

UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL LAY LEADERSHIP



GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL CHURCH LAITY LEADERSHIP

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Bishop's Message to Lay Leadership.....	2
GNJAC Strategic Ministry Plan Summary.....	3
Conference Lay Leader's Message.....	8
Scriptural Support.....	9
Lay Member of Annual Conference.....	9
Lay Leader Responsibilities.....	10
The Role of the Lay Leader.....	11
District Lay Leader's Ministry.....	13
Conference Lay Leader's Ministry.....	14
Conference Lay Servant Ministries.....	15
Certified Lay Speaker/Servant.....	15
Certified Lay Minister (CLM).....	17
Process for Laity Called to Ordained Ministry.....	18
About the United Methodist Church.....	19
The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey.....	20
Suggested Resources.....	22
Administration of The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey.....	24



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Greater New Jersey Conference

John R. Schol, Bishop

*The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience,
with signs and wonders and mighty works. - 2 Corinthians 12:12*

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

To lead the church into the new mission field, we are called to be fruitful, transformational and apostolic leaders. We are called to stir up faith hope and justice in our churches and communities. Laity leadership is a pillar for our path forward.

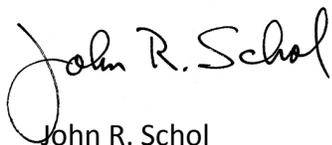
GNJ's Laity Leadership Academy is designed to equip you with the tools you need to help set the pace, tone and direction for disciples and the congregation. The training is focused on six tracks which are key to making vital congregations:

- Small groups
- Worship experiences
- Evangelism church
- Social media
- Vital older adult ministry
- Liturgical/praise dance ministry

Greater New Jersey has leaders who are highly committed, want to learn, build relationships and seek results. You collaborate and take more risks for the mission. I pray that what you learn today helps you grow in your own discipleship and transforms your congregation.

I praise God for you and your faithful service. I give thanks and rejoice for your leadership, it is an honor to serve with you.

In Christ,



John R. Schol

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GNJ STRATEGIC MINISTRY PLAN SUMMARY

VISION

We see a church like Jesus Christ—radical spirit and humble, teaching and healing, soul saving and soul tending, leader and servant, unbound and outbound for mercy and justice.

We also see a Wesleyan Church—personal holiness and social holiness, connectional and risk taking, thoughtful and inspirational, small groups and large vision, welcoming all and respectful of all.

MISSION

Recruit and develop transformational leaders to make disciples of Jesus Christ and grow vital congregations to transformation the world.

DISCIPLES

Are life-long learners and followers of Jesus Christ, leaving behind safety and complacency to serve like Christ to make new disciples, end poverty, be graceful with those at the margins, connect with people who are different from us, and magnify God's presence in the world. This type of disciple is shaped, encouraged, sent and supported through vital congregations.

VITAL CONGREGATIONS

Are inwardly transformed and missionally outbound. Vital congregations are Spirit-filled, forward leaning communities of believers that grow over time, welcome all people (Galatians 3:28); make disciples of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20); and serve like Christ through justice and mercy ministries (Micah 6:8 and Luke 4:17-21). Vital congregations engage and shape disciples in five ministries – worship, small groups, community mission, making new disciples and generous giving. Vital congregations transform the world.

TRANSFORMED WORLD

Is a place where congregations, communities and people are working together to end poverty, eradicate racism, practice good stewardship of God's creation, seek peace, and draw all people closer to God. This type of world is born through the Great Commandment, love God and your neighbor (Matthew 22). It begins with the church engaging its neighbors and working toward a peaceable kingdom as described throughout the scriptures. A transformed world, vital congregations and new disciples require transformational leaders.

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERS

Assess the gifts and needs of the congregation and community, set a courageous vision and goals, and inspire and equip the congregation to make new disciples, grow worship, grow disciples' faith through small groups, engage the congregation in life changing mission, and increase giving to mission and ministry (Ephesians 4:11- 12).

Transformational Leaders have high expectations of themselves and for their congregations.

LEADERSHIP EXPECTATIONS - Include and are not limited to:

1. Connect and relate well with church leadership and membership and community residents,
2. Develop leaders within the congregation,
3. Lead the congregation to deeper faith and service in the world,
4. Increase vitality through inspiring worship and messages, attracting and making new disciples, and engaging disciples in small groups, community hands-on mission and generous giving,
5. Raise sufficient funds for community and world mission, ongoing congregational ministry, shared ministries, and salary and benefits.

CONGREGATIONAL EXPECTATIONS - Include but are not limited to:

1. Connect with and welcome all people in the community,
2. Engage passionately and grow in the five ministries of a vital congregations,
3. Create an environment for risk taking and innovation,
4. Support the growth and development of transformational leaders and radical disciples, and
5. Share generously including 100% of shared ministry and billables.

GNJ EXPECTATIONS

To achieve our vision and mission, GNJ is compelled to shift how it thinks and carries out its ministry. These shifts include: From managing clergy and congregations to being in relationship with clergy and congregations.

1. From Conference programming to Conference resourcing leaders and local congregations.
2. From telling clergy and congregations what to do to supporting clergy and congregations to innovate and create how they will make disciples, grow vitality and transform the world in their context.

Therefore GNJ will focus on growing vital congregations and resourcing leaders and congregations.

GNJ RESOURCES

Congregations and transformational leaders that are ready and desire to become vital and more like Christ. Our primary resources are coaching, PaCE and Laity Pursuing Excellence groups, Team Vital, and Communities of Hope. These resources come along side and center leaders and congregations in their calling, help them assess their present gifts and challenges and set a vision, create a ministry action plan and provide support and technical assistance to achieve a God sized vision. *Fruitfulness, faithfulness and effectiveness will be evaluated each year.*

GNJ EVALUATION INCLUDES THREE TYPES OF EVALUATIONS:

1. GNJ progress toward our vision, mission and developing vital congregations and its commitment to and quality of its resourcing leaders and congregations. This evaluation will be done in February and September and results will be reported to the annual conference session.
2. Congregational progress toward the expectations and vitality will be evaluated every September and a report given and discussed at the charge conference.
3. Clergy's leadership in the areas of the five expectations will be conducted in April. April is chosen so that it is not connected with salaries or appointments. The evaluation is a tool to help assess a pastor's progress and develop a plan for continued development.

GNJ GOALS

GNJ will grow from 14% to 41% vital congregations as it:

1. Increases the percentage of churches growing in worship attendance from 33% to 51%
2. Starts 90 new faith communities
3. Decreases the number of worshipers it takes to make a new profession of faith from 17 to 15
4. Increases the percentage of worshipers in small groups from 43% to 75%
5. Increases the number of young adults in small groups from 2820 to 3200
6. Increases our racial ethnic worshipers from 20% to 25%
7. Increases the percentage of worshipers engaged in mission from 8%5 to 40%
8. Increases local church dollars spent on mission 15% to 17%
9. Raises \$12 million through a mission campaign

We believe accomplishing these goals will bear fruitful outcomes that include transformational leadership, radical discipleship, vital congregations, and transformed world as described above.



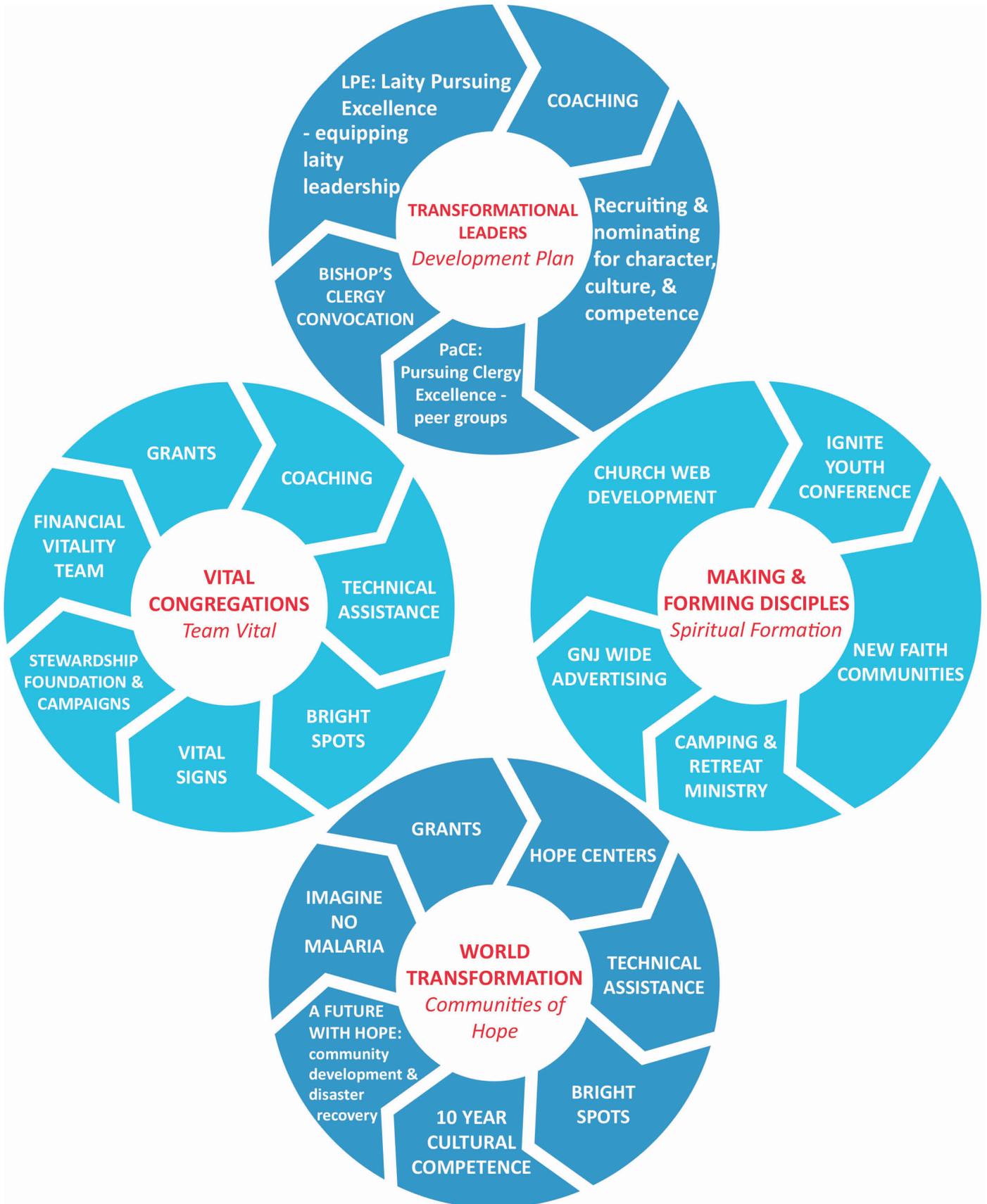
THE PATH TO VITALITY

Our mission is a spiritual mission that requires a journey toward health and vitality. As the staff and GNJ leadership prayerfully and faithfully travel the path to vitality, we see more transformational leaders, disciples of Jesus Christ and vital congregations transforming the world.



RESOURCES

GNJ provides resources to develop transformational leaders, make disciples, grow vital congregations and transform the world.





GNJ TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERS: Character, Culture, Competency

We believe the church and the world needs transformational leaders. Leaders who form and inspire passionate disciples, grow vital congregations and transform the world. GNJ Transformational Leaders are lay and clergy believers who are Christ-centered and Holy Spirit led. They embody the character, possess the competency and fit culturally for the GNJ mission.

CHARACTER

We recruit and equip Holy Spirit led Christ-centered believers with these characteristics.

1. Passionate – leaders with a contagious love for God and others who are excited about the mission and move people and ideas to action.
2. Open – grace-filled leaders who are grounded and yet embrace new ideas and learnings. Leaders who are open to and embrace people who think, look, act and live differently.
3. Relational – leaders who are genuine in their relationship with God and others, seek a team experience and connect with others through their interests and ideas.
4. Learning – life-long learners who are teachable and dedicate their life to learning and applying new ideas.
5. Creative – leaders who don't let adaptive challenges stop the mission but are curious and inquisitive, take risks and apply innovative ideas even when there are limited resources to overcome challenges.

CULTURE

We recruit and equip Holy Spirit led and Christ-centered believers who fit our team culture.

1. Trust – leaders who trust and grow trust with others.
2. Disagree – leaders with the ability to disagree in order to create better outcomes.
3. Commitment – leaders who are willing to commit to and follow through with action plans.
4. Accountability – leaders who take responsibility and are accountable for their work.
5. Results - leaders who are results oriented and are focused on the goal.

COMPETENCY

We recruit and equip competent Holy Spirit led, Christ-centered believers.

1. Transformational – Spirit-led pioneers who initiate a vision of what could be, develop strategies, and inspire people to work together to achieve a life and world changing mission.
2. Analytical – leaders who make excellent decisions and resolve challenges using prayer, scripture, knowledge, input from others, data and experience.
3. Manage Multiple Projects – leaders who are flexible and adapt to added work or challenges while maintaining excellence and a Christ-centered and warm spirit.
4. Organized – leaders who plan, formulate steps, prioritize and carry out work on time and with excellence to accomplish stated goals.
5. Communication – leaders who listen for understanding, articulate with clarity and express directly and clearly through verbal and written communication.

CONFERENCE LAY LEADER MESSAGE



Thank you for answering God's call to serve your local church. Not only are you leaders of your congregations, but you are a chosen minister of Jesus Christ. As you prayerfully prepare to serve effectively, may you have an open mind and a willing spirit to build blocks laid on the cornerstone that is Jesus Christ.

It is important that you faithfully work with your pastor as partners in ministry to fulfill the mission of the church. Formation of a partnership is a deliberate act and commitment that allows visioning and seeking God's direction as a team. Nurturing the church parish and your community calls for caring, creativity, as well as constant prayer as you reach out to meet the ever changing needs of a changing world. God's transforming grace in Jesus Christ calls us to become one dynamic church with diverse people in many settings, offering a new life of Christian discipleship to the world. Each congregation is a community of Christian people organized to carry out God's mission for the church as defined in Matthew 28:19-20. This mission, the development of disciples to minister to the world, requires:

- Reaching out into the world surrounding the congregation and joyfully receiving into the family of faith all who would respond;
- Encouraging people in their relationship with God and inviting them into commitment to God's love in Jesus Christ;
- Providing opportunities for people to be nurtured and to practice the disciplines of faith;
- Supporting and equipping laity leadership to live an act of faithful disciples in ministry to the world in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Your District Lay Leader and I are available to help you in any way we can. Please contact us whenever we can be of assistance to you. May God continue to strengthen you and sustain you as you serve in Jesus' name to build a fruitful ministry.

Rosa Williams
Greater New Jersey Lay Leader

SCRIPTURAL SUPPORT

I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love. - Ephesians 4:1-2 NRSV

So, my son, throw yourself into this work for Christ. Pass on what you heard from me—the whole congregation saying Amen!—to reliable leaders who are competent to teach others. - 2 Timothy 2:1-2 The Message

Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. - Phillippians 4:5-6 NRSV

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. - Matthew 28:19-20 NRSV

But whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. - Mark 10: 43b-45 NRSV

If any of you wants to serve me, then follow me. Then you'll be where I am, ready to serve at a moment's notice. The Father will honor and reward anyone who serves me. - John 12:26 The Message

To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another he gives the gift of special knowledge. The spirit gives special faith to another, and to someone else he gives the power to heal the sick. He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and to another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to know whether it is really the Spirit of God or another spirit that is speaking. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, and another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. - 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 New Living Translation

LAY MEMBER OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2016) Part V, Chapter 1, Section VI ¶251.2

The lay member of the annual conference and alternates shall be elected annually or quadrennials as the annual conference directs. If the charge's lay representative to the annual conference shall cease to be a member of the charge or shall for any reason fail to serve; an alternate member in the order of election shall serve in place. Both the lay members and the alternates shall have been professing members in good standing of The United Methodist Church for at least two years and shall have been active participants for at least four years next preceding their election (see ¶ 32), except in a newly organized church, which shall have the privilege of representation at the annual conference session. No local pastor shall be eligible as a lay member or alternate. United Methodist churches that become part of an ecumenical shared ministry shall not be deprived of their right of representation by a lay member in the annual conference. The lay member(s) of the annual conference, along with the pastor, shall serve as an interpreter of the actions of the annual conference session. These persons shall report to the local church council on actions of the annual conference as soon as possible, but not later than three months after the close of the conference.

LAY LEADER RESPONSIBILITIES

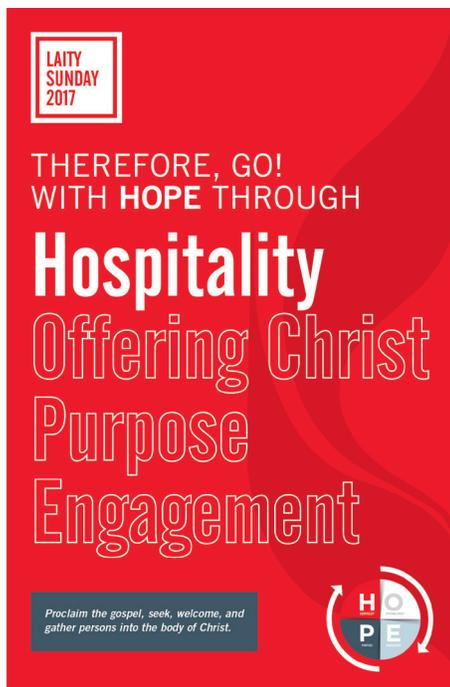
The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2012) Part V, Chapter 1, Section VI, ¶251

Duties of Leaders and Members - 1. Out of the professing membership of each local church (¶127), there shall be elected by the charge conference a lay leader who shall function as the primary lay representative of the laity in that local church and shall have the following responsibilities:

- a) fostering awareness of the role of laity both within the congregation and through all ministries in the home, workplace, community, and world, and finding ways within the community of faith to recognize all these ministries;
- b) meeting regularly with the pastor to discuss the state of the church and the needs for ministry;
- c) membership in the charge conference and the church council, the committee on finance, committee on nomination, the committee on lay leadership and the committee on pastor-parish relations or staff parish relations, where, along with the pastor, the lay leader shall serve as an interpreter of the actions and programs of the annual conference and the general Church (to be better equipped to comply with this responsibility, it is recommended that a lay leader also serve as a lay member of annual conference);
- d) continuing involvement in study and training opportunities to develop a growing understanding of the Church's reason for existence and the types of ministry that will most effectively fulfill the Church's mission;
- e) assisting in advising the church council of opportunities available and the needs expressed for a more effective ministry of the church through its laity in the community;
- f) informing the laity of training opportunities provided by the annual conference. Where possible, the lay leader shall attend training opportunities in order to strengthen his or her work. The lay leader is urged to become a certified lay servant.

In instances where more than one church is on a charge, the charge conference shall elect additionally leaders so that there will be one lay leader in each church. Associate lay leaders may be elected to work with the lay leader in any local church.

THE ROLE OF THE LAY LEADER



The Discipline lists these responsibilities for a lay leader in congregations of every size and in multiple point charges. These responsibilities are lived with a great deal of variation in congregations:

- Advocacy
- Model responsible and faithful discipleship
- Build awareness within the congregation
- Recognize and celebrate the ministry of the laity
- Partnership with pastor
- Serve on various committees
- Continue spiritual growth
- Assist the church council
- Communicate to laity educational opportunities

LAITY ARE CALLED!

All of God's people, in all places and at all times, are called to love and serve. (Ministry of the Laity.) We rejoice in God's Call to be disciples of Jesus Christ. Claimed by baptism and nurtured by God's redeeming love and grace, we are compelled to live under the direction of the Holy Spirit. We are called to an every-moment ministry.

Ministry of the laity includes, but is not limited to:

- Living faithfully as disciples of Jesus Christ in our everyday life.
- Responding to God's gifts of grace and call to serve.
- Using our gifts and resources to serve others.
- Loving our neighbors.
- Living out the Gospels in all our relationships – at home, at school, at work, at play, in our communities and in our world.

As described in the Gospels, Jesus Christ calls all persons to do a variety of things. You are called to be in lay ministry as a Lay Leader. You were chosen by your Church Conference to be the lay leader of your congregation. Your role is to make disciples of Jesus Christ and your priorities are the same as those of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference.

Become a partner in ministry with your pastor by praying, visioning, sharing, and working together. This involves frequent communication—no less than weekly. Listen to the congregation and provide objective input to your pastor. You and your pastor are a team and teaming means sharing responsibilities. Be aware of your pastor's schedule so that the church functions smoothly when she or he is away or unavailable. Work with your pastor to actively develop, plan and implement goals for your church. Be willing and available to assist and share in pastoral responsibilities.

LAITY SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2017: THEREFORE, GO! WITH HOPE THROUGH HOSPITALITY

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2016) ¶264.2

Laity Sunday shall be observed annually, preferably on the third Sunday in October. Laity Sunday calls the Church to celebrate the ministry of all lay Christians, as their lives are empowered for ministry by the Holy Spirit. The observance of Laity Sunday shall be under the general supervision of the General Board of Discipleship. The Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders will recommend themes for an entire quadrennial to the General Board of Discipleship two years before the beginning of a new Quadrennial." Themes and worship helps for Laity Sunday can be found at (gbod.org/laity.)

PARTNERING WITH PARISH

Become a partner with your congregation. Communicate with them and make sure they know you are there to help them and the church. Listen to congregational concerns and issues and communicate those to the pastor, while providing information to the congregation that may alleviate their concerns. If your church has more than one service and different type services, such as traditional and contemporary, consider having an associate lay leader to assure a Lay Leader is attending all services and each service is aware of their lay leader.

STEWARDSHIP

Be involved in your church's stewardship program and assure the emphasis is ongoing throughout the year. Promote giving by keeping the congregation educated on all the ministries involved in your church and our connectional system. Learn about and educate your congregation on how their apportionments are used in ministry throughout the world. Help identify your congregation's gifts and graces and allow those with a passion to serve to fulfill their ministry.

APPORTIONMENTS AND CONNECTIONAL GIVING

What is connectional giving? It's as simple as people coming together, combining their money to accomplish something bigger than themselves and their local congregations. *United Methodists support apportioned and designated funds through their connectional gifts.*

As a lay leader it is important that we not only understand the magic of being a connectional church but that we understand our role in making sure that the leadership in the church as well as the congregation is informed. As lay leaders, stewardship is a very important area of our lives and responsibility. Scripture guides us best in this area:

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. - Matthew 6:19-21, NRSV

The General Conference establishes budgets for the denomination's general funds. These are divided among annual conferences, based on a specific formula. Each annual conference, using its own approved formula, divides these fund requests, along with conference administrative and benevolence fund requests, among local churches. In addition, individuals, local churches, districts and annual conferences may make monetary gifts to the designated funds called advance specials, of which 100 percent goes directly to a specific project or ministry. Together, apportioned and designated funds represent our connectional giving. By combining several smaller gifts into a larger amount, we can effect change across the world. Individual churches can minister to a small area; however, as a connectional church, we can do big things, all in the name of Jesus Christ. Additional information is available at umcgiving.org.

EDUCATE YOURSELF

Learn about the United Methodist Church, the connectional system, and the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference. It is recommended the Lay or Associate Lay Leaders be the Lay Member(s) for your church at Annual Conference and they become familiar with the training and ministries available to your church and laity through the General Church, Jurisdiction, and Annual Conference and assure your church takes advantage of them. Learn how delegates to General and Jurisdictional conferences are elected. Identify those in your congregation that have a passion to be delegates to those conferences, and help them with the nomination process. Continue your Christian education and leadership skills and encourage your church laity to do the same. Become involved in Bible study, the Walk to Emmaus and Cluster Groups, Lay Servant Ministries training, Lay Pastor Ministry and other ministries that promote outreach and discipleship. Promote the use of teams in your church to identify new ministries, areas of outreach and potential new small groups. As new ministries are implemented and small groups formed, allow teams to move on to other new areas.

You are a voting member of the church conference and the church council, the committee on finance, the committee on nominations and leadership development, as well as the committee on pastor-parish relations or staff-parish relations. It is recommended that you or the associate lay leader be present at each meeting, along with your pastor, to serve as an interpreter of the actions and programs of the annual conference and the General Church—a good

reason for the Lay Leader/Associate Lay Leader to be the church's Lay Member of Annual Conference. Promote effective relationships between you and your pastor. This special relationship starts with open minds and mutual respect plus an understanding that the church is God's church and only by God's Grace and Love can we be a part of this relationship. Congregations respond in a positive way to clergy-laity leadership when they see that both are spirit-filled and working in harmony for effective ministry. This kind of partnership ministry, with the whole congregation involved, becomes important when pastoral leadership changes. You, your pastor and the Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee have an awesome responsibility to identify and work with those laity that are called to Licensed or Ordained Ministry. One of the most important aspects of your position as Lay Leader is to help others heed God's call. You are encouraged to be aware of this responsibility and the process involved.

Actively support the work of the United Methodist Men, Women, Youth, Children, and other organized lay groups. Serve with love, with joy, and enthusiasm; with courage to move as God directs; and with guidance from the Holy Spirit through daily prayer and meditation. Length of service for lay leaders is recommended to be three years where you are elected annually. However, many churches have specific and different requirements which may warrant a change to the three year rule and that may be determined by each church.

Assistance and encouragement related to the position of local church Lay Leader may come from a variety of sources; your District Lay Leader, Conference Lay Leader, the United Methodist Book of Discipline, your pastor and most importantly from God.

ASSOCIATE LAY LEADER

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2012) ¶251

Associate lay leader(s) may be elected to work with the lay leader in any local church." Election of associate lay leaders is encouraged in churches with multiple worship services. Each service should have a lay leader/associate lay leader attending to help accomplish the roles and responsibilities of lay leader. Lay leaders and associate lay leaders should establish good communications meet periodically and form a partnership with the church pastor(s). Associate lay leaders should have the same basic responsibilities as the lay leader and assure a lay leader is represented in church ministries and attendance at all meetings where the lay leaders are involved. However, if the lay leader and associate lay leader(s) are attending the same meeting there should only be one vote for lay leadership representation.

DISTRICT LAY LEADER'S MINISTRY

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2012) ¶660

1. The district lay leader is the elected leader of the district laity and shall be a professing member of a local church. The district lay leader shall provide for the training of local church lay leaders for their ministries in the local churches in relation to ¶249. The district lay leader shall have responsibility for fostering awareness of the role of the laity both within congregations and through their ministries in the home, workplace, community, and world in achieving the mission of the Church, and supporting and enabling lay participation in the planning and decision-making processes of the district and the local churches in cooperation with the district superintendent and pastors.
2. The district lay leader shall be elected as determined by the annual conference for a term of not less than four years. The method of nomination and the maximum term of office shall be determined by the annual conference. There may be one or more associate district lay leader(s) within a district. The associate district lay leader(s) shall be elected as determined by the annual conference. The method of nomination and the maximum term of office shall be determined by the annual conference. The district lay leader and the associate district lay leader(s) may be reimbursed for their approved expenses.
3. The district lay leader will meet regularly with the district superintendent to discuss the state of the district, the Church, and the needs for ministry both locally and globally.
4. The district lay leader is a member of annual conference (see ¶32).
5. The district lay leader shall be a member of the conference board of laity or equivalent structure and they are part of the Nomination Committee and the Primary Task Team.

6. The district lay leader shall work with the District Superintendent to ensure that there is a district director of Lay Servant Ministries and shall serve on the district committee on Lay Servant Ministries.
7. The district lay leader is a member of the district conference and shall be a member of the district council on ministries or alternative structure and its executive committee. The district lay leader shall also be a member of the committee on district superintendency of the district.
8. The district lay leader may serve as a lay member of the district committee on ordained ministry (or equivalent agency) and the district board of church location and building (or equivalent agency).
9. The district lay leader shall relate to the organized lay groups in the district such as United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, and United Methodist Youth and support their work and their activities.
10. The district lay leader may designate persons to serve as proxy in any of the above groups except the annual conference, the district conference, district council on ministries, and the district council on ministries executive committee, district committee on ordained ministry, and the district board of church location and building

CONFERENCE LAY LEADER'S MINISTRY

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2012) ¶603

The conference lay leader is the elected leader of conference laity and is an officer of the annual conference. The conference lay leader shall participate in annual conference sessions as a partner in ministry with the Bishop.

developing the advocacy role for laity in the life of the Church
 increasing the participation of laity in the sessions and structure of the annual conference
 encouraging layperson in the general ministry of the Church

THE CONFERENCE LAY LEADER

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2012) ¶607

1. The conference lay leader is the elected leader of conference laity and will have responsibility for fostering awareness of the role of the laity both within the congregation and through their ministries in the home, workplace, community, and world in achieving the mission of the Church and for enabling and supporting lay participation in the planning and decision making processes of the annual conference, district, and local church in cooperation with the bishop, district superintendents, and pastors.
2. The conference lay leader shall relate to the organized lay groups in the conference such As United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, United Methodist Youth, and Scouting Ministries encourage and support their work and activities and help coordinate activities. The conference lay leader shall also have the general responsibility in:
 - developing the advocacy role for laity in the life of the Church,
 - increasing the participation of laity in the sessions and structure of the annual conference,
 - encouraging layperson in the general ministry of the Church.
3. The conference lay leader shall chairperson of the conference board of laity or equivalent structure, shall be a member of the annual conference, the conference council on ministries or equivalent structure, the executive committee, if any, of the conference council on ministries, the conference committee on nominations, the conference committee on episcopacy, and the committee planning annual conference sessions; and may be designated by virtue of office to membership on any conference agency by the annual conference.
4. The conference lay leader shall be responsible for presenting a report to the annual conference.
5. The conference lay leader may serve on the conference Board of Ordained Ministry and will participate in the Service of Ordination at annual conference.
6. The conference lay leader shall meet with the cabinet when matters relating to the coordination, implementation, or administration of the conference program, or other matters as the cabinet may determine are on the agenda.
7. The conference lay leader will meet regularly with the bishop to discuss the state of the Annual conference, the Church, and the needs for ministry both locally and globally.

8. The conference lay leader shall ensure that the Annual Conference has a conference director of lay servant ministries filled in the manner determined by the annual conference and the conference lay leader shall participate in Lay Servant Ministries
9. The conference lay leader shall be elected for a term of not less than four years by the Annual Conference as the annual conference may determine. The method of nomination and term of office shall be determined by the annual conference. Associate lay leader(s), to work with the conference lay leader, may be elected by the annual conference as it may determine. The conference lay leader and associate lay leader(s) will receive reasonable reimbursement for approved dues and expenses necessary for their ministry.
10. The conference lay leader shall be a member of the Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders.

CONFERENCE LAY SERVANT MINISTRIES

What is Lay Servant (formerly Lay Speaking) Ministries? Leading, Caring, Communicating: these words characterize what lay speakers do in ministry as The United Methodist Church engages the world of the twenty-first century!

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2012) ¶266

1. A lay servant certified is a professing member of a local church or charge who is ready and desirous to serve the Church and who is well informed on and committed to the Scriptures and the doctrine, heritage, organization, and life of The United Methodist Church and who has received specific training to develop skills in witnessing to the Christian faith through spoken communication, church and community leadership, and care-giving ministries. An applicant must be active in the support of the local church or charge.
2. Lay servants are to serve the local church or charge (or beyond the local church or charge) in any way in which their witness or leadership and service inspires the laity to deeper commitment to Christ and more effective discipleship, including the interpretation of the Scriptures, doctrine, organization, and ministries of the church.
3. Through continued study and training a lay servant should prepare to undertake one or more of the following functions, giving primary attention to service within the local church or charge. To take initiative in giving leadership, assistance, and support to the program emphases of the church. To lead meetings for prayer, training, study, and discussion when requested by the pastor,
4. district superintendent or committee on Lay Servant Ministries.
 - To conduct, or assist in conducting, services of worship, and present sermons and addresses when requested by the pastor, district superintendent, or committee on Lay Servant Ministries.
 - To relate to appropriate committees and ministry areas in providing leadership for congregational and community life and fostering care-giving ministries.
 - To assist in the distribution of the elements of Holy Communion whenever celebrated upon request by the pastor of the church of which the lay servant is a member.
5. Lay servant/speaker training courses shall be those recommended by the General Board of Discipleship or alternates approved by the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries. Such training should enable ministries with all language and cultural groups as appropriate. This course is open to all laity.
6. It is recommended that a service of commitment be held for persons recognized as local church or certified lay speakers/servant.

CERTIFIED LAY SPEAKER/SERVANT

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2012) ¶268

1. A candidate may be recognized as a certified lay speaker/servant by the district or conference committee on Lay Speaking Ministries after the candidate has:

- Made application in writing to the appropriate committee and has been recommended by the pastor and the church council or the charge conference of the local church in which he or she holds membership.
 - Completed both basic and one advanced training courses for lay servant ministries.
 - Had his or her qualifications reviewed and approved by the district lay servant committee.
2. The certified lay speaker/servant shall continue to serve the local church in the ministries of leading, caring and communicating and may serve in district and conference.
 3. Recognition as a certified lay speaker shall be renewed annually by the district or conference committee on Lay Speaking/Servant Ministries after the certified lay speaker has: Requested in writing the renewal of certification.
 - Submitted an annual report to the charge conference and the committee on Lay Speaking Ministries, giving evidence of the satisfactory performance of lay speaking service.
 - Been recommended for renewal by the pastor and the church council or charge conference.
 - Completed at least once in every three years an advanced course for lay speakers/Servant.

¶269. TRANSFER OF CERTIFICATION BY CERTIFIED LAY SPEAKERS/SERVANTS

A certified lay speaker who moves may transfer certification to the new district upon receipt of a letter from the previous district's committee on Lay Servant Ministries confirming current certification and the date of completion of the most recent advanced course taken. Further renewal of certification is in accordance with ¶267.

YOUTH BASIC LAY SPEAKING/SERVANT MINISTRY

- An active, supportive member of the UMC
- Eager to serve through the Church
- Well informed on the scripture and the doctrine, heritage, organization and life of the UMC
- Committed to witnessing his/her faith through church and community

Youth Lay Speaking Ministry are youth between the ages 14-18 years of age who are committed to witnessing his/her faith through church and community leadership, care giving ministries and spoken communication. (Leading, Caring and Communicating.)

LAY MISSIONERS

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2012) ¶270

Provisions for Lay Missioners – Lay missioners are committed laypersons, mostly volunteers, who are willing to be trained and work in a team with a pastor-mentor to develop faith communities, establish community ministries, develop church school extension programs, and engage in congregational development. All lay missioners must follow the guidelines established by the National Committee on Hispanic Ministries of the National Plan for Hispanic Ministries and may be certified by their annual conference. If annual conferences choose to certify lay missioners, they must do so according to the guidelines. They are accountable to their pastor-mentor as members of the ministry team. The ministry team is accountable to the policies and procedures of the annual conference where assigned. The concept of lay missioners is theologically based in the ministry of the laity. While lay missioners are engaged in a variety of ministries, their purpose is to complement, not replace, pastors.

CERTIFIED LAY MINISTER (CLM)

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2012) ¶271

Certified Lay Minister – In order to enhance the quality of ministry in small membership churches, expand team ministry in churches and deference to an expression of gifts and evidence of God’s grace associated with the lay ministry of early Methodism, the certified lay minister is recognized and utilized.

The certified lay minister may be assigned by the District Superintendent to provide pastoral leadership for a local church as a part of a ministry team under supervision of a clergy person.

1. The certified lay minister shall preach the Word, provide a care ministry to the congregation, assist in program leadership, and be a witness in the community for the growth, missional and connectional thrust of The United Methodist Church as part of a ministry team with the supervision and support of a clergy person.
2. A certified lay servant or a person with equivalent training as defined by his or her district or conference may be certified as a lay minister by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry after he or she has:” (the steps to certification are summarized below and spelled out in full in ¶ 271)
3. Steps to Certification:
 - Local Church recommendation (pastor, church council and approved by charge conference)
 - Complete course work and certification requirements
 - Recommendation by District Superintendent
 - Apply in writing to the District Committee on Ordained Ministry
 - Recertification required every two years
 - Complete Psychological Examination

CANDIDACY FOR LICENSED AND ORDAINED MINISTRY

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2012) ¶310

Persons, upon hearing and heeding the call to servant leadership through licensed or ordained ministry, shall contact the clergy person of their local church, another clergy, or the district superintendent of the district in which they participate in a United Methodist ministry setting to inquire about the process of candidacy. Persons are encouraged to use resources recommended by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM), such as:

THE CHRISTIAN AS A MINISTER AND THE MINISTRY INQUIRY PROCESS

1. Those beginning candidacy for licensed or ordained ministry:
 - shall be a professing member in good standing of The United Methodist Church or a baptized participant of a recognized United Methodist campus ministry or other United Methodist ministry setting for a minimum of one (1) year;
 - shall write to the district superintendent requesting admission to the candidacy process and the assignment of a candidacy mentor. Include a statement of call. Request registration through the district superintendent with GBHEM;
 - after registration by the district superintendent with GBHEM, mentor and candidate will study the resources adopted by the conference Board of Ordained Ministry;
 - Shall write their statement of call ¶310.

The candidate will consult with the pastor or equivalent in ministry setting specified by the district committee on ordained ministry to request a meeting of the pastor parish relations committee or equivalent body specified by the district committee on ordained ministry to consider the statement of call and to be interviewed in light of Wesley’s historic questions;

- Do they know God as pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire nothing but God? Are they holy in all manner of conversation?
- Have they the gifts, as well as evidence of God's grace, for the work? Have they a clear, sound understanding; a right judgment in the things of God; a just conception of salvation by faith? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly?
- Have they fruit? Have any been truly convinced of sin and converted to God, and are believers edified by their service?

As long as these marks occur in them, we believe they are called by God to serve. These we receive as sufficient proof that they are moved by the Holy Spirit.

- After approval of the candidate by pastor parish relations committee or equivalent body specified by the district committee on ordained ministry, shall meet with a charge conference or body specified by the district committee on ordained ministry called to recommend the candidate to the district committee on ordained ministry. Approval of the candidate must be by two thirds written ballot, and the candidate shall have been graduated from an accredited high school or received a certificate of equivalency.

2. Candidates seeking to become certified for licensed or ordained ministry shall:

- request to meet with the district committee on ordained ministry. In preparation for meeting with the district committee on ordained ministry, consult with the mentor to provide the following written information in addition to the material written for ¶310.1.d. (i) the most formative experience of their Christian life; (ii) God's call to licensed or ordained ministry and role of the church in their call; (iii) their beliefs as a Christian; (iv) their gifts for ministry; (v) their present understanding of their call to ministry as elder, deacon, or licensed ministry; and (vi) their support system;
- complete and release required psychological reports, criminal background and credit checks. They shall submit, on a form provided by the conference Board of Ordained Ministry:
 - a notarized statement detailing any convictions for felony or misdemeanor or written accusations of sexual misconduct or child abuse; or
 - a notarized statement certifying that this candidate has neither been accused in writing nor convicted of a felony, misdemeanor, any incident of sexual misconduct, or child abuse.

PROCESS FOR LAITY CALLED TO ORDAINED MINISTRY

The district committee on ordained ministry through the Board of Ordained Ministry shall seek ways to consider cultural and ethnic/racial realities in meeting these requirements.

- provide other information as the district committee may require for determining gifts, evidence of God's grace, fruit, and demonstration of the call to licensed or ordained ministry;
- agree for the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world and the most effective witness of the gospel and in consideration of their influence as clergy, to make a complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life as set forth in ¶¶103-105; 160-166. To this end they shall agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness, social responsibility, and growth in grace and the knowledge and love of God. Where possible, the local church is encouraged to assist candidates with the expenses of candidacy.
- be voted on by individual ballot by committee members present. A three-fourth majority vote of the committee present is required for certification.
- upon vote of certification, the candidate shall be encouraged by the district committee on ordained ministry to attend a United Methodist seminary.

In special circumstances, the district committee on ordained ministry may authorize other United Methodist ministry settings to serve in the role of the local church for the purpose of recommending candidacy and specify the persons or bodies that will serve in the roles of pastor, pastor parish relations committee and church conference.

ABOUT THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE

The organization, beliefs and official policies of The United Methodist Church are contained in *The Book of Discipline*. At its quadrennial meeting, the General Conference reviews *The Book of Discipline* and has the authority to rewrite any portion of it following proper procedures. Checks and balances are built into all aspects of church life. The organization of the denomination resembles that of the U.S. government. The General Conference is the top legislative body; a nine member Judicial Council is the Supreme Court, and reviews situations in the church to make sure they are in adherence with *The Book of Discipline*; and the Council of Bishops is similar to the executive branch. At every level of the church, from the local church to the General Church, there are teams, committees and councils focusing on particular areas of ministry. These teams guide the efforts of a particular ministry effort and determine the specifics of how ministry is carried out.

CONNECTIVITY ALLOWS US TO SERVE THE WORLD

United Methodists join the founder of the Methodist movement John Wesley in affirming the divine call to do good works that show God's love wherever we can. We are mutually connected organized - so that our individual efforts blend with the work of others to be more powerful than any one person or any one congregation can do alone. Our budgets support our connection.

CONNECTIONAL CHURCH

The United Methodist Church is a connectional church, which means our churches are connected by a system to guide our work and govern our policies. This system also allows us to pool our resources so that we may work together more effectively and be in ministry throughout the world; work and express our covenant to connectional service and multiply God's love in tangible ways.

STRUCTURE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The United Methodist Church is a connectional structure maintained through its chain of conferences.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

The General Conference is the supreme legislative body of The United Methodist Church. It is made up of not less than six hundred nor more than one thousand delegates, on a formula spelled out in The Book of Discipline. Half of the delegates are ministers and half are laypersons elected by their annual conferences throughout the world. The General Conference meets every four years. The General Conference is responsible for all legislation of policy established by the United Methodist Church and published in *The Book of Discipline*. No person, no paper, no organization, has authority to speak for The United Methodist Church. This right having been reserved exclusively to the General Conference under the Constitution of The United Methodist Church.

THE JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCE

The Jurisdictional Conferences are regional bodies. The voting membership consists of an equal number of clergy and lay delegates elected by their annual conferences within the jurisdiction. The Jurisdictional Conference meets every four years. The Jurisdictional Conference may order a special session in such manner as it shall determine.

In the United States, there are five Jurisdictional Conferences as follows:

- Southeastern Jurisdiction
- South Central Jurisdiction
- North Central Jurisdiction
- Northeastern Jurisdiction
- Western Jurisdiction

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey Conference is part of Northeastern Jurisdiction

THE CENTRAL CONFERENCE

The role and responsibilities of the Central Conferences are set forth in The Book of Discipline. Central Conferences perform about the same function as Jurisdictional Conferences, except that they are located in other countries than the United States. However, because of their location and their need to adapt to the needs there, they are accorded a larger measure of freedom to work out their own structures than is the case of the Jurisdictional Conferences.

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

The Annual Conference is the basic body in the Church and as such shall have reserved to it the right to vote on all constitutional amendments, on the election of clergy and lay delegates to the general and jurisdictional conferences, on all matters relating to the character and conference relations of its clergy members, and on the ordination of clergy. The Greater New Jersey Annual Conference meets every year. The Bishop presides at the meeting. The voting membership consists of an equal number of clergy and lay members. Pastors are itinerate within an Annual Conference area, which means they move from church to church during their ministry career. The Bishop and the District Superintendents, known as the Cabinet, determine which church or ministry a pastor will serve, making sure each church has a pastor. The Bishop officially appoints a pastor to a church and appointments are renewed or changed each year.

The Annual Conference connects local churches together. Churches contribute financial resources - a portion of their local church budget known as apportionments or connectional giving - which enables the Annual Conference to support ministry projects within its boundaries and throughout the world, to provide training sessions to help its churches be more effective, to start new churches and ministries, to provide special events for children, youth and determine the programs and direction of ministry for the Annual Conference for the next year. They also make business decisions necessary to support the ministry of the Annual Conference and its churches. There are nine (9) districts in the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference:

DISTRICTS

A district is made up of a group of churches in a geographical location. An ordained clergy elder known as the District Superintendent supervises each district. Churches in a district often meet together for training events and ministry opportunities and may combine resources for special projects.

- Cape Atlantic District
- Capital District
- Delaware Bay District
- Gateway North District
- Gateway South District
- Northern Shore District
- Palisades District
- Raritan Valley District
- Skylands District

REGIONAL GROUPING

Northern Region includes: Gateway North, Palisades and Skylands Districts

Central Region includes: Capital, Northern Shore and Raritan Valley Districts

Southern Region includes: Cape Atlantic, Delaware Bay and Gateway South Districts

THE CHURCH CONFERENCE/CHARGE CONFERENCES

The church/charge conference is the basic unit in the connectional system of The United Methodist Church. It is the local church level. The church/charge conference meets every year and, also, may meet in special sessions. The membership of the church/charge conference shall be the pastor and all members of the church council, together with retired clergy who were elected to hold their membership in said church/charge conference. If more than one church is on the pastoral charge, all council members of each church shall be members of the church/charge conference. The District Superintendent/or Circuit Elder shall preside at the meetings of the church/charge

conference or may designate an elder to preside. To encourage broader participation by members of the church, the church/charge conference may extend the vote to all local church members present at such meetings.

THE LOCAL CHURCH

Definition of a Local Church: The local church provides the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs. It is a community of true believers under the Lordship of Christ. It is the redemptive fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by persons divinely called and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, the church exists for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, and the redemption of the world.

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2012) ¶ 201

THE FUNCTION OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

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

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2012) ¶ 202

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

The United Methodist Church is a part of the holy catholic (universal) church, as we confess in the Apostles' Creed. In the church, Jesus Christ is proclaimed and professed as Lord and Savior. All people may attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments and become members in any local church in the connection. In the case of persons whose disabilities prevent them from reciting the vows, their legal guardian[s], themselves members in full covenant relationship with God and the Church, the community of faith, may recite the appropriate vows on their behalf.

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2012) ¶ 214

The membership of a local church shall include those who have been baptized and all people who have professed their faith.

1. The baptized membership of a local United Methodist church shall include all baptized people who have received Christian baptism in the local congregation or elsewhere, or whose membership has been transferred to the local United Methodist church subsequent to baptism in some other congregation.
2. The professing membership of a local church shall include all baptized people who have come into membership by profession of faith through appropriate services of the baptismal covenant in the ritual or by transfer from other local churches.

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2012) ¶ 215

CHARACTERISTICS OF A VITAL CONGREGATION

A vital congregation has:

- Inviting and inspiring worship
- Engaged disciples in mission and outreach
- Gifted, equipped and empowered lay leadership
- Effective, equipped and inspired clergy leadership
- Small groups and strong children's programs and youth ministry

LOCAL CHURCH ORGANIZATION

The basic organizational plan for the local church shall include provision for the following units:

- Charge conference
- Church council

- Committee on pastor-parish relations
- Board of trustees
- Committee on finance
- Committee on lay leadership (nominations)

All members of The United Methodist Church are connected with a local congregation. United Methodists believe the local church is the most significant arena through which we are able to make disciples (devoted followers) of Jesus Christ. Sometimes several local churches are linked together and share a pastor. This is known as a pastoral charge. Each local church can have its own personality and style, but our local congregations have this common purpose: to make disciples through worship, educational experiences for people of all ages, fellowship activities, and opportunities to serve and put faith into action.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do we ever meet with our conference or district lay leaders?

Please feel free to communicate with them. Contact information on page 36. They are always available for personal meetings, consultation and guidance. They are very approachable people, so just give them a call or email.

What about my attendance at Conferences (local, Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, Northeastern Jurisdictional, General)?

As indicated in Your Calling and Responsibilities, the local church lay leader should become familiar with the training and ministries available to your church and laity through the General Church, Jurisdiction, and Annual Conference and District, assure your church takes advantage of them.

What about goals - are they provided to us by the conference, district or church pastor?

The material in the section The Role of the Lay Leader and Laity is Called provides general guidelines for your work as local church laity leader. The setting of specific goals for your local congregational work should be developed by you and then agreed to jointly by you and your pastor. The setting of goals is critical for moving forward for Jesus. When setting goals, be sure they indicate specific actions, time frame for completion of actions plus means to evaluate the goals.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

The Wesley Study Bible

Available at: www.cokesbury.com

The 2016 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church

Available at: www.cokesbury.com

The United Methodist Book of Worship

Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation Lay Leader/Lay Member

Available at: www.cokesbury.com

WEBSITES

Conference website: www.gnjumc.org

United Methodist Church website: www.umc.org

Apportionment Giving: www.umcgiving.org

Laity Sunday: www.gbod.org/laity

MAGAZINES AND E-NEWSLETTERS

The Interpreter Magazine

Order through your church from United Methodist Communications or online at www.interpretermagazine.org

New World Outlook Magazine

The Mission Magazine of the UMC

www.umcmmission.org/Find-Resources/New-World-Outlook

The Upper Room Daily Devotional Guide

www.devotional.upperroom.org

The Digest

E-newsletter from the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference

The Relay

Newsletter from Greater New Jersey Annual Conference

To subscribe email: communications@gnjumc.org

BOOKS

Small Groups Big Impact by Jim Egli and Dwight Marable

The Worship Workshop by Marcia McFee

Real-life Discipleship Training Manual by Jim Putman, Avery T. Willis, Jr., Brandon Guindon, Bill Krause

Natural Church Development by Christian A. Schwartz and Christopher Schalk

Now Discover Your Strengths by Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton

The Ministry of Christian Education and Formation: A Practical Guide, Discipleship Resources

Think Orange: Imagine the Impact When Church and Family Collide by Reggie Joiner

Children's Ministry in the 21st Century by Craig Julita, Jim Wideman, Pat Verbal

Making Your Children's Ministry the Best Hour of Every Week by Sue Miller and David Staal

Energizing Children's Ministry in the Smaller Church by Rich Chromey

Building a Children's Ministry: A Practical Guide by Tina Houser

When You Pray: Daily Practices for Prayerful Living by Reuben P. Job

Three Simple Rules: A Wesleyan Way of Living by Reuben P. Job

Change the World: Recovering the Message and Mission of Jesus by Mike Slaughter

UPPER ROOM PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE THROUGH COKESBURY

- "What Every Leader Needs to Know About..."
- Leading in a Congregation
- Leading in Prayer
- Leading Meetings
- Leading with Purpose
- United Methodist Connections
- From Discipleship Resources

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