

Local Church Positions

“The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs.” (The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2004, par 120) Several units of organization in the local church are required by the Book of Discipline. Following are brief descriptions of several of those groups/positions.* Discipline paragraphs are referenced and **specific lay positions** are highlighted in blue:**

Charge Conference – Par 245-247. Connecting link between local church and general Church. Pastor is administrative officer. All members of the church council are considered members of Charge Conference. DS sets time for the meeting and presides over it (unless the DS has designated an elder to preside). Discipline states that purpose of the charge conference annual meeting is to review and evaluate the total mission and ministry of the church, receive reports, and adopt objectives and goals recommended by the church council. A joint charge conference for two or more charges may be held at the same time and place, as the DS may determine. The **charge conference recording secretary** is responsible for keeping minutes from the charge conference meetings (Both the DS and the secretary sign the minutes, a copy of which is kept on file in both the District and local church offices). The Discipline recommends that each church elect a **church historian**. (Charge conference also relates to candidates for Ordained Ministry, Lay Speakers, Certified Lay Ministers, candidates for Church-related vocations, Volunteers in Mission, pastor and staff compensation, apportionment amounts...)

Local Church Lay Leader – Par 251. Elected by Charge Conference. Responsible for: fostering awareness of the role of laity within and outside of the local church; meeting regularly with the pastor; sitting on charge conference, administrative council, committee on finance, committee on lay leadership (formerly nominations), and pastor-parish relations committee; along with pastor, interpreting actions and programs of the annual conference and 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.”); continuing involvement in study and training opportunities; assisting in advising church council; and informing the laity of training opportunities provided by the annual conference.

Church Council – Par 252. Meets at least quarterly. Charge Conference determines size of Church Council. Made up of [at least] **church council chair, lay leader, pastor-parish rep** or chair, **finance committee rep** or chair, **trustees rep** or chair, **church treasurer, lay member** to annual conference, **UMM president, UMW president, youth representative**, and pastor. Responsible for providing for planning and implementing program of nurture, outreach, witness, and resources in local church; administration of church organization; envisioning, planning, implementing and evaluating mission and ministry of the church; reviewing membership of church; filling interim vacancies among lay officers; establishing budget on recommendation of finance committee; recommending to charge conference salaries of pastor/s and staff; and reviewing recommendation of pastor-parish relations committee regarding parsonage/housing for pastor.

Pastor-Parish Relations Committee – Par 259.2. Meets at least quarterly, as well as at request of Bishop, DS, pastor, chair of committee, or any other person accountable to committee. Composed of **not fewer than 5, nor more than 9 lay persons**. One member *shall* be a **young adult** and one member may be a **youth**. In addition, the lay leader and lay member to annual conference *shall* be members. Membership (except for lay leader and lay member) divided into 3 rotating classes, each elected for a 3 year term. Pastor should be present at committee meetings, except when he/she voluntarily excuses him/herself. **The committee shall meet in closed session, and information shared in committee shall be confidential.** Responsibilities include interacting with pastor and staff in such a way that the pastor and staff are encouraged, supported, and effective in their ministry to the local congregation (specifics explained in Par 259.2g); at least yearly evaluation of pastor and staff; developing staff job descriptions in conjunction with pastor; consulting with pastor and staff regarding continuing education and spiritual renewal; enlisting, interviewing, evaluating, reviewing, and recommending annually to the charge conference lay preachers and persons for candidacy to the ordained ministry; advising district superintendent and bishop regarding change of pastoral leadership; recommending to church council professional and other staff positions necessary (specifics, Par 259g); recommending to charge conference establishment of personnel committee; educating and developing commitment to diversity in selection of staff; and consulting on matters relating to pulpit supply and pastoral needs.

Board of Trustees – Par 2524-2529. Not fewer than 3 and not more than 9 persons Recommended that at least 1/3 be **laywomen** and at least one-third be **laymen**, of legal age. At least 2/3 professing members of the UMC. Pastor not voting member unless is elected as a member of Board. Divided into 3 rotating classes, each elected for a 3 year term. Vacancies filled by election for unexpired

term. Chairperson, vice chair, secretary, and (opt) treasurer (See Par 2529.2). For information re: incorporation, please see Par 2529. Meetings at least annually. Majority of members constitutes quorum. Subject to direction of Charge Conference, Board shall have supervision, oversight, and care of all real property owned by local church (See Par 2532 for particulars). Permission shall be granted to use by outside organizations only when such use is consistent with the Social Principles (Par 160-166) and ecumenical objectives. Chairperson of Board of Trustees, Pastor-Parish Chair, and pastor shall make annual review of parsonage to ensure proper maintenance. Shall conduct, in cooperation with health and welfare ministries representative, annual accessibility audit. Info re: bequests, trusts, trust funds, and investments found in Par 2532.5.

Committee on Finance – Par 259.4. **Chairperson**, pastor, **lay member to annual conference, chair of church council, chair of pastor-parish, trustees representative, chair of stewardship, lay leader**, financial secretary, treasurer, church business administrator and others added as the charge conference may determine. Recommended that chair of committee on finance be a member of church council. The financial secretary, treasurer, and church business administrator shall be members without vote, if paid employees. Position of treasurer and financial secretary should not be combined and held by one person (nor should they be family members). If no stewardship ministry, stewardship shall be the responsibility of a subgroup or shall be assigned to a task group that shall report to the church council. All financial askings to be included in the annual budget shall be submitted to the committee on finance who will then submit it to church council for review and adoption. Finance Committee charged with responsibility for developing and implementing plans to raise sufficient income. Shall designate **at least 2 persons not of immediate family residing in same household to count weekly offering**, under supervision of financial secretary. Record of all funds received to be given to financial secretary. Funds deposited promptly in name of local church. Financial secretary shall keep records of contributions and payments. Provision for annual audits of financial records. Recommends to church council proper depositories, forwards contributions designated for specific causes and objects according to intent of donor, and prepares annual report to church council of all designated funds. After local church budget has been approved, all changes must be approved by church council.

Church Treasurer – Par 259.4b Makes all money disbursements. Monthly remission of funds for World Service, conference benevolence to conference treasurer. Shall make regular and detailed reports on funds received and expended to committee on finance and church council. Shall be adequately bonded.

Lay Leadership Committee – Par 259.1 Elected annually by charge conference. Composed of not more than 9 persons, in addition to pastor and **lay leader**. Chaired by pastor. **Vice-chair** is lay person elected by Committee from within. Responsible for identifying, developing, deploying, evaluating, and monitoring spiritual leadership of local church. Provides a means for identifying spiritual gifts and abilities of the membership. Serves throughout the year to guide church council on matters regarding lay leadership of congregation; guide development and training of spiritual leaders; recruit, nurture, and support spiritual leaders; and assist church council in assessing changing leadership needs. Annually recommends to Charge Conference names of people to serve as officers and leaders.

** A series of booklets available through Cokesbury (www.cokesbury.com) is available. Each of these booklets explains each individual position within the church, even those beyond Disciplinary requirements. They are available for less than \$3.00 each.*

***Please note that, in Par 247.7, it is recommended that “no officer serve more than three consecutive years in the same office.”*