and in response to the sacredness of all children as set forth in scripture, through the teachings of John Wesley, and in our Social Principles, our vision for childcare must include a vision of services available to all families on an equitable basis. Through the particular ministry of childcare, we extend the nurturing ministry of the church and proclaim justice to children, families, and communities.

The church has important responsibilities in initiating, encouraging, and participating in the highest quality of childcare for children and families, not only in the local community and beyond.

Therefore, we recommend the following:

1. See childcare as planned ministry.

Each congregation of The United Methodist Church that maintains any childcare ministry program must intentionally assess its understanding of discipleship as it relates to weekday ministry. Each childcare ministry program may encompass one or all of the following expressions of ministry: nurture, outreach, and witness by asking three questions. What are the congregation’s gifts for ministry with children? What is the mission of childcare? How is intentional ministry a part of the daily operation of the program?

Congregations must determine how the childcare program embraces the church’s mission.

- a. Nurture includes Christian education, stewardship, and worship. In a program that focuses on nurture, spiritual development through Christian education is central. When children are cared for, they learn to care for others and for their world. An intentional part of the curriculum and resources should be the selection of stories (biblical and secular) and methods, and the integration of “God talk” and Christian values into daily conversations, worship opportunities, and interactions. In our childcare ministry programs, we reflect our commitment to being God’s stewards in the ways we use and allocate our physical and ecological resources.
- b. Outreach includes the areas of advocacy, safety, health, welfare, and equity, and how well they are addressed in our communities. Embracing outreach as a part of a weekday ministry program follows our traditional roots of caring for the needs of the community. As a congregation responds to the needs of people in the community through weekday ministry,

the community and the congregation discover many blessings Each congregation should determine the unmet needs of their surrounding community by providing specialty childcare for children and families with special needs, striving to meet needs specific to the community, and advocating for the needs of children and families. Congregations should make every effort to work collaboratively with other community agencies and groups to assure that needs are being met without duplication of efforts and in support of each other.

- c. Witness includes the areas of evangelism, membership care, and spiritual formation. In embracing witness as our particular expression of ministry, we proclaim God active in our lives. A witness to our faith speaks clearly through the actions of weekday ministry boards, through the caring love of the staff, the use of developmentally appropriate practices, gentle and caring words, curriculum and resources, the environment of the facilities, and the attitude of the congregation.

Every congregation of The United Methodist Church needs to define its ministry through childcare and include a statement of this ministry through weekday ministry programs as part of employee handbooks, parent handbooks, community statements, and church reports.

2. Uphold the quality of childcare in the Church.

Any time a child enters a childcare ministry program housed in a church, expectations are raised regarding quality of the program, behavior of the childcare staff and church staff, and adherence to the Christian doctrines of love and justice. Since the program is in the church, families have different expectations than if they are taking their child to a commercial childcare facility. So a church cannot divorce itself, either morally or legally, from what takes place in its building through childcare ministry programs. The childcare ministry program shall include developmentally appropriate curriculum and resources, the involvement of the congregation with the program, pastoral availability to families and staff involved in childcare, safe and clean buildings and equipment, and the highest quality in staff and staff support in each of the following areas:

- a. Program Reviews: An annual review of the childcare ministry program should take place with joint participation of childcare staff, church personnel, and informed, interested laity.
- b. Licensing: Congregations should strive to meet and surpass licensing standards in their state. The regulations of basic health and safety conditions in a building/program that serves children are the appropriate responsibility of the state and do not interfere with the free exercise of religion. Congregations should seek to be actively informed about such licensing procedures and requirements and should work to reform such regulations when they do not mandate standards that serve the best interests of children.
- c. Self-Study: Through a self-study process, every childcare facility can look for ways to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of the care provided. Churches should follow a process of self-study for their childcare ministry programs on a regular basis. These self-studies are available through some annual conferences, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and the United Methodist Association of Preschools—Florida.
- d. Personnel: As congregations seek to support childcare ministry programs, competitive salaries, benefits, and support of the staff of these programs should be of concern and subject to review and discussion to insure the best for the children and families involved. Congregations have a responsibility to advocate for higher pay and benefits for childcare workers. These professional caregivers should maintain excellence and integrity in the important job they do, and they should be appropriately compensated for it. Appropriate screening protects the children, the childcare providers, and the congregation. It is important to meet any government regulations and the Safe Sanctuaries® policies of your local church regarding the screening of childcare workers as appropriate. A yearly plan for comprehensive continuing education should be part of the congregation's support for childcare providers.

3. Be advocates for quality childcare.

Going beyond the congregation, United Methodists should be diligent advocates for childcare nationwide.

- a. Stay informed about childcare conditions existing today and the issues involved in the design of an adequate public policy for childcare.
- b. Use the appropriate councils and agencies of the church to monitor public policy at federal, state, and local levels of government.

- c. Become involved in church conferences and meetings, and in the larger arena of childcare through the Children's Defense Fund, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and other research-based advocates of quality childcare.
- d. Call upon staff at the General Board of Church and Society to monitor, serve as an advocate for, raise issues concerning, and bring the voice of the Church to bear on childcare policy development.
- e. Call upon the staff of the General Board of Discipleship and The United Methodist Publishing House to express arising needs as they relate to program support, needed curriculum and resources, and policies regarding church and childcare center relationships.
- f. Call upon the General Board of Global Ministries to assist churches in responding to childcare needs in their communities with appropriate programs and resources.
- g. Call upon the General Board of Discipleship in consultation with the General Council on Finance and Administration to make available to local congregations' resources that address legal aspects and procedures to follow in establishing childcare facilities and/or programs.

R3082 – Church Support of Caregivers of Children

ACDA LOCATION:

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Readopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE:

PETITION TEXT:

We believe that children are the most vulnerable and precious resource of our societies, and they need loving adult support to flourish. Adult caregivers of children need parenting support systems as well. Today, children are being raised in a variety of household structures headed by various caregivers; and children in these families are in our communities, schools, and congregations. To flourish, families need a support system that embraces their household's structure, and church ministry programs should reflect that changing dynamic.

We call upon each local United Methodist Church to:

1. make a conscious effort in its ministry action, as well as in its words, to nurture children by supporting their family unit and its caregivers, regardless of that family structure;
2. examine the structure of existing ministries to determine if they can be more effective and inclusive by changing titles, timing of events, group expectations, or other norms;
3. determine if new ministries are needed to help non-traditional caregiver groups, and create them as appropriate; and
4. prayerfully consider opportunities to minister and love children and their caregivers without limit.

R3084 – Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in the Church

ACDA LOCATION:

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Readopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE:

PETITION TEXT:

Jesus said, “Whoever welcomes one such child...welcomes me” (Matthew 18:5). Children are full participants in the life of the church and in the realm of God.

Jesus also said, “As for whoever causes these little ones who believe in me to trip and fall into sin, it would be better for them to have a huge stone hung around their necks and be drowned in

the bottom of the lake” (Matthew 18:6). Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to the little ones, the children. The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church

state that “children must be protected from economic, physical, emotional, and sexual exploitation and abuse” (§ 162C).

Tragically, churches are not always safe places for children. Child sexual abuse, exploitation, including online, and ritual abuse occur in congregations of all sizes and geographical locations. The problem cuts across all economic, cultural, and racial ethnic lines. Most annual conferences can cite specific incidents of child sexual abuse and exploitation within churches. Virtually every congregation has among its members adult survivors of early sexual trauma.

Such incidents are devastating to all who are involved: the child, the family, the local church, and its leaders. Churches are torn apart by the legal, emotional, and monetary consequences of litigation following allegations of abuse.

1. “Ritual abuse” refers to abusive acts committed as part of ceremonies or rites.
2. God calls us to make our congregations safe places, protecting children and other vulnerable persons from sexual and ritual abuse. God calls us to create communities of faith where children and adults grow safe and strong. In response to this churchwide challenge, the following steps shall be taken to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse:
 - A. Local churches should:
 1. develop and implement an ongoing education plan for the entire congregation and its leaders on the reality of child abuse, risk factors leading to child abuse, and strategies for prevention;
 2. adopt comprehensive screening procedures (use of application forms, interviews, reference checks, background clearance, and so forth) for all adults directly or indirectly involved in the care of children and youth;
 3. develop and implement safety procedures for church activities such as having two or more nonrelated adults present in classroom or activity; leaving doors open and installing half-doors or windows in doors or halls; providing hall monitors; instituting sign-in and sign-out procedures for children ages ten or younger; and so forth, that meet or exceed Safe Sanctuaries® policies;
 4. advise children and young persons of an agency or a person outside as well as within the local church whom they can contact for advice and help if they have suffered abuse;
 5. carry liability insurance that includes sexual abuse coverage;
 6. assist the development of awareness and self-protection skills for children and youth through special curriculum and activities; and
 7. be familiar with annual conference and other church policies regarding clergy sexual misconduct.

B. Annual conferences should:

1. develop safety and risk-reducing policies and procedures for all conference-sponsored events and activities where children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults are present; and
2. develop guidelines and training processes for use by church leaders who carry responsibility for prevention of child abuse in local churches. Both sets of policies shall be developed by a task force appointed by the cabinet in cooperation with appropriate conference agencies. These policies shall be approved by the annual conference and assigned to a conference agency for implementation. It is suggested that the policies be circulated in conference publications and shared with lay professionals and clergy at district or conference seminars.

C. The General Board of Discipleship and the General Board of Global Ministries should:

1. cooperatively develop and/or identify and promote the following resources;
2. sample policies, procedures, forms, and so forth for reducing the risk of sexual abuse and exploitation of children and youth in local churches, both in relation to their own sponsored programs and to any outreach ministries or other programs for children or youth that use church space;
3. child abuse prevention curriculum for use in local churches;
4. training opportunities and other educational resources on child sexual abuse and exploitation and on ritual abuse; and
5. resources on healing for those who have experienced childhood sexual trauma.

R3461 – Local Church Support for Young People

ACDA LOCATION: 20636-DI-R3461-G. Volume 2. Section 1. Print Page 425. PDF Page 305.

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Readopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE:

PETITION TEXT:

Whereas, The United Methodist Church supports young people and is called to minister to them; and

Whereas, the young people in The United Methodist Church are in need of growth and revival churchwide; and

Whereas, in order for young people to grow in the worldwide church, they must first grow in the local church,

Therefore, be it resolved, that each local church do all in its power to support and strengthen young people's ministries at its local level, so that they may be strengthened worldwide.

R8013 – Meeting Times

ACDA LOCATION:

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Readopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE:

PETITION TEXT:

Whereas, The United Methodist Church recognizes the leadership of young people within the Church; and

Whereas, young people of The United Methodist Church are called by God to serve in leadership roles at the local, district, and conference levels; and

Whereas, a churchwide effort in recruiting and retaining young people’s participation is growing; and

Whereas, the time constraints of young people through school, career, and family are great, making accessibility to leadership roles difficult;

Therefore, be it resolved, that in choosing dates and times for all meetings of United Methodist Church boards and agencies, utmost importance is given to the consideration of times, dates, and places between all conferences that will make young people’s participation as great as possible.

Be it further resolved, that in choosing dates and times for district, annual/central, and General Conference meetings that utmost importance is given to the consideration of allowing as many youth and young adult delegates to actively participate as is possible.

R8014 – Church Participation by a Registered Child Sex Offender

ACDA LOCATION:

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Readopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE:

PETITION TEXT:

The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church declare: “We recognize that family violence and abuse in all its forms—verbal, psychological, physical, sexual—is detrimental to the covenant of the human community. We encourage the Church to provide a safe environment, counsel, and support for the victim. While we deplore the actions of the abuser, we affirm that person to be in need of God’s redeeming love” (Social Principles ¶ 161G [2012 Discipline]).

Churches are faced with a dilemma in their attempt to be faithful to both of the last two sentences above. Assuring the safety of children in our care, our facilities and our programs is a sacred duty. We must weigh that duty in the balance with what often seems the conflicting value of participation in the life of the church by a convicted child abuser. Being part of a worshiping community is not the only way for a person to experience God’s redeeming love, but it is an important one.

Ongoing studies suggest a low likelihood that pedophiles can or will change. Without extensive professional treatment, virtually all child sexual offenders will re-offend. Repentance, prayer, and pastoral support, always in combination with lifelong professional treatment, can be crucial in helping to change behavior but, in themselves, offer slim hope of changing the behavior of perpetrators. Thorough awareness, careful planning, and ongoing monitoring must accompany welcoming a child sex offender into a congregation.

A convicted and/or registered sex offender who wishes to be part of a church community should expect to have conditions placed on his or her participation. Indeed, offenders who have been in treatment and are truly committed to living a life free of further abuse will be the first to declare that, in order to accomplish that, they must structure a life that includes ongoing treatment, accountability mechanisms, and lack of access to children.

The following steps should be taken in order to be faithful to the Social Principles’ commitment both to safety from abuse and to ministry with abusers:

A. Local churches should:

- hold discussions in the church council and in adult education settings about the possibility of facing the situation of a convicted sex offender returning to or joining the church. These discussions should be held and general agreements reached about actions to be taken should the church find itself in this circumstance;
- develop a carefully constructed and openly negotiated covenant between the offender and the church community. The covenant should include agreements in the following areas: participation in a professional counseling program for at least the entire time of church membership or participation; adult “covenant partners” to accompany the offender while on church property or attending church activities; areas of church facilities that are “off limits”; restrictions on leadership in or on behalf of church; no role in church that includes contact with children or youth; any additional conditions for presence or participation; restrictions on use of church-related media; and
- assure that the covenant is maintained by having it written and signed by the offender, the pastor(s), and the chairperson of the church council. While confidentiality of victims should be respected, the covenant should not be secret. Monitoring of the covenant should be taken seriously as a permanent responsibility.

B. Annual conferences should:

- develop similar plans and covenant for situations in which a convicted and/or registered sexual offender is involved or seeks involvement in the conference, its activities or facilities;
- include information about this concern and assistance with implementation of this resolution in its training and resourcing of clergy and local church lay leaders;

C. The General Board of Discipleship and the General Board of Global Ministries should:

- cooperatively develop and promote a process and specific guidelines to assist congregations in the education and covenant tasks outlined above.

R8015 – Guidelines: The UMC and the Charismatic Movement

ACDA LOCATION:

PREFERRED ACTION: No Updates, Readopt

COMMENTS/RATIONALE:

PETITION TEXT:

Introductory Statement

In 1976 General Conference approved “Guidelines: The United Methodist Church and the Charismatic Renewal.” These Guidelines served the church well. At the 2004 General Conference the GBOD was assigned the responsibility to review and revise the Guidelines, while retaining their general focus and purpose.

Glossary

Terminology associated with the charismatic movement is confusing because of varying usage.

Pentecostal. This term refers to the movement whose roots began late in the nineteenth century, resulting in the formation of a number of pentecostal denominations in the early years of the twentieth century. Classic pentecostalism affirms what is sometimes spoken of as initial evidence, which includes the concept of requisite “baptism in the Holy Spirit,” that every Christian must experience the “baptism in the Holy Spirit” that is accompanied by glossolalia or speaking in tongues as an “initial evidence.” Pentecostals also emphasize strongly the full recovery of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Charismatic. The word charismatic comes from the Greek word charismata, meaning “gifts.” The root words in Greek mean grace and joy. By definition, a charismatic should be a joyful, grace-gifted Christian. Charismatic Christians emphasize the need to recover the empowerment and the gifts of the Spirit for ministry today. They affirm the importance of all the “gifts of the Spirit.”

Charismatic Movement. Throughout this report the term charismatic movement is used to identify the movement that began about 1960 in mainline Christian bodies, both Protestant and Roman Catholic. This movement emphasizes the central importance of the “baptism of the Holy Spirit,” but without the elevation of “speaking in tongues” as the initial evidence. A focus is placed on the need to recover the Holy Spirit’s empowering and gifts for ministry today. These gifts include prophecy, healing, tongues, and interpretation of tongues, because these gifts are perceived to have been neglected by the Church.

In a biblical sense there is no such person as a “noncharismatic Christian,” since the term charismata refers to the gracious gifts of God bestowed upon all Christians to equip them for ministry: “A demonstration of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7).

Pentecostals and Charismatics emerged out of Christianity in the West, where for long periods Christianity neglected the importance of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church. However, the activity of the Holy Spirit is not merely restricted to Western Christianity. Indeed, when the gospel reached different parts of the non-Western world, many Christians learned of the Holy Spirit’s work in the Bible. In simple faith they believed, and many began exercising the gifts of the Spirit. Although the ministries of such individuals and churches are similar to those of the Pentecostals and the Charismatics in many ways, they do not owe their origins to these Western sources. Rather, they sprang up entirely on their own under the direct leading of the Spirit.

Neo-charismatics, or Third Wave (the Pentecostals being the first wave and the Charismatics being the second wave). These are Christians who, unrelated or no longer related to the Pentecostal or Charismatic renewals, have become filled with the Spirit, are energized by the Spirit, and exercise gifts of the Spirit without recognizing a baptism in the Spirit separate from conversion. Speaking in tongues is considered optional or unnecessary. Signs and wonders, supernatural miracles, and power encounters are emphasized. Third-wavers form independent churches and do not identify themselves as either Pentecostals or Charismatics (Synan, p. 396).

Guidelines

We believe the church needs to pray for a sensitivity to be aware of and to respond to manifestations of the Holy Spirit in our world today. We are mindful that the problems of discerning between the true and fraudulent are considerable, but we must not allow the problems

to paralyze our awareness of the Spirit's presence; nor should we permit our fear of the unknown and the unfamiliar to close our minds against being surprised by grace. We know the misuse of mystical experience is an ever-present possibility, but that is no reason to deny spiritual experiences.

In facing the issues raised by charismatic experiences, we plead for a spirit of openness and love. We commend to the attention of the church the affirmations of Paul on the importance of love in First Corinthians 13 and of Wesley—"In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; and, in all things, charity" (love that cares and understands). Without an active, calm, objective, and loving understanding of the religious experience of others, however different from one's own, harmony is impossible.

The criteria by which we understand another's religious experience must include its compatibility with the mind and the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, as revealed in the New Testament. If the consequence and quality of a reported encounter with the Holy Spirit leads to self-righteousness, hostility, and exaggerated claims of knowledge and power, then the experience is subject to serious question. However, when the experience clearly results in new dimensions of love, faith, joy, and blessings to others, we must conclude that this is "what the Lord hath done" and offer God our praise. "You will know them by their fruit" (Matthew 7:20).

Guidelines for All

1. Be open and accepting of those whose Christian experiences differ from your own.
2. Continually undergird and envelop all discussions, conferences, meetings, and persons in prayer.
3. Be open to new ways in which God by the Spirit may be speaking to the church.
4. Seek the gifts of the Spirit that enrich your life and your ministry, as well as the life of the church.
5. Recognize that although spiritual gifts may be abused in the same way that knowledge or wealth or power may be abused, this does not mean that they should be prohibited.
6. Remember that, like other movements in church history, the charismatic renewal has a valid contribution to make to the ecumenical church.
7. Remember the lessons of church history that when God's people rediscovered old truths the process was often disquieting and that it usually involved upheaval, change, and a degree of suffering and misunderstanding.
8. Always be mindful of the spiritual needs of the whole congregation.
9. In witnessing, teaching, or preaching, the wholeness of all aspects of the gospel must be presented.

For Pastors Who Have Had Charismatic Experiences

1. Combine with your charismatic experience a thorough knowledge of and adherence to United Methodist theology, polity, and tradition. Remember your influence will, in large part, be earned by your loving and disciplined employment of the gifts, by your conduct as a pastor of your entire congregation, and by your participation as a responsible pastor.
2. Seek a deepening and continued friendship with your clergy colleagues regardless of their charismatic experience.
3. Remember your ordination vow to "love, serve, and pray for all the people among whom you work...to serve rather than to be served...to look after the concerns of Christ above all." (The United Methodist Book of Worship, "The Order for the Ordination of Elders," 675)
4. Avoid the temptation to force your personal views and experiences on others. Seek to understand those whose spiritual experiences differ from your own.
5. Seek to grow in your skills as a biblical exegete, a systematic theologian, and a preacher in all the fullness of the gospel.
6. Pray for the gifts of the Spirit essential for your ministry; continually examine your life for the fruits of the Spirit.
7. Let your personal experience demonstrate the power of the Spirit in "works of piety" and "works of mercy" as understood and practiced in the Wesleyan tradition.

For Pastors Who Have Not Had Charismatic Experiences

1. Continually examine your understanding of the doctrine and experience of the Holy Spirit, so you can communicate this with clarity.
2. Remember the lessons of church history when God's people rediscover old truths—the process is often disquieting, that it usually involves upheaval, change, and a degree of suffering and misunderstanding.
3. Seek firsthand knowledge of what the charismatic renewal means to those who have experienced it. Keep your mind open until this firsthand knowledge is obtained. Then observe and respond as a loving Christian, as a United Methodist minister, and as a sympathetic, conscientious pastor. Keep to scriptural teaching regarding all the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
4. When speaking in tongues occurs, seek to understand what it means to the speaker in his or her private devotional life and what it means when used for intercessory prayer, especially in group worship.
5. Seek to understand the meaning of the other “gifts of the Spirit” in the charismatic experience, such as the utterance of wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, and prophecy.
6. United Methodist pastors should be intentional about the benefits to be derived by a mutual sharing of a variety of experiences that have biblical foundation. Accordingly, the pastor should seek to keep all meetings called for prayer and fellowship open to all interested members of the congregation.

For Laity Who Have Had Charismatic Experiences

1. Remember to combine with your enthusiasm a thorough knowledge of and adherence to the United Methodist form of church government. The charismatic movement is closely related to the holiness movement and to the Wesleyan tradition. Consult with your pastor(s) and if they have not also had your experience, help him or her understand what it means to you. Invite your pastor(s) to attend your worship services and prayer meetings.
2. Pray that the Spirit will help you to maintain fellowship with all United Methodists.
3. Strive for a scholarly knowledge of scriptural content in combination with your spiritual experiences. “Seek to unite knowledge and vital piety” (Wesley). Strive to integrate your experiences with the theological traditions of our church.
4. Avoid undisciplined, undiplomatic enthusiasm in your eagerness to share your experiences with others. Resist the temptation to pose as an authority on spiritual experiences. Failure in this area may cause your fellow Christians to interpret your behavior as spiritual pride.
5. Be intentional about keeping your prayer meetings and other gatherings open to all members of your congregation. When those who do not share your experiences do attend, discuss with them the purpose of the meeting with an interpretation of the significance of the content.
6. Remember that there are many types of Christian experiences that lead to spiritual growth; charismatic experience is one of these.
7. Accept opportunities to become personally involved in the work and mission of your own congregation. Let the results of your experience be seen in the outstanding quality of your church membership and service to others. Be an obvious, enthusiastic supporter of your congregation, its pastor, and its lay leadership and of your district, your annual conference, the General Conference, and mission of each. This may well be the most effective witness you can offer to the validity and vitality of your charismatic experience.
8. Remember Paul's injunction that when the gift of tongues is spoken to the body in a group context, there must be interpretation to ensure proper order (1 Corinthians 14:27, 40). If the gift is exercised in a worship setting or group prayer, be careful that it does not hinder worship or cause distraction for others.
9. Keep your charismatic experience in perspective. No doubt it has caused you to feel that you are a better Christian. Remember that this does not mean you are better than other Christians but that you are, perhaps, a better Christian than you were before. Jesus commanded us to love one another (John 13:34).

For Laity Who Have Not Had Charismatic Experiences

1. We believe God is constantly seeking to renew the church, including The United Methodist Church. Pray that God may make known to you your own place in the process of renewal. The advent of the charismatic movement into our denomination is only one aspect of renewal.
2. If there are members of your congregation who have had charismatic experiences, accept them as brothers and sisters. Jesus commanded us to love one another (John 13:34).
3. Be aware of the tendency to separate ourselves from those who have experiences that differ from our own. Observe personally the charismatics in their prayer meetings, in your congregation, and in the mission of your church. Examine scriptural teaching about this. Pray about it. Discuss your concern with your pastor. The United Methodist Church is theologically diverse.
4. Do not be disturbed if your experience is not the same as others. The work and mission of a healthy congregation calls for many gifts (1 Corinthians 12–14). Each Christian is a unique member of the body of Christ and should seek to discover his or her gifts and role.
5. Should your pastor emphasize charismatic experiences, help her or him to be mindful of the spiritual needs of the entire congregation, to be a pastor and teacher to all. Encourage her or him in preaching to present the wholeness of all aspects of the gospel. Be open to what God would say to you through your pastor about the Holy Spirit.

For Connectional Administration

1. Refer prayerfully and thoughtfully to the other sections of these Guidelines.
2. Remember your pastoral responsibilities toward ordained persons and congregations within the connection, particularly toward those whose spiritual experience differ from your own.
3. Each administrator should consider whether any teaching or practice regarding the charismatic movement involving an ordained minister of a congregation is for the edification of the church.
4. If there is division involved in a particular situation, make as careful an evaluation as possible, remembering that there are other kinds of issues that may divide our fellowship—a lack of openness to something new or an unwillingness to change, for example. Sometimes tensions and conflicts may result in the edification and growth and maturity of the church and therefore need to be handled wisely and prayerfully by all concerned.
5. Administrators and connectional bodies will be required to deal with expressions of the charismatic movement. We urge all involved to seek firsthand information and experience about the movement, its meaning for those involved in it, and its value to the particular congregation.
6. Care should be taken that persons whose theology and experiences align with those of the Charismatic Renewal are not discriminated against in appointments or as candidates for ordination.
7. Where an ordained person seems to overemphasize or de-emphasize some charismatic doctrines/practices, she or he should be counseled to preach the wholeness of the gospel, to minister to the needs of all of the congregation, and as a pastor to grow in understanding of our polity in the mission of the particular annual conference.
8. Annual conferences may also be faced with a situation where there is a charismatic group within a congregation whose pastor or whose lay leadership or both may be hostile to or ignorant of the charismatic movement. The annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry, the bishop, and the district superintendent have a pastoral responsibility to mediate and to guide in reconciliation, using these guidelines.
9. Pray continuously for sensitivity to the will and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Historical Perspective: The Ministry of the Holy Spirit in Church History

The Holy Spirit in the New Testament Period

The Holy Spirit came upon Mary (Luke 1:35), descended upon Jesus at his baptism (Luke 3:22) and filled Jesus before the temptation in the wilderness (Luke 4:2ff). Jesus claimed that the Spirit was upon him when he stood up to preach (Luke 4:18ff) and that the Spirit empowered him to cast out demons (Matthew 12:28). John the Baptist and Jesus both indicated the importance of the power of the Spirit (Luke 3:15-19; John 7:37-39; Acts 1:5, 8).

The coming of the Holy Spirit ushered in the beginning of the Church (Acts 2) and empowered the disciples to be witnesses (Acts 1:8, Acts 2:4ff). Paul writes about the gifts of the Spirit in his letters (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-31; Ephesians 4:11) and describes his missionary outreach to the Gentiles as “by what I’ve said and what I’ve done, by the power of signs and wonders, and by the power of God’s Spirit” (Romans 15:18-19; see also 1 Corinthians 2:4-5; 1 Thessalonians 1:5).

The Holy Spirit in John Wesley’s Life and Ministry

John Wesley and his followers were bearers of Scriptural Christianity. Their ministry testifies to the dynamic work of the Spirit in early Methodism.

To begin with, Wesley’s Aldersgate experience of the assurance of his salvation on 24 May 1738 was certainly a work of the Spirit. He relates in his journal how as he heard of “the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed... and an assurance was given that he had taken away my sins.” Some months later, he was at prayer with seventy others, including his brother Charles and also George Whitefield, on the night of 1 January 1739. In the early hours of the next morning, the Holy Spirit was poured on them in a most powerful manner. He writes: “About three in the morning . . . the power of God came mightily upon us insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy and many fell to the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of His majesty, we broke out with one voice, ‘We praise Thee, O God, we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.’”

“On the basis of Scripture, Wesley taught that the Holy Spirit is present and active in every major stage of Christian experience.” (Stokes, 46) Careful study of Wesley’s writings shows clearly that spiritual gifts, including healing and deliverance of the demonized, were clearly manifested in his ministry and that of his coworkers. There were also reported cases of people falling to the ground under the power of the Holy Spirit due to a variety of reasons, including deliverance from demonization, deep conviction of sin and subsequent release, or simply being overcome by the Spirit (Davies, *Methodism*, pp. 60f; Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the*

People Called Methodists, pp. 100f, 319). One study has shown that, “a careful study of Wesley’s Works and particularly of the lives of the early Methodist preachers reveals evidence that all the spiritual gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 were exercised, with the one exception of the interpretation of tongues” (Davies and Peart, *The Charismatic Movement and Methodism*, 2).

Finally, Wesley himself has noted that the spiritual gifts were not generally exercised after the first two or three centuries after Christ. But the reason for this was not that these gifts were not available. Rather, as he noted, “The real cause was ‘the love of many,’ almost all Christians, was ‘waxed cold,’ because the Christians were turned Heathens again, and had only a dead form left” (Sermon LXXXIX, “The More Excellent Way,” *Works*, Vol. 7, 26-27).

And Wesley wrote, “I do not recollect any scripture wherein we are taught that miracles were to be confined within the limits either of the apostolic or the Cyprianic age, or of any period of time, longer or shorter, even till the restitution of all things” (“Principles of a Methodist Farther Explained,” *Works*, Vol. 8, 465).

The Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements and the Wesleyan Framework

It is impossible to speak of Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Renewal apart from their roots in Methodism. It was, after all, the Wesleyans who first applied the title “pentecostal” to their movement and to a variety of their publications. The Methodists were also first to coin the phrase baptism of the Holy Spirit as applied to a second and sanctifying grace (experience) of God. (Cf. John Fletcher of Madeley, Methodism’s earliest formal theologian.) The Methodists meant by their “baptism” something different from the Pentecostals, but the view that this is an experience of grace separate from and after salvation was the same. However, the roots of Pentecostalism in Methodist soil go much deeper than titles and phrases. While the phenomenon of speaking in tongues, commonly associated with Pentecostalism, was not an experience sought or promoted by early Methodists, other equally startling manifestations of the Spirit did abound. This was particularly so as Methodism spread across the American frontier. When asked once why the gifts of the Spirit, manifest

in the early church, had disappeared, as if the church had no more need for them, Mr. Wesley responded: “It should not be reasoned that the absence of such in the church (eighteenth-century Church of England) reflects the reluctance of God to give, rather the reticence of the church to receive” (Tuttle, 106). Methodism then, at its inception, invited God’s people to expect and receive whatever blessing God would give “for the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7). It is not surprising that many of the first Pentecostal leaders were originally Methodists. Pentecostalism has continued to be what Francis Asbury wanted Methodism to remain, a pliable movement more than a static institution. Whether Methodism claims it or not, Pentecostalism is an offspring and will perhaps be its greatest legacy. Conservative estimates of the number of classical denominational Pentecostals run 200 million. Combined with the millions of charismatics and neo-pentecostals or third-wavers and those in house churches, that number now stands at 500 million (Synan, 2) to 700 million (Rutz, 44-46), making this the second largest group of Christians in the world, second only to the Roman Catholic Church as a whole. This group is estimated to be growing worldwide by 8 percent a year (Rutz, 15).

Charismatics should interpret their gifts and experiences in light of their own traditions. When this does not occur, division and/or exploitation sets in. When United Methodist charismatics adopt a classical pentecostal line, they are no longer United Methodist—at least in the Wesleyan sense. United Methodist Charismatics need to recognize that, properly understood within the context of our own tradition, their charismatic gifts and experiences can be considered as fresh wind of the Spirit.

Wesley’s theology of grace is in fact a theology of the Holy Spirit. He believed that Reformation theology was built upon the cardinal doctrine of original sin and that it is God’s sovereign will to reverse our “sinful, devilish nature” by the work of the Holy Spirit. He called this activity of God prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace. Bound by sin and death, one experiences almost from the moment of conception the gentle wooing of the Holy Spirit—prevenient grace. This grace “prevents” one from wandering so far from God that when a person finally understands what it means to be a child of God the Holy Spirit enables us to say Yes to this relationship. For Wesley, this Yes was a heartfelt faith in the merit of Christ alone for salvation. It allows the Holy Spirit to take the righteousness that was in Christ and attribute or impute it to the believer—justifying grace. For Wesley this begins a lifelong movement from imputed to imparted righteousness in which the Holy Spirit moves the believer from the righteousness of Christ attributed through faith to the righteousness of Christ realized within the individual—sanctifying grace.

To understand Wesley’s experience of “entire sanctification” is to know how far the pentecostal baptism of the Holy Spirit falls short if there are not continuing works of grace. Grace is continual, though we may not always perceive it. It is essential that we do not confuse being “filled with the Holy Spirit” with Wesley’s mature doctrine of sanctification. The Spirit-filled life is, rather, a sustained journey of gifts, experiences, and divine support, beginning with conversion, constantly moving us toward the goal of sanctification.

Many charismatics have come to believe that being filled with the Holy Spirit is an experience that begins with justification and continues as a lifelong process of growth in grace. For the charismatic, Spirit-baptism bestows not one but many gifts and not one but many experiences intended to sustain one day after day. Being baptized in the Spirit (Acts 1:4-5) and being continually filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) and walking with the Spirit (Galatians 5:25) are important parts of the journey toward Christ-likeness, but they are only parts of the journey. Thus, United Methodist charismatics, within the context of our own rich tradition, can never interpret gifts and experiences as signs of superior spirituality, making them better than others. Rather, the power of God being sustained within them makes them better than they were and able to “pursue . . . the prize of God’s upward call in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14).

The Charismatic Renewal has been instrumental in providing many gifts to the Church of Christ Jesus and has made a profound impact upon present-day United Methodism.

Methodists throughout history have always worshiped God in a variety of styles—never more so than today. In addition worship itself—from openly free to highly liturgical—is now more broadly and correctly understood as a personal offering from the body rather than simply the service of worship that one attends. “God is spirit, and it is necessary to worship God in spirit and truth” (John 4:24).

Contemporary Christian music—a hallmark of the charismatic renewal—fills many of our churches each Sunday, enriches the spiritual life of individuals and enhances small group meetings.

There are a variety of healing services offered in The United Methodist Book of Worship. In addition, the church offers a number of helpful resources for beginning and sustaining healing ministries within the local church.

Spiritual formation is now considered an integral part of planning for annual conferences and important in the continuing education for clergy.

The renewing work of the Holy Spirit within The United Methodist Church has supported the Lay Witness Movement, the Walk to Emmaus, and the Academy for Spiritual Formation. In 1978, Aldersgate Renewal Ministries (whose purpose is to “encourage United Methodists to be filled, gifted, empowered and led by the Holy Spirit in ministry to the world” became an affiliate of the General Board of Discipleship. These ministries have been used by God to bring thousands of people around the world into a new or deeper relationship with the Lord.

United Methodist charismatics and non-charismatics alike should be encouraged. In fact, the term noncharismatic Christian is a misnomer. All Christians have gifts. Charismatic, as earlier defined, refers to those who more explicitly acknowledge and emphasize teaching concerning the power of the Holy Spirit at work within them and the church through such gifts.

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