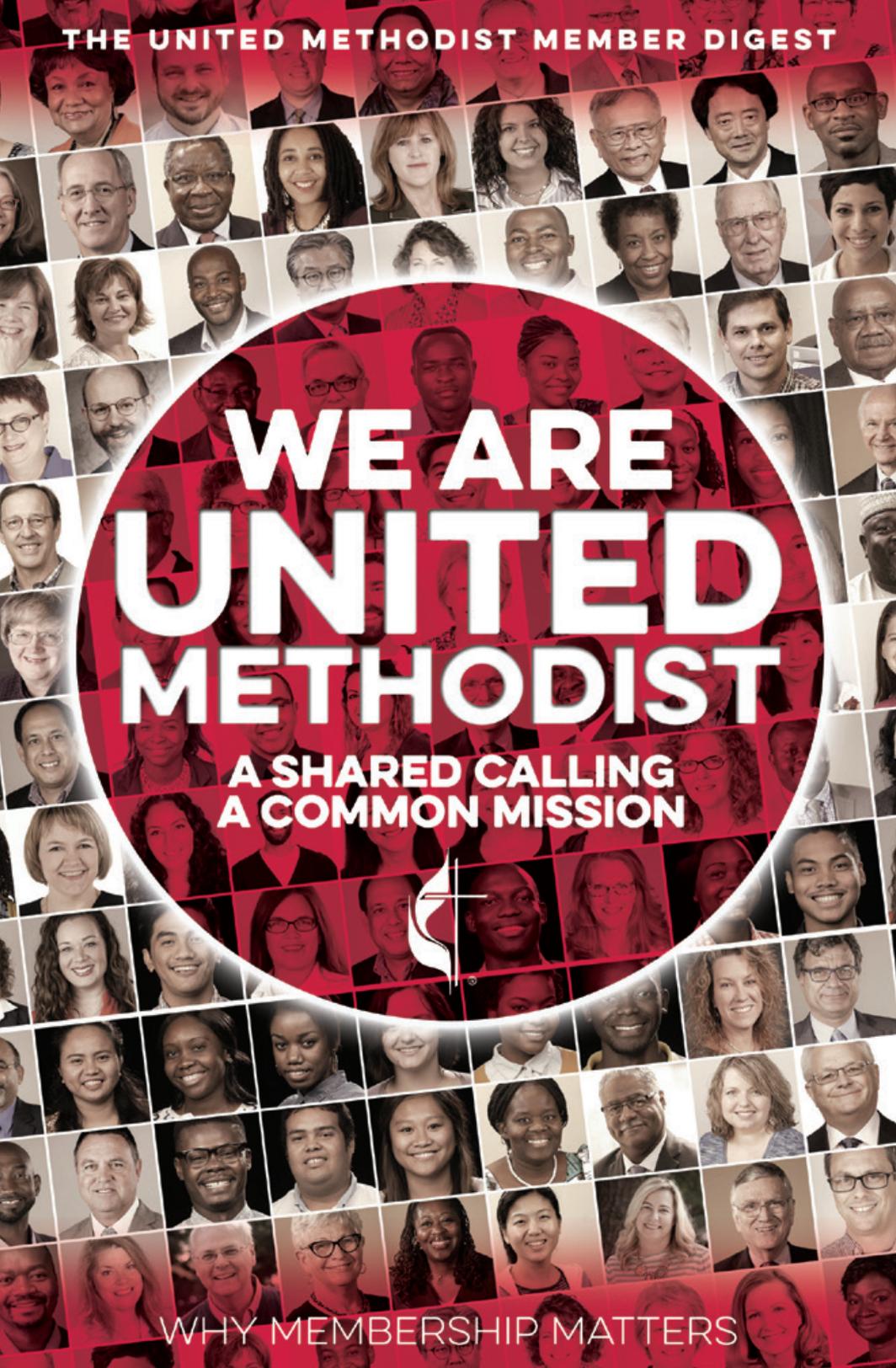


THE UNITED METHODIST MEMBER DIGEST



WE ARE UNITED METHODIST

A SHARED CALLING
A COMMON MISSION

WHY MEMBERSHIP MATTERS



OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

**THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IS
TO MAKE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST
FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE
WORLD. LOCAL CHURCHES AND
EXTENSION MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH
PROVIDE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT
ARENAS THROUGH WHICH
DISCIPLE-MAKING OCCURS.**

(UNITED METHODIST BOOK
OF DISCIPLINE, PARAGRAPH 120).

A SHARED CALLING, A COMMON MISSION:

WHY MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

We are thrilled you want to learn more about what it means to be a member of a United Methodist congregation. We believe membership matters because we are better together.

God designed us to share our faith journeys together.

- Soon after creating Adam, God said, “It’s not good that the human is alone” (Genesis 2:18 CEB).
- Jesus shared his ministry with 12 disciples and many followers.
- The Apostle Paul taught that we are to be one body in Christ (Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 CEB).
- John Wesley, one of United Methodism’s founders, wrote, “Solitary religion is not to be found there.”

Our Christian faith is to be lived in the community called the church. Church membership matters. Through participation in the church’s ministries, we are shaped into lifelong followers of Jesus Christ. Also, we can do things together that no one person could do alone.

A shared calling: We believe Christians are called to a lifelong journey of growth. Participation in the ministries of the church, like worship, Bible study, missions, and connecting with our neighbors, are ways God works in our lives and hearts.

A common mission: We also believe that call includes participating in the work of God in the world. Through our church membership, we participate in ministries in our community, our region, and around the world. Read on to learn more about our shared calling and common mission. See how we live into this life of discipleship. Find the places where God is calling you to get involved.

I AM UNITED METHODIST:

“Grace, connectional church, focus on our responsibility of sharing God’s amazing gift of love and grace through outreach to others; doctrine that supports our open hearts, open minds and open doors.” – @SWMITTON





SOME BASIC UNITED METHODIST BELIEFS

United Methodists share the historic Christian faith passed down through the centuries, with a unique history and distinctive emphases. None of the following definitions are complete. To learn more, visit UMC.org/Beliefs.

GOD

- We believe in one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity). Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God saves us and restores and heals all of creation.

US – HUMANITY

- We believe God loves and is present with every person—even before they're aware of it. God seeks to make us whole and holy.

THE CHURCH

- The Christian church is the community of all Christians around the world, throughout time. The United Methodist Church exists to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Local churches and extension ministries of the church provide the most significant arenas through which disciple-making occurs. Through the ministries of the church, we are formed into the body of Christ and participate in God's restoration project for the world.

THE BIBLE

- The Bible is our primary source for understanding God's will for our lives and for the world. Our reason, experience, and the history of the church's interpretation help us to understand more fully what God is teaching us in the Bible.

GRACE

- John Wesley, founder of the Methodist movement in England, emphasized God's grace. God loves and is present with all people by his prevenient grace. God graciously forgives, restores, and receives us through his justifying grace. God continues to grow us into better followers of Jesus through his sanctifying grace.

WE ARE DISCIPLES

God calls each of us to a life of faithful discipleship. The United Methodist Church has defined the scope of its mission in the world, so every member can find their calling and bring Jesus Christ's ministry to the world.

THERE ARE FOUR AREAS OF FOCUS.

With them, we will make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

- 1. MAKING NEW DISCIPLES
IN NEW PLACES**
- 2. LEADING WHERE GOD CALLS**
- 3. OVERCOMING POVERTY TOGETHER**
- 4. SEEKING HEALTH AND WHOLENESS
FOR ALL**





A CONNECTED CHURCH

Membership in a United Methodist church connects you with the people of your local congregation, and a global denomination of more than 12 million members across five continents—Africa, Asia, Europe, and North and South America. We organize this “connection” into ever-widening groups, many of which we call conferences—a term carried over from the early days of the Methodist movement in the 1700s.

LOCAL CHURCH

In the local church, we worship God, receive the sacraments, serve our communities, study the Bible, and work together to share the good news of Jesus Christ with those who have not yet heard it. Every member’s participation in the congregation is vitally important. Don’t just attend your church; find places to serve, grow, and lead.

DISTRICTS

Your congregation is part of a geographic grouping of United Methodist churches called a district. Districts coordinate and support the ministries of the congregations and pastors of the district under the supervision of a district superintendent, an elder appointed by their bishop to serve this role.



ANNUAL CONFERENCES

Annual conferences are the basic unit of The United Methodist Church. Annual conferences create local churches and organize them into districts. A director of connectional ministries leads the program ministries of an annual conference. A bishop elected by the jurisdictional or central conference provides executive leadership for each conference. Among other things, annual conferences organize and support regional ministries, approve new clergy, and elect members to general and jurisdictional conferences. Bishops, consulting with the district superintendents, pastors, and congregations, appoint clergy to serve the churches of the annual conference. Meetings of the annual conference consist of the clergy of that conference and an equal number of lay (non-clergy) representatives elected by their congregations.

CENTRAL CONFERENCES AND JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCES

Jurisdictional conferences (within the United States) and central conferences (outside the United States) organize and coordinate the work of annual conferences across a wider geographical region. Jurisdictional and Central conferences establish the number and the boundaries of annual conferences within them, elect and appoint bishops to serve their episcopal areas (which may include one or more annual conferences), and support a variety of other ministries and institutions within their geographical area. Central conferences and jurisdictional conferences meet once every four years, a period we call a quadrennium. Their meetings include half clergy and half laity.

GENERAL CONFERENCE

General Conference is the quadrennial (once every 4 years) global meeting of The United Methodist Church. This is the only body that can speak on behalf of the denomination. The General Conference creates and approves the *Book of Discipline* (our organizational guidebook), the *Book of Resolutions* (official positions on social issues), our *United Methodist Hymnal, Book of Worship*, and other official documents of The United Methodist Church. Bishops preside at plenary sessions of the General Conference, but have no voice or vote. Voting members of the General Conference are lay and clergy delegates elected by each of the annual conferences.

WHERE DO THE U.S. LOCAL CHURCH EXPENSE DOLLARS GO?

The cost of our Christ-centered global ministry is significant, but it is only a tiny portion of our local church budget.

THIS EXAMPLE REPRESENTS HOW \$1 GIVEN IN THE OFFERING IS SHARED ACROSS THE CONNECTION.

6
CENTS
BENEVOLENT GIVING

7
CENTS
GO TO JURISDICTIONS, ANNUAL CONFERENCES AND DISTRICTS

2
CENTS
GO TO GENERAL APPORTIONMENTS



Your church's and conference's expense figures will vary depending on your local church's support of annual conference apportionments and your annual conference's budget.

CONNECTIONAL GIVING

When you give to your local congregation, a small portion of that money supports the work of your annual conference, jurisdictional conference, and the General Conference. Connectional giving is represented through apportioned funds and designated funds. By combining our giving, we are able to accomplish what could never be done alone.

APPORTIONED FUNDS

A method of giving that proportionally allocates the churchwide budget to conferences and local churches. There are seven apportioned funds we recognize:

AFRICA UNIVERSITY FUND

In 1988, The United Methodist Church voted unanimously to invest in higher education in Africa and founded Africa University, the first fully accredited United Methodist-related school on the African continent. This fund helps with the general operating expenses such as the administrative costs of the university.

BLACK COLLEGE FUND

In 1972, The United Methodist Church established the Black College Fund to provide a constant, reliable way to support United Methodist-related historically Black colleges in the United States. We are proud to support more historically Black colleges and universities than any other religious denomination.

EPISCOPAL FUND

Our bishops provide important leadership to our churches. The Episcopal Fund pays their salaries, benefits, pensions, and office and travel expenses.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION FUND

The General Administration fund finances the general church administrative functions, like the General Conference. This fund supports the work of The Connectional Table, The Judicial Council, pension and salary aid and two agencies—General Council on Finance and Administration and General Commission on Archives and History.

INTERDENOMINATIONAL COOPERATION FUND

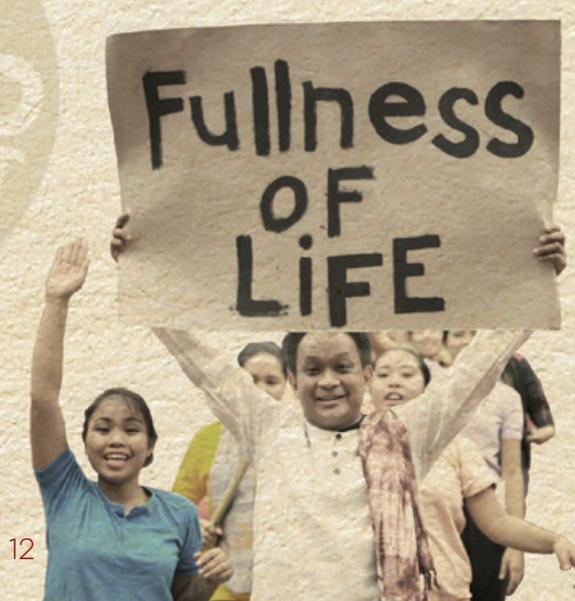
This fund enables United Methodists to share in the basic budget with other organizations to help provide for several national and worldwide ecumenical organizations where together we stand as an ecumenical front to globally make a difference.

MINISTERIAL EDUCATION FUND

This fund helps us prepare people to be pastors and leaders in The United Methodist Church. Through our giving, we support the education of our students at our 13 United Methodist seminaries in the United States.

WORLD SERVICE FUND

The World Service Fund is vital to The United Methodist Church. We use this money to build new churches, train clergy and lay leaders, pay missionary salaries, cooperate with other faith traditions, advocate around the world for peace and justice, provide scholarships and endowments, and so much more. The World Service Fund supports the work of some of our general boards, councils, and agencies.



DESIGNATED GIVING

Designated funds give us the opportunity to make gifts to specific ministries that are used in support of general church causes. These funds are sometimes referred to as second-mile giving.

THE ADVANCE FOR CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

One of the ways we live out our mission in partnership is by supporting the Advance, the designated mission giving channel of The United Methodist Church. Since 1948, the Advance has raised funds to transform communities and empower individuals across the globe. Through the Advance, you are able to support specific, approved mission programs or personnel with financial gifts. Your gifts are used to build relationships with missionaries and projects including global health, water and sanitation needs, disaster response, and sharing the Word of God!

WORLD SERVICE SPECIAL GIFTS

World Service Special Gifts expand the ministries of The Advance, benefits the Africa University Endowment Fund, the Methodist Global Education Fund, the National Anti-Gambling Project and the Lay Missionary Planting Network. United Methodist General Boards and Agencies can apply to use this money to assist ministries not covered elsewhere.

SPECIAL SUNDAYS

The United Methodist Church designates a number of Sundays throughout the year that are celebrated annually and recognize specific ministries in support of general church causes. These Sundays are referred to as Special Sundays and are placed on the calendar to make clear the calling of the church as the people of God and to give persons the opportunity to contribute offerings to special programs. Each Sunday falls into one of three different categories: churchwide Special Sundays with offerings, Special Sunday for annual conferences, and Special Sunday with no offering.

SPECIAL SUNDAYS WITH OFFERINGS

Six Special Sundays are observed on dates determined by the General Conference. Offerings support local and global needs.

HUMAN RELATIONS DAY is celebrated on the Sunday before the observance of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. Offerings collected help ministries improve race relations and recognize the right of all God's children to realize their potential as human beings in relationship with one another.

UMCOR SUNDAY, formerly "One Great Hour of Sharing," is celebrated on the fourth Sunday in Lent. Offerings collected help fund the administrative costs of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), which alleviates human suffering around the world by providing disaster relief and supplies, disaster risk reduction, sustainability and humanitarian development.

NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES SUNDAY is celebrated on the third Sunday of Easter. Offerings collected help ministries that nurture mission with Native American people and provide scholarships for United Methodist Native American seminarians. Half of the gifts collected stay within each annual conference.

PEACE WITH JUSTICE SUNDAY is celebrated on the First Sunday after Pentecost. Offerings collected help continue ministries of reconciliation through each annual conference and help United Methodists proclaim the good news to those longing to experience God's peace and justice.

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY is celebrated by a number of US-related Protestant denominations around the world. Offerings collected help fund scholarships; half of the gifts received fund World Communion Sunday Scholarships and the remaining half benefits the Ethnic Scholarship Program and Ethnic In-Service Training Program. On this Sunday, we remember and celebrate our diversity as God's children united by our faith in Jesus.

UNITED METHODIST STUDENT DAY is celebrated the last Sunday in November. Offerings collected help fund scholarships and loans for United Methodist students. On this Sunday we are called to support United Methodist students as they prepare for life by adding knowledge to their faith.

SPECIAL SUNDAYS APPROVED FOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE OFFERINGS

Five Special Sundays are observed on dates determined by the annual conference. Offerings received are used for ministries within the conference.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION SUNDAY urges churches to use this day as a time to celebrate their Christian Education ministries with events of appreciation and recognition of growth and learning as disciples of Jesus Christ. Offerings received in the local churches support the educational ministries of their annual conference.

GOLDEN CROSS SUNDAY offers an opportunity to highlight and support United Methodist-related homes and agencies in the annual conference. Offerings received in the local churches are used for health and welfare ministries in the annual conference.

RURAL LIFE SUNDAY celebrates the rural heritage of The United Methodist Church, recognizes the needs of rural areas and affirms the interdependence of rural and urban communities. Offerings received in the local churches are for the purpose of strengthening nurture, witness and outreach in town and rural areas.

DISABILITY AWARENESS SUNDAY celebrates the gifts and graces of persons with disabilities and calls the church and society to full inclusion in the community of persons with disabilities. Offerings received should promote awareness of issues, as well as ministries that provide opportunities for fuller inclusion of people with disabilities.

VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION AWARENESS SUNDAY celebrates those who serve in short-term mission work and highlights the ways in which VIM mission teams are deepening of our sense of mutuality between different parts of our global connection. Offerings received can be used to strengthen Volunteers in Mission engagement and participation.

SPECIAL SUNDAYS WITH NO OFFERING

Five Special Sundays are designated to focus attention on a specific aspect of the church's ministry with no special offering taken.

HERITAGE SUNDAY is a day for the church to reflect on our heritage, to celebrate where the church has been, understand itself as it shapes us today and realize the meaning of Christian conferencing. Observed on Aldersgate Day, May 24, or the Sunday preceding.

LAITY SUNDAY focuses on the ministry of all lay Christians as their lives are empowered by the Holy Spirit. Celebrates that we are all called to go and make disciples in a world so desperately in need of hope through service. Observed on the 3rd Sunday in October.

ORGAN AND TISSUE DONOR SUNDAY celebrates organ donation as an act of love and ministry to others in need. It is recommended to celebrate this time of year to come together around issues of life and thanksgiving. Observed on the 2nd Sunday in November.

MEN'S MINISTRY SUNDAY celebrates men's ministry in the church and the community where men of The United Methodist Church join together for fellowship, nurture, spiritual development, witness and outreach. Observed on a day designated by the congregation.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY SUNDAY celebrates women's ministry in the church and the community where women of The United Methodist Church join together for fellowship, nurture, spiritual development, witness and outreach. Observed on a day designated by the congregation.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Do you have questions about The United Methodist Church? Ask The UMC can help you find answers or the best contact for your question. Visit umc.org/contact to submit a question, have a live chat with someone (available 8:30 - 4:30 CST) or email us at asktheumc@umc.org.

THE WORLD SERVICE FUND

The World Service Fund is vital to the United Methodist Church. We use this money to build new churches, train clergy and lay leaders, pay missionary salaries, cooperate with other faith traditions, advocate around the world for peace and justice, provide scholarships and endowments and so much more. The World Service Fund supports the work of some of our general boards, councils, and agencies. Those organizations include:

GENERAL BOARD OF CHURCH AND SOCIETY

UMCjustice.org

Promotes, develops, and distributes resources to inform, motivate, and train United Methodists for action toward social justice.

GENERAL BOARD OF DISCIPLESHIP

UMCdiscipleship.org

Provides resources, training, and support to help the church make disciples of Jesus Christ through worship, stewardship, Christian formation for all ages, lay ministries, and Upper Room Ministries.

GENERAL BOARD OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES

UMCmission.org

Serves as the global mission and relief development agency of the church and connects United Methodist through mission in 136 countries by coordinating mission, evangelism, and service efforts. As part of Global Ministries, the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to alleviating human suffering around the globe.

GENERAL BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND MINISTRY

gbhem.org

Supports the recruiting, training, and development of clergy; provides assistance and ministry to college and seminary students; and supports our institutions of higher education.

GENERAL COMMISSION ON RELIGION AND RACE

gcorr.org

Promotes the full and equal participation of the racial and ethnic constituencies in the work, witness and life of The United Methodist Church.

GENERAL COMMISSION ON THE STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN

gcsr.org and UMSexualEthics.org

Promotes the full and equal responsibility and participation of women at all levels of The United Methodist Church, and leads in preventing, addressing and healing sexual misconduct in The United Methodist Church.

GENERAL COMMISSION ON UNITED METHODIST MEN

gcumm.org

Works to support ministry to, for and through men within local congregations and surrounding communities, that form men as disciples of Jesus Christ.

UNITED METHODIST COMMUNICATIONS

UMCom.org

Meets the strategic communications, public relations and marketing needs of the global church to raise awareness of the mission and ministry of the Church around the globe, and manages the denomination's official website, umc.org.

UNITED METHODIST AGENCIES NOT SUPPORTED BY THE WORLD SERVICE FUND

WESPATH BENEFITS AND INVESTMENTS

wespath.org

Provides pensions, benefits, and more for clergy and United Methodist Church employees.

THE UNITED METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE

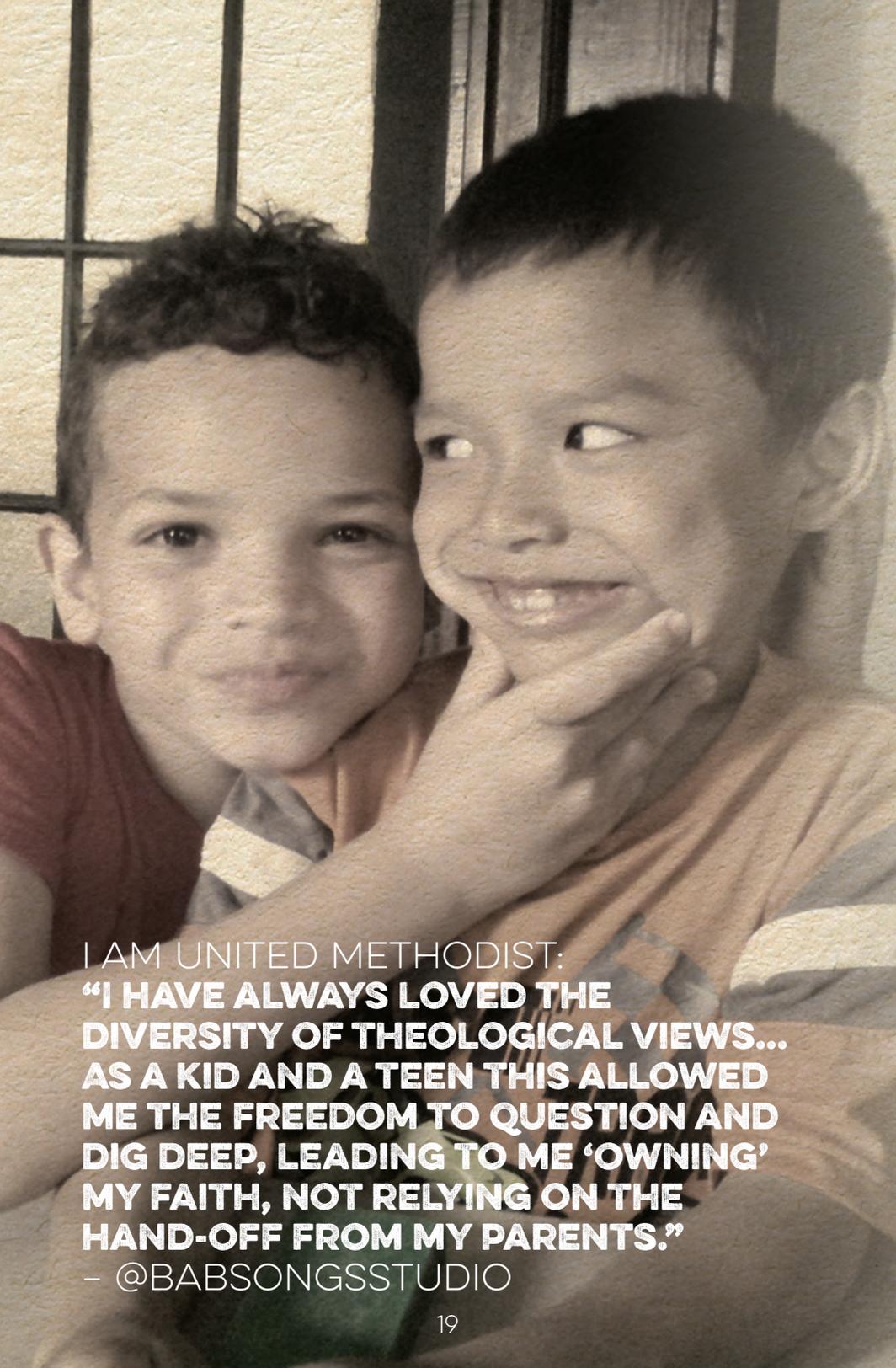
umph.org and Cokesbury.com

Publishes and distributes resources to support the work, ministry and mission of The United Methodist Church and extended Christian community.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN OR UMW

UnitedMethodistWomen.org

Advocates on behalf of women, children and youth around the world, fostering spiritual growth, developing leaders and advocating for justice. UMW raises millions of dollars each year for programs and projects related to women and children around the world.



I AM UNITED METHODIST:
**“I HAVE ALWAYS LOVED THE
DIVERSITY OF THEOLOGICAL VIEWS...
AS A KID AND A TEEN THIS ALLOWED
ME THE FREEDOM TO QUESTION AND
DIG DEEP, LEADING TO ME ‘OWNING’
MY FAITH, NOT RELYING ON THE
HAND-OFF FROM MY PARENTS.”**

- @BABSONGSSTUDIO

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION FUND

The General Administration Fund finances the general church administrative functions, like the General Conference. This fund supports The Connectional Table, The Judicial Council, pension and salary aid and two agencies—General Council on Finance and Administration and General Commission on Archives and History.

THE CONNECTIONAL TABLE

umc.org/ConnectionalTable

Coordinates the denomination's mission, ministries, and resources; discerns the church's vision; and establishes policies and procedures.

THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

umc.org/JudicialCouncil

Determines whether acts of official bodies of the church conform to *The Book of Discipline*, including decisions of law made by bishops.

GENERAL COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

gcah.org

Preserves materials of historical significance to The United Methodist Church and its antecedent bodies with special care to highlight the historic witness of women, racial and ethnic minority peoples and other constituencies not usually covered in historic documentation.

GENERAL COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

gcfa.org

Coordinates and administers our finances; safeguards our legal interests and rights; provides an insurance program and investment opportunities.

GLOSSARY OF UNITED METHODIST TERMS

Below are some useful definitions of terms used by The United Methodist Church. For more information, or if you come across a United Methodist term we didn't include, use our online glossary at UMC.org/Glossary.

APPORTIONMENT

A local church or annual conference's assigned portion of giving to support international, national and regional missions and ministries.

BISHOP

An elder elected to provide oversight to an annual conference, and as part of the Council of Bishops, to the denomination. Bishops appoint clergy to serve the congregations and ministries of their annual conference.

BOOK OF DISCIPLINE

Our book of law, doctrine, administration, and organizational work and procedures. *The Discipline* governs our practice as The United Methodist Church.

BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS

Official statements and positions of The United Methodist Church on a variety of topics. We do not expect all United Methodists to agree on every subject.

BOOK OF WORSHIP

Our book of the rituals, sacraments and orders of worship. United Methodist pastors use this resource to plan worship, baptisms, weddings, funerals, and more.

I AM UNITED METHODIST:

"I love that while we have everything we need to be church, we don't claim to have restored things to how they were supposed to be."

- @TANNERCARLSON2989

CHARGE OR CHURCH CONFERENCE

The annual – and sometimes specially called – meeting of a United Methodist congregation to elect officers, set pastors' salaries and to buy and sell property. A critical role of the charge conference is to evaluate local church ministries.

DEACON

A clergyperson ordained to ministries of word, service, justice, and compassion. Deacons help connect the ministries of the church and the needs of the community. A deacon's primary employment may be outside of a local congregation.

DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT (DS)

An elder appointed by a bishop to serve as the chief missional strategist for a district, including supervising the work of pastors, local congregations, and other ministries within the district.

ELDER

A clergyperson ordained to ministries of word, sacrament, order, and service. Elders preach and teach God's word, administer the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion, order the life of the church for mission and ministry, serve all people, and are a living witness to the work of Christ in the world.

ITINERANCY/ITINERACY

The system in The United Methodist Church by which pastors are appointed to congregations and extension ministries by the bishops.

LAITY

Those who are not clergy.

LOCAL PASTOR

A licensed pastor, authorized by the clergy session of the annual conference, to perform all the duties of an elder while assigned to a particular congregation.

QUADRENNIUM

The four-year period beginning January 1 following each General Conference. Our current quadrennium began January 1, 2017, and concludes December 31, 2020. The next quadrennium period will be January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2024.

I AM UNITED METHODIST BECAUSE

“The connection! The fact we are worldwide and have a long history! I’ve represented at AC several times and to be in one “room,” well a BIG room, nearly 1,000 people all the same faith, same denomination, all under one bishop! And that’s just one Conference—and that’s just two people from each church! Awesome!”

@SHARON BARTTER

“Acceptance, social justice, female pastors. The United Methodist church I attended in my youth was the most open-minded, welcoming, revolutionary, Christlike church I’ve ever been inside. I will always be a Methodist.”

@ANGELA GOMES

“They have open minds and open hearts. They value education. They practice Jesus’s teachings. I love the Methodist church.”

@JUDY JERGENS

“The theology of GRACE. The focus on a loving God as opposed to a vengeful, punishing God.”

@PKBONNER

“I feel like it’s the most ‘non’ judgmental church I’ve been a part of. I also love the message of kindness to others that is shared each week.”

- @RAINYLATTEHK

“I like not being constrained to old ways and that women are allowed to be pastors unlike other denominations who only let men serve. And the fellowship, food, fun.”

@JASONWT765

“The fact that its policies are not set in stone, and that there is an opportunity to evolve every four years. The fact that, despite a history of systemic racism, the denomination is still trying to live into being a global church. The hope that our differences might be considered blessings instead of political wedges.”

@GHEETASMITH

“I love that our denomination focuses so much on the GRACE of Jesus and how inclusive we are of anyone wanting to be part of a faith journey.”

@HAPPY_CAB