

# Style and Reference Guide



**COMMUNICATIONS**  
United Methodist Communications

*Updated 2020*

# Style and Reference Guide



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**NOTE:** United Methodist News Service (UMNS) follows Associated Press style in its reporting unless noted otherwise in this book. Words or phrases that appear without accompanying text are listed as spelling guides.

Updated 2020

## A

### Abingdon Press

The publishing arm of the United Methodist Publishing House, based in Nashville, Tennessee.

### acknowledgment

Note spelling.

### acronyms and abbreviations

Keep them to a minimum. A good guideline is to avoid them unless the abbreviation is one that the reader would recognize, such as FBI. General United Methodist abbreviations that are widely recognized include UMW, UMCOR and UMCOR. Before using an abbreviation, spell out the name on first reference.

### administration

Always use a lowercase “a”: Trump administration, Clinton administration, governor’s administration, etc.

### The Advance

The Advance is a program of giving that originated with the 1948 General Conference and became a regular program of the Methodist Church in 1952. It has raised more than \$1 billion in its first 70 years. The Advance includes projects around the world that are approved to receive voluntary gifts for missions and relief. Money raised is disbursed by the General Board of Global Ministries. When doing a story about an Advance project, include information on how to make donations, if that’s appropriate. Uppercase “The” Advance.

### Advent wreath

### adviser

Not “advisor.”

### affiliated autonomous Methodist Church

A Methodist church outside the United States that has a covenant relationship with The United Methodist Church. In many cases, such as the Methodist Church of Puerto Rico, the church was established with the help of The United Methodist Church. Others were established by the British Methodist Church.

### Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender and Queer Concerns

Affirmation is an unofficial United Methodist caucus. Originally known as the United Methodist Gay Caucus or Gay United Methodists, it changed its name in 1977. [UMaffirm.org](http://UMaffirm.org)

### Africa Central Conference

One of seven central conferences in The United Methodist Church. Today, the continent of Africa includes three central conferences:

- ▶ **Africa:** Contains five episcopal areas, 12 annual conferences and ministry in 12 countries;
- ▶ **Congo:** Contains four episcopal areas, 14 annual conferences and ministry in nine countries;
- ▶ **West Africa:** Contains four episcopal areas, seven annual conferences and ministry in six countries.

### Africa University

Africa University is the first private university in Zimbabwe and the only one related to The United Methodist Church on the continent. It admitted its first group of students in March 1992. The school began with undergraduate degrees in agriculture and theology and has since expanded its offerings to include such disciplines as education, management and administration, humanities and social sciences, and medicine. At its 25th anniversary in 2017, the university claimed more than 7,000 graduates from 32 African countries. Datelines for stories written at the school should read: MUTARE, Zimbabwe – not Old Mutare, which is the name of the old city and site of the Mutare mission. [AfricaU.edu](http://AfricaU.edu)

### African American

No hyphen as a noun or adjective (an AP style change in 2019).

### African Methodist Episcopal Church

Organized in 1816, the AME Church was formed by African Americans who had experienced racism in the predominantly white Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1787, a group of blacks walked out of St. George’s Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia after experiencing racial discrimination. The AME Church is one of three historically African American Methodist denominations. [AME-church.com](http://AME-church.com)

### African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

The AME Zion Church was organized in 1796 by African Americans protesting discrimination at the John Street Methodist Church in New York City. Their first church, Zion, was built in 1800 and the word later became part of the denomination’s name. One of three historically African American Methodist denominations. [AMEZ.org](http://AMEZ.org)

**ages**

Always use figures, even for ages below 10.

**Albright, Jacob (1759-1808)**

A well-known preacher, Albright decided in 1800 to organize his followers along the lines of Methodist study classes. He founded what later became known as the Evangelical Association, and was elected bishop at its first annual conference in 1807. The Evangelical Association is a precursor to The United Methodist Church.

**Aldersgate experience**

Refers to the spiritual turning point in the life of Methodism’s founder, John Wesley. An Anglican cleric, Wesley had felt in the early part of his ministry that something was missing in his spiritual life. Then, at a Moravian Bible study meeting on May 24, 1738, Wesley felt his heart “strangely warmed” with the certainty that Christ had died for him personally. This experience, named for the street where it occurred, invigorated Wesley’s ministry and the Methodist movement. Wesley remained an Anglican cleric for the rest of his life.

**Aldersgate Renewal Ministries**

Originally known as United Methodist Renewal Services Fellowship. The Goodlettsville, Tennessee-based group is autonomous. It sponsors the annual Aldersgate Conference, an event characterized by exuberant worship and charismatic expressions. [AldersgateRenewal.org](http://AldersgateRenewal.org)

**Allen, Richard (1760-1831)**

A popular African American preacher and former slave, Allen helped organize the African Methodist Episcopal Church and was its first bishop. Allen had been attending the predominantly white St. George’s Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, but left in 1787 in protest of the church’s racial discrimination. His writings included a book of discipline and three hymnals.

**annual conference**

A regional unit of The United Methodist Church and also the designation of a meeting held each year by that unit. Lay and clergy members from local churches come together to establish programs, approve budgets and speak on social issues. Clergy appointments are normally announced during the conference. Use uppercase letters only when the full title of the conference is given: Oklahoma Annual Conference.

**apportionments**

The contributions requested of each U.S. annual conference for the support of denominationwide ministries and administration. The apportionments are determined by General Conference and managed by the General Council on Finance and Administration. Each annual conference sets apportionments for its churches. This amount also includes support for conference projects and programs. The seven general funds of The United Methodist Church are The World Service Fund, The Africa University Fund, The Black College Fund, The Episcopal Fund, The General Administration Fund, The Interdenominational Cooperation Fund and The Ministerial Education Fund. At the 2016 General Conference, delegates approved a formula for central conferences to contribute to two of the seven general church funds: The Episcopal Fund and The General Administration Fund.

**area**

Capitalize when “area” is part of a proper noun: Manila Area, Houston Area.

**Asbury, Francis (1745-1816)**

Dispatched by John Wesley to America, Asbury became the central figure in early American Methodism. He went to Philadelphia in 1771. At the Christmas Conference in Baltimore in 1784, Thomas Coke ordained him superintendent, a title that was later changed to bishop. Coke himself had been named a superintendent by John Wesley and had gone to America with instructions to ordain Asbury. Coke and Asbury served as joint superintendents of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. Asbury led the church’s early growth, while Coke divided his time between England and America.

**Asian American**

No hyphen as a noun or adjective (an AP style change in 2019).

**Asian American Language Ministry Plan**

One of the six ethnic initiatives of The United Methodist Church, the Asian American Language Ministry Plan serves as a resource for developing new ministries and strengthening existing ones in the Asian American community. The plan provides funding, technical assistance and consultation needed to reach out to the Asian American population in the United States.

**Ask The UMC (formerly InfoServ)**

The information service of The United Methodist Church, Ask The UMC is a ministry of United Methodist Communications. [UMC.org/AskTheUMC](http://UMC.org/AskTheUMC)

**at this time, at that time**

Try “now” and “then.” Often, “now” is not even necessary.

**B**

**Bible, biblical**

Do not abbreviate the names of the books of the Bible when citing scriptural passages. The word “biblical” is always lowercase. The word “bible” is also lowercase when used to describe a book other than the Bible. The United Methodist Publishing House suggests two versions of the Bible for English-speaking United Methodist audiences: The Common English Bible and the New Revised Standard Version. These are the preferred versions for United Methodist Communications content.

**bishop**

The top clergy position in the church. A bishop — elected for life and assigned every four years in the U.S. and for various lengths of time in other parts of the world — serves as a general superintendent of the entire denomination but supervises an area of one or more annual conferences. Each jurisdiction and central conference has a college of bishops, and all of the leaders collectively form the Council of Bishops. Avoid referring to someone as a “retired bishop” unless the retirement status is relevant. After the first reference, use the last name only. Lowercase bishop unless used in front of a person’s name. A list of all of the bishops and the year they were elected is in the front of the Book of Discipline.

**bishops’ appeal**

From time to time, the Council of Bishops launches an appeal for a special need. Use capital letters when writing the full name, but lowercase letters otherwise.

**bishops’ initiatives**

The Council of Bishops uses initiatives to focus the denomination’s energy and attention on specific concerns. Use capital letters when writing the full name.

**Black College Fund**

General Conference approved the creation of this apportionment in 1972 to support the denomination’s historically black colleges and universities. It is administered through the United Methodist General Board of Higher Education and Ministry in Nashville, Tennessee. The church’s 11 historically black schools are Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina; Bethune-Cookman College, Daytona Beach, Florida; Claflin University, Orangeburg, South Carolina; Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta; Dillard University, New Orleans; Huston-Tillotson College, Austin, Texas; Meharry Medical College, Nashville,

Tennessee; Paine College, Augusta, Georgia; Philander Smith College, Little Rock, Arkansas; Rust College, Holly Springs, Mississippi; Wiley College, Marshall, Texas. [gbhem.org/education/bcf](http://gbhem.org/education/bcf)

**Black Methodists for Church Renewal**

Founded in 1968, the organization is a forum for black Methodists to define issues and develop strategies for change within The United Methodist Church. Its goals are to empower black Methodists for effective witness and service; to involve them in the struggle for economic justice; and to expose racism at all levels of the church, its agencies and related institutions. BMCR is acceptable on second reference. [bmcrUMC.org](http://bmcrUMC.org)

**Book of Discipline, the**

The book of rules and bylaws that guide The United Methodist Church. Only General Conference can change the Book of Discipline, and the book is revised every four years after each gathering of the conference. The Book of Discipline also includes the church’s constitution, Articles of Religion and Social Principles. Capitalize the Book of Discipline, but do not underline or use quotations.

**Book of Resolutions, the**

Published after each General Conference, the book includes all of The United Methodist Church’s resolutions that are currently valid. The resolutions address a wide range of social issues and concerns. The 2000 General Conference approved a rule stating: “Resolutions are official expressions of The United Methodist Church for eight years following their adoption, after which time they shall be deemed to have expired unless readopted.” Capitalize the Book of Resolutions, but do not underline or use quotations.

**Boy Scouts, Scouts**

Capitalize Scoutmaster as a title before names.

## C

**case**

UMNS style is to use uppercase letters when 1. spelling out the official name of an organization; 2. in second references to churchwide organizations, even when the name is shortened; 3. with titles only when they appear before someone's name. UMNS uses lowercase letters in most other cases, including second references to conference-level boards and agencies.

**Central and Southern Europe Central Conference**

One of seven central conferences in The United Methodist Church. Currently, Europe has three central conferences:

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

**central conference**

A central conference is a geographic unit of The United Methodist Church outside the United States, comparable to a U.S. jurisdictional conference. It consists of several annual conferences and possibly provisional annual conferences. The church has seven central conferences comprising annual and provisional annual conferences, just as it has five U.S. jurisdictional conferences with annual conferences. The seven are the Africa, Congo, West Africa, Philippines, Central and Southern Europe, Germany and Northern Europe and Eurasia central conferences. The term “central conference” also refers to the meeting that these units hold every four years. Delegates act on such matters as determining the boundaries of annual conferences, electing bishops, establishing boards to elect administrative officers, adapting General Conference decisions to their own circumstances and so on. Lowercase unless officially naming an individual central conference, for example, West Africa Central Conference.

**Central Jurisdiction**

Between 1939 and 1968, the Methodist Church included this racially segregated, non-geographical jurisdiction for African American churches in the denomination. The jurisdiction was created as a compromise on the issue of race when the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church merged in 1939 to create the Methodist Church. When The United Methodist Church was created in 1968 with the union of the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren denominations, the Central Jurisdiction was eliminated. The jurisdiction's churches, clergy and bishops were assigned to the five geographic jurisdictions.

**chairman, chairwoman, chairperson**

The preferred style is to refer to someone by their gender unless the organization's official title is “chairperson.” Avoid calling someone a “chair.” Also do not use the word “chair” as a verb.

**Christians Engaged in Faith Formation**

A United Methodist organization that provides resources and support for Christian educators. Formerly known as the Christian Educators Fellowship. It is based in Nashville, Tennessee. [cefUMC.org](http://cefUMC.org)

**Christian Methodist Episcopal Church**

The CME Church was formed in Jackson, Tennessee, in 1870 as the result of an agreement between African American and white members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. It is one of three historically African American Methodist denominations. [TheCMEChurch.org](http://TheCMEChurch.org)

**Christmas Conference**

The Methodist Episcopal Church was created at this event, held in Baltimore during the 1784 Christmas season. That move by the American Methodist preachers, acting under the direction of John Wesley, marked the beginning of a distinct American Methodist church, led by bishops. Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury became the church's joint superintendents, later bishops, at this conference. Coke, already ordained a superintendent by Wesley, laid hands on Asbury. Philip Otterbein, a close friend of Asbury's, also participated in the ceremony.

**Christmas tree****churchmen, churchwomen**

One word in each case.

**Church of the United Brethren in Christ**

The United Brethren in Christ was one of the first churches to originate in the United States. It was founded in 1800 near Frederick, Maryland. The United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Association merged in 1946 to form the Evangelical United Brethren Church. In 1968, that denomination merged with the Methodist Church to create The United Methodist Church.

**church trial/clergy trial**

A trial in The United Methodist Church occurs when a complaint is filed against an individual, and specific committees have reviewed the charges and recommended a trial.

Most complaints against clergy are resolved in the supervisory process, making a trial unnecessary. According to the church's Book of Discipline, “Church trials are to be regarded as an expedient of last resort.” The Book of Discipline contains the bylaws of The United Methodist Church.

The trial is carried out by the accused clergy member's annual conference. The bishop appoints a presiding officer, who is usually chosen from among the denomination's retired bishops. A jury, known in the church as a trial court, consists of 13 clergy members from the conference. Nine votes are necessary to convict. A conviction could result in penalties ranging from the withdrawal of ministerial credentials to a lesser penalty.

According to the church's Book of Discipline, a trial is closed unless the respondent (defendant) requests in writing that it be open. For more information, see the Book of Discipline.

**Churches Uniting in Christ**

Founded in 1962 by four mainline Protestant churches, the organization formerly known as the Consultation on Church Union gradually grew to include several member communions, including The United Methodist Church, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), United Church of Christ, Presbyterian Church (USA), Episcopal Church, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Moravian Church Northern Province and the International Council of Community Churches. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is a partner in dialogue and mission. The group's name changed to Churches Uniting in Christ in 2002. At a meeting that year in Memphis, Tennessee, the members formally agreed to maintain their own identities and structures but to engage in tangible acts of cooperation.

**CIEMAL**

The Council of Evangelical Methodist Churches in Latin America is a coalition of Wesleyan churches in Central and South America. Its Spanish name is Concilio Iglesias Evangelicas Metodistas de America Latina. Use the full English name on first reference and CIEMAL on second reference.

**clergy, clergyman, clergywoman, clergyperson**

The preferred terms for ordained individuals. “Clergy” is a collective term for a group of people ordained for religious service. See also minister, pastor entry.

**Coalition for United Methodist Accountability**

CUMA, formed in February 2000, describes itself as a group of “laity and clergy who have come together to seek doctrinal, fiscal and procedural accountability in the life of The United Methodist Church.” This could entail taking legal action in church and secular courts to enforce the denomination's Book of Discipline. The member organizations are Good News, the Institute on Religion and Democracy and the Confessing Movement. The last time it was active was in 2010.

**Coke, Thomas (1747-1814)**

A key figure in British and American Methodism, Coke was the first bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and that is reflected in the list of bishops in the Book of Discipline. He was a close friend and assistant to John Wesley, who named him a superintendent in 1784 and sent him to America with instructions to ordain Francis Asbury superintendent also. That title was later changed to bishop.

**Cokesbury**

Based in Nashville, Tennessee, Cokesbury is the online retail store and distribution unit of The United Methodist Publishing House. It also is the name given to a book imprint, online music resource and other Publishing House products and services. In 2012, the United Methodist Publishing House made the decision to close its Cokesbury brick-and-mortar stores — including 19 seminary stores. Cokesbury was named after the first two bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury.

**Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation and Union**

The 36-member commission involves three historically black denominations — African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion and Christian Methodist Episcopal — and the predominantly white United Methodist Church. Together, the four denominations have more than 12 million members. Black Methodists created their own denominations because of racism that existed in the main Methodist bodies of their day. All share a common heritage in the Methodist movement, launched in the 18th century by Church of England clergymen John and Charles Wesley, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, founded in America in 1784. Since 1985, a commission has been working on ways the four denominations can cooperate in such areas as higher education and curriculum development. Another commission looking at possible union for the four denominations was created in 1996. The two groups were combined in 2000 by action of the top legislative bodies of the four churches.

**committee**

UMNS style is to lowercase the names of committees unless they are churchwide organizations, such as the United Methodist Committee on Relief, or in cases where the full official name of the committee is being given. For example: the First United Methodist Church Finance Committee, First Church's finance committee. For other usages, see the AP Stylebook.

**Communities of Shalom**

See Shalom zones.

**comprise**

“Comprise” means to consist of or contain. It is not a synonym for “compose.” The American Heritage Dictionary notes in its definition that the whole comprises the parts, and the parts compose the whole. Correct: The Judicial Council comprises nine members. The jury in the church trial of the Rev. Jimmy Creech comprised 13 clergy members. The jury, comprising 13 clergy members, entered the courtroom under police protection. Incorrect: The Judicial Council is comprised of nine members. The jury in the church trial of the Rev. Jimmy Creech was comprised of 13 clergy members. The jury, which was comprised of 13 clergy members, entered the courtroom under police protection. Avoid writing “was comprised of.”

**conference**

Capitalize this word when it appears in a full name. For example, Missouri Annual Conference, General Conference, Western Jurisdictional Conference. UMNS also capitalizes the word when it appears in second references to an annual conference but without the word “annual”: Missouri Conference. However, use lowercase letters in references to multiple conferences: the Missouri, Oklahoma and Tennessee conferences. Also use lowercase letters in most other situations: conference board of ordained ministry, jurisdictional conference.

**Confessing Movement within The United Methodist Church**

An unofficial advocacy organization of United Methodist individuals and congregations launched in April 1994. Its members “pledge confident allegiance to Jesus Christ” and “stand for the apostolic faith” within the denomination, according to its website. It is based in Indianapolis.

[ConfessingUMC.org](http://ConfessingUMC.org)

**Congo Central Conference**

One of seven central conferences in The United Methodist Church, it contains four episcopal areas, 14 annual conferences and ministry in nine countries.

**connection, connectional**

Term and concept began with Methodism's founder John Wesley in England. Today, “the connection” refers to the entire organization of The United Methodist Church. Local churches and annual conferences are in a covenant or connected relationship with one another. Local churches are not independent entities. Lowercase “connectional giving” unless referring to a specific ministry of the church, such as the Connectional Giving Team at UCom.

**Connectional Table, the**

Created at the 2004 General Conference, the Connectional Table was formed to serve as both the visioning body of the church and the steward of resources to carry out the vision of the denomination worldwide. Jurisdictional and central conferences elect members to serve on the Connectional Table. The Council of Bishops both leads and collaborates with the Connectional Table. The agencies of the church also have representation in the CT, participating with voice (general secretaries) and vote (agency presidents). Representation from each of the ethnic caucuses and from The Division on Ministries with Young People make sure their unique interests and perspectives are heard and inform the work.

[UMC.org/topics/the-connectional-table](http://UMC.org/topics/the-connectional-table)

**conservative**

See labels.

**Council of Bishops**

The collective body of The United Methodist Church's top clergy leaders, made up of all active and retired bishops of The United Methodist Church. The president of the council is elected by the other bishops and serves a two-year term. See also bishop.

**D****datelines**

UMNS follows Associated Press style on datelines. For a list of cities that stand alone in the dateline, consult the AP Stylebook. In the UMNS Daily and Weekly digests, each digest item carries a dateline. There is no need to say “here” in the lead of a story or brief that has a dateline.

**deacon**

In The United Methodist Church, a deacon is an ordained clergy [See note below in “defrocked.”] who, through word, service, compassion and justice, leads the church in ministry to the greater community. In this capacity, he or she leads the church in relating the gathered community to their ministries in the world, thus connecting the church's worship with its service in the world. A deacon has the authority to teach and proclaim God's Word, to lead in worship, to assist elders in the administration of the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, to perform the marriage ceremony where the laws of the state permit and to bury the dead.

**defrocked**

A short way of saying that an ordained or licensed clergy member has lost his or her credentials and is no longer a clergy member. When referring to United Methodist clergy members, UMNS style is to say that one's credentials have been removed, but use of the word “defrocked” is acceptable.

**diaconal minister**

Literally, a “servant minister,” this category of lay ministry was discontinued by the 1996 General Conference and no new candidates were accepted. People in process or already consecrated as diaconal ministers were allowed to continue with that title.

**Discipline, discipline, disciplinary**

Discipline is a shortened way of referring to the Book of Discipline, but spell out the entire title whenever possible. Use “discipline” and “disciplinary” with lowercase first letters.

**Diseases**

Do not capitalize malaria, cholera, typhoid fever, pneumonia, etc. Per Associated Press style, when a disease is known by the name of a person or geographical area identified with it, capitalize only the proper noun element: Ebola virus (named for a river in the Democratic Republic of Congo in Africa where one of the first outbreaks of the disease occurred in 1976), Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, etc.

**district**

A geographical unit within an annual conference. Capitalize when referring to a particular district: Nashville District.

**district superintendent**

The clergy person who oversees the ministries in a geographic district of an annual conference. The district superintendent is a member of the bishop's cabinet. Avoid using the abbreviation “DS” except in quoted material.

**divisions**

UMNS style is to capitalize the names of divisions, such as the Division of Higher Education. This also applies to units such as Young People's Ministries, a part of Discipleship Ministries.

**doctor**

Use the “Dr.” title only if someone is a medical doctor. An exception can be made when dealing with the title in a direct quote. Don't use “the Rev. Dr.” even if someone is ordained and a medical doctor.

## E

**email**

Use lowercase letters, no hyphen. Use a hyphen with other e- terms: e-book, e-reader, e-newsletter.

**episcopacy, episcopal, episcopate**

In The United Methodist Church, these terms refer to the office of bishop, who is sometimes described as an episcopal leader. Keep these usages to a minimum. Particularly with stories that are written for a non-United Methodist audience, terms like “episcopal leader” can be confusing.

**ethnicity and racial background**

UMNS makes note of an individual’s ethnic or racial background only when the information is relevant to a story. For example, that information is included in stories about candidates for bishop, along with a sentence explaining its importance: The United Methodist Book of Discipline (Para.407.2a) states that jurisdictions “shall give due consideration to the inclusiveness of The United Methodist Church with respect to sex, race and national origin.”

**Evangelical United Brethren Church**

The denomination merged with the Methodist Church in 1968 to create The United Methodist Church. The EUB Church was formed in 1946 with the merger of the Evangelical Association and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

**executive session**

Occasionally, the board of directors of a general agency will go into executive session during one of its regular meetings. Technically, at least three-fourths of the board members must vote to close the meeting. Executive sessions are closed to all but the voting members and the top staff executive. UMNS acquiesces only in cases where the executive session deals with subjects spelled out in Paragraph 722 of the [2016 Book of Discipline](#) as being grounds for closed meetings. An annual conference holds an executive session at the beginning of its yearly gathering to consider whether clergy members are in good standing. See entry on open meetings.

**expletives**

Avoid using expletives. In situations where the use of an expletive is necessary in quoted material, write the first letter of the word and then use dashes for each letter afterward.

**Exploration**

Capitalize only the first letter, not the entire word, when referring to this event, sponsored by the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

## F

**Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts, The**

The organization consists of volunteers and professional staff who have responsibility for worship across the church. The members meet every two years. The Fellowship is affiliated with Discipleship Ministries but has offices at the United Methodist Publishing House. The organization publishes a journal, *WorshipArts*, six times a year. Use *The Fellowship* on second reference. Based in Nashville, Tennessee.

[UMfellowship.org](http://UMfellowship.org)

**Foundation for Evangelism, The**

Organized in 1949, the foundation is a not-for-profit organization affiliated with Discipleship Ministries. The late Harry Denman, a layman and one of Methodism’s best-known evangelists, conceived the idea of starting the foundation as a way of supporting evangelism and keeping it visible in the general church. It solicits gifts through the denomination but receives no money from the general church. Its headquarters are in Lake Junaluska, North Carolina.

[FoundationForEvangelism.org](http://FoundationForEvangelism.org)

**full communion**

Full communion means mutual recognition around word, sacrament and order in each other’s churches. Specifically, we agree “the word is rightly preached, the sacraments are duly administered, and the governance of the church is rightly ordered,” the latter meaning we can recognize the validity of the ordinations of the other church enough to allow some degree of interchangeability in ministry.

**fundraising, fundraiser**

One word in all cases.

## G

**Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary**

When referring to the United Methodist-related seminary in a headline, avoid using “Garrett,” but instead use the hyphenated “Garrett-Evangelical” or a synonym. The hyphenated name reflects the merger of the Garrett and Evangelical seminaries in Northern Illinois.

**general agency**

The United Methodist Church has 13 agencies that carry out the denomination’s programs and ministries and provide administrative services. For a full list, see Appendix B. UMNS style in referring to these agencies is to drop the word “general” from their titles except in the case of the United Methodist General Council on Finance and Administration. As a result, the General Board of Global Ministries is referred to as United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, etc.

**General Conference**

The top lawmaking body of the church, General Conference meets every four years or for special called sessions on specific topics or questions. Up to 1,000 delegates from around the world gather to discuss new legislation that will result in revisions of the Book of Discipline and the Book of Resolutions, adopt a general church budget for the next four years and provide for its collection, and possibly create or eliminate churchwide programs and agencies. The General Conference’s site has rotated among the five U.S. geographical jurisdictions. The Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren held a Uniting Conference in Dallas in 1968, which was followed by a special session in St. Louis in 1970. Other General Conference meeting sites have been: Atlanta (1972); Portland, Oregon (1976); Indianapolis (1980); Baltimore (1984); St. Louis (1988); Louisville, Kentucky (1992); Denver (1996); Cleveland (2000); Pittsburgh (2004); Fort Worth, Texas (2008); Tampa, Florida (2012); and Portland, Oregon (2016). The 2020 General Conference will be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota. A special General Conference was held in February 2019 in St. Louis to deal with the denomination’s decades-long divisions over homosexuality.

**general secretary**

The top staff executive at one of The United Methodist Church's general boards or commissions. Because the term "general secretary" can be confusing to non-United Methodists, always use "top staff executive," "chief executive" or a synonymous term instead.

**Germany Central Conference**

One of seven central conferences in The United Methodist Church. Contains one episcopal area, three annual conferences, and ministry in one country.

**Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Scouts**

Capitalize.

**good news**

Use lowercase letters unless referring to the organization or the video-production company by that name.

**Good News**

An unofficial advocacy group within the church, Good News publishes a magazine by the same name. It is based in The Woodlands, Texas. The group, which identifies as traditionalist and evangelical, advocates, among other things, for maintaining the denomination's current church teachings and laws against the practice of homosexuality. The magazine and organization were started in 1967. [GoodNewsMag.org](http://GoodNewsMag.org)

**Gospel**

Follow Associated Press style. Capitalize when referring to the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, collectively or together, as well as references to the Gospel of Christ. General uses (gospel singer, "her word was gospel," etc.) should be lowercase.

**grass roots**

Two words, no hyphen, unless used as a modifier. For example: grass-roots organization.

**Great Commission**

Capitalize.

**Gulfside Assembly**

The United Methodist conference and retreat center in Waveland, Mississippi, was founded as the African American counterpart to the segregated Methodist Church's meeting facilities. Robert E. Jones, the first black bishop of The Methodist Church, started Gulfside. When it opened in 1923, it was the only resort specifically for black Methodists in the gulf region. The center has been designated as a historical site and landmark by both The United Methodist Church and the state of Mississippi. Today, the Mississippi Conference owns the center, which is open to people of all religions, races and creeds. [sejumc.org/GulfsideAssembly](http://sejumc.org/GulfsideAssembly)

**H****headlines**

UMNS follows standard newspaper copydesk style in writing headlines. Only the first word and proper nouns are capitalized. Exception: First word after colon is always uppercase in headlines. Use numerals for all numbers except in casual uses: "hundreds" instead of "100s." Use single quotes for quotation marks. The headline should have a subject and a verb. Avoid a construction that has an implied "is" or "are." Avoid conjunctions, such as "and." Headline should not parrot the lead. It should convey the news value of the story in some way. In other words, avoid humdrum headlines that would cause the reader to think, "No kidding" (i.e., "Board of Pension tackles benefits issues"; "UMCOR gathers supplies for relief effort," etc.). Present tense in headlines means the action has already happened. Try to keep headlines to 45 characters or less, including spaces.

**heaven, hell**

Use lowercase letters.

**Hispanic surnames**

Hispanic surnames consist of two words: the father's family name followed by the mother's. Following the custom in Hispanic cultures, UMNS style is to use the first word in the surname. For example, Bishop Juan Vera Mendez is referred to as Vera on second reference. Some people combine their last names with a hyphen.

**Hispanic terms**

The word "Hispanic" is acceptable in all references to ethnic Spanish-speaking people of the Americas. Avoid writing "Hispanic American," which is redundant. The words "Latino" (male) and "Latina" (female) include Spanish, Portuguese and French speakers. Latino includes people from Brazil, Haiti and French minor Antilles from the Caribbean. The use of the term Hispanic/Latino in The United Methodist Church (and other contexts), even when it is linguistically redundant, is to honor those who do not feel included in the concept of Latin — basically those who have Spanish heritage and do not come from Latin America. This would include, for example, Spanish families and descendants that lived in border states before the United States took the territory (California, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Oklahoma and Kansas) from Mexico between 1836 and 1853.

**holy boldness**

Do not capitalize unless referring to a program by that name.

**Holy Communion**

Along with baptism, Holy Communion is one of only two rituals regarded as sacraments in The United Methodist Church. Capitalize the full term, per Associated Press style.

**Holy Eucharist**

Use capital letters for this term for Holy Communion.

**Holy Family**

Capitalize this collective reference to Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

**Holy Spirit**

Use capital letters.

**homosexuality**

Note that in The United Methodist Church, the word "practicing" has significance when referring to homosexuals. The church condemns the practice of homosexuality, not the homosexual individual. Do not use a comma in the phrase "self-avowed practicing homosexual." The church's official viewpoint is that a comma changes the meaning of the phrase. Be aware that some gays and lesbians regard the word "homosexual" as a negative term and dislike being described that way. See LGBTQ entry.

**I****individual**

Use "individual" when necessary for clarity in a sentence. Otherwise, it is a bureaucratic-sounding word that is best avoided. This goes double for the plural "individuals."

**InfoServ**

see Ask The UMC.

**Interpreter**

A magazine for active United Methodists produced by United Methodist Communications and sent six times a year to about 150,000 local church officers. The magazine ceased publication in December 2017.

**it vs. they, its vs. theirs, its vs. it's**

Use "they" only when referring to a group of people. A church, an organization, etc. is an "it." The possessives follow suit. The possessive of "it" is "its," not "it's." Use "it's" only as a contraction for "it is." "They" also can be the requested pronoun for someone who identifies as neither male nor female.

**itinerancy**

Use "itinerancy" instead of "itineracy" unless in the latter is used in a quote. "Itinerant" is an adjective that refers to The United Methodist Church's system of appointing elders to places of ministry. It also can be used to describe a clergy member who works in that system. Clergy members are appointed each year by their bishops. Most clergy itinerate, or move, from one appointment to another every few years.

# J

## Jesus

Following Associated Press style, do not capitalize personal pronouns. Words related to Jesus that are capitalized: Christ, Messiah, Son of God, Lord.

## job titles

Avoid using bureaucratic titles any more than absolutely necessary. For instance, write “an executive for the churchwide Board of Church and Society” rather than “associate general secretary of the General Board of Church and Society.”

## judgment

Note spelling.

## Judicial Council

The top court of The United Methodist Church consists of nine members. It determines the constitutionality of acts or proposed acts of the General, jurisdictional, central and annual conferences. It acts on these either on appeal of lower rulings or through requests for declaratory decisions. It also rules on whether acts of other official bodies of the denomination conform to the Book of Discipline. Its decisions since 1940, along with its rules of procedure, can be found at [UMC.org/who-we-are/judicial-council](http://UMC.org/who-we-are/judicial-council).

## jurisdictions

The United Methodist Church has five U.S. jurisdictions: Northeastern, Southeastern, South Central, North Central and Western. The word “jurisdiction” is always lowercase unless the full name of the jurisdiction is used. Each jurisdiction holds a conference every four years during the summer. The primary business is the election and assignment of bishops. Central conferences are the equivalent outside the U.S., but unlike jurisdictions, the central conferences can adapt parts of the Book of Discipline.

## JUSTPEACE Center for Mediation and Conflict Transformation

The center was created in 1999 by the General Council on Finance and Administration to help United Methodists address conflict in the church and the world constructively and in a way that emphasizes justice, reconciliation, preservation of resources and restoration of community. Offices are in Washington. [justpeaceumc.org](http://justpeaceumc.org)

# K

## Kelly, Leontine T.C.

In 1984, Kelly became the first African American woman to be elected a bishop in any major religious denomination. She served in The United Methodist Church’s San Francisco Area for four years until retiring in 1988. She died in 2012.

## Korean American

Do not hyphenate as a modifier or a noun.

## Korean Ministry Plan

One of the six ethnic initiatives of The United Methodist Church, the Korean Ministry Plan strengthens Korean ministries inside and outside the church through congregational development, leadership formation, next generation ministries and resource development.

# L

## labels

UMNS makes an effort to describe what people actually stand for or are doing, rather than using labels such as “conservative” or “progressive.” So, it is better to describe someone as “favoring the denomination’s current ban on gay clergy and same-sex marriage” rather than using the label conservative, or that someone “favors ordaining LGBTQ clergy and officiating at same-sex marriage services” rather than using the label progressive.

## Lake Junaluska, North Carolina

Lake Junaluska is a conference and retreat center that also houses the headquarters of the World Methodist Council and the Southeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church. [LakeJunaluska.com](http://LakeJunaluska.com)

## Layman, laymen, laywoman, laywomen, layperson

One word in each case.

## legislative titles

When naming a senator or congressional representative in a story, give his or her party affiliation and area represented. For example: U.S. Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark.; U.S. Rep. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass. Make note of legislators who are United Methodists. Otherwise, follow Associated Press style.

## LGBTQ

Acceptable in all references for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning and/or queer. In quotations and the formal names of organizations and events, other forms such as LGBTQIA and other variations are also acceptable, with the other letters explained. I generally stands for intersex, and A can stand for asexual (a person who doesn’t experience sexual attraction), ally (a person who is not LGBTQ but who actively supports the LGBTQ community) or both. Queer is acceptable for people and organizations that use the term to identify themselves.

## liberal

See labels.

## Lord’s Supper, the

Use capital letters for this term describing Holy Communion.

## Love Prevails

The unofficial advocacy group within the church seeks the full inclusion of LGBTQ individuals in all aspects of church life. Its methods include disclosure, divestment and disruption. [LovePrevailsUMC.com](http://LovePrevailsUMC.com)

# M

## MARCHA

An official church caucus, founded in 1971, representing the interests and concerns of Latino United Methodists. Its full name is Metodistas Asociados Representando La Causa de los Hispano Americanos or Methodists Associated Representing the Cause of Hispanic Americans. [Marchaumc.org](http://Marchaumc.org)

## Matthews, Marjorie

In 1980, Matthews became the first woman elected as a bishop in The United Methodist Church. She was 64 and served one term, leading the Wisconsin Area for four years before retiring in 1984. She died in 1986.

## Methodist Federation for Social Action

Detroit-based MFSA is an unofficial United Methodist organization that aims to “mobilize clergy and laity within The United Methodist Church to take action on issues of peace, poverty and people’s rights within the church, the nation and the world.” It was started in 1907 as the Methodist Federation for Social Service and later changed its name. [mfsaweb.org](http://mfsaweb.org)

## millennium, millennial

Note spellings.

## minister, pastor

“Clergy” is the preferred term for all ordained individuals. All baptized Christians are considered ministers. “Pastor” refers to an ordained clergy member appointed to a local church.

## missional

This is church jargon. Use “mission” or a related word if possible. “Missional” is fine for direct quotes.

## more than, over

Acceptable in all uses to indicate greater numerical value. Salaries went up more than \$20 a week. Salaries went up over \$20 a week.



# N

## 9/11

This reference to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on America is acceptable for headlines and quoted material in stories.

## National Association of Filipino American United Methodists

An official United Methodist organization that advocates for the concerns of Filipino American church members.

[Nafaum.org](http://Nafaum.org)

## National Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities of The United Methodist Church

An association of chief executives of United Methodist-related educational institutions that addresses issues of mutual concern, including church relations, international education and public policy. The association is affiliated with the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry in Nashville, Tennessee.

## National Council of Churches (National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.)

An ecumenical organization based in Washington. It has 35 Protestant and Orthodox member denominations, representing 50 million people in the United States. National Council of Churches is acceptable on first reference, unless comparable organizations from other countries are also mentioned in the story. On second reference, use NCC. The United Methodist Church is a major supporter in terms of money and leadership to the NCC.

[nccusa.org](http://nccusa.org)

## National Federation of Asian American United Methodists

Based in Oakland, California, the federation represents the interests and concerns of Asian American United Methodists. It is an official group in The United Methodist Church that includes ethnic sub-groups, such as Korean, Middle Eastern, South Asian, and Japanese fellowships.

[nfaaUM.org](http://nfaaUM.org)

## National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry

This denominationwide program promotes the growth of The United Methodist Church in Latino communities. It is in the process of changing its name to the Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry to reflect the fact that it is not only national but international.

[nphlm.org](http://nphlm.org)

## native

Use lowercase letters when the word occurs alone. Capitalize in other usages, such as Native American.

## Native American

No hyphen as a noun or adjective. Use tribal affiliations when relevant to the story. American Indian also is acceptable.

## Native American Comprehensive Plan

The Native American Comprehensive Plan emphasizes congregational and leadership development, Native American spirituality and native involvement in the total life of The United Methodist Church. The task force's goal is to help United Methodists view Native Americans as partners in ministry and no longer as a mission of the church. The General Conference mandated the plan in 1992.

[Nacp-umc.org](http://Nacp-umc.org)

## Native American International Caucus

An official United Methodist organization that holds Native American concerns before the church.

## Nazarene

The Church of the Nazarene grew out of the Wesleyan movement and became a member of the World Methodist Council in 1999.

## nicknames

Follow AP style. When using a nickname with the full name, use quotation marks, not parentheses. Example: Bishop Marshall L. "Jack" Meadors Jr.

## nonprofit

No hyphen. Most words beginning with "non" are not hyphenated. When in doubt, consult the dictionary.

## North Central Jurisdiction

One of five U.S. jurisdictions, North Central includes Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

[ncjUMC.org](http://ncjUMC.org)

## Northeastern Jurisdiction

One of five U.S. jurisdictions, Northeastern includes Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and West Virginia.

[nejUMC.org](http://nejUMC.org)

## Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference

One of seven central conferences in The United Methodist Church. It includes Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Latvia, Moldova, Norway, Russia, Sweden and Ukraine.

## numbers or numerals

Follow the Associated Press Stylebook. In general, spell out one through nine and use numerals for 10 and above. An exception is ages, which are never spelled out.

# O

## open meetings

The United Methodist Church mandates open meetings of its official boards and other entities under Paragraph 722 of the Book of Discipline. UMNS is an advocate for open meetings in the church and believes the church is most effective in carrying out its mission in the world when members are fully informed.

## order and discipline of The United Methodist Church

Use lowercase letters for "order and discipline."

## Otterbein, Philip William (1726-1813)

Along with Martin Boehm, Otterbein became one of the first two bishops of the United Brethren movement in 1800. A German Reformed Church pastor, he moved to America in 1752 to serve German settlers in Pennsylvania, eventually ended up in Baltimore in 1774, and led a congregation there for the rest of his life. He was a close friend of Methodism's Francis Asbury. The United Brethren movement was a precursor of today's United Methodist Church. Otterbein is fourth in the list of United Methodist bishops in the Book of Discipline, followed by Boehm.

# P

## Pacific Islander Ministry Plan

One of the six ethnic initiatives of The United Methodist Church, the Pacific Islander Ministry Plan empowers Pacific-Island United Methodists to fully participate in the life of The United Methodist Church. Focus areas for the group include leadership development, ministry with the poor and language resources.

## Pan-Methodist

See Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation and Union. When used apart from a proper noun, lowercase the first letter of the word: pan-Methodist.

## pastor

Always a noun, never a verb. Avoid “pastored,” “pastoring,” etc., unless it occurs in a direct quote. See also minister, pastor entry.

## Pentecostal/charismatic

Churches in the Pentecostal tradition have their roots in the holiness movement that arose in the Methodist church in the 1800s.

## percent

Per AP style, use % when paired with a numeral, but spell out percent in casual uses, such as “only a small percent” or “zero percent chance.”

## person, people

Use “person” when referring to an individual; “people” when referring to more than one person. Avoid the stiff-sounding “persons” except in direct quotes. This is an oft-forgotten Associated Press style guideline.

## Philippines Central Conference

One of seven central conferences in The United Methodist Church.

## president

In a departure from Associated Press style, UMNS gives the first name of the U.S. president on first reference. This reflects UMNS’ global focus and is consistent with its style in referring to presidents of other countries.

## Primitive Methodists (U.S.A.)

The Primitive Methodist Church was formed in 1811 in England, and spread to America in 1829. The U.S. church split from the British church around 1840. A different Primitive Methodist Church was formed in America in 1792, but it was short-lived.

## protester

Not “protestor.”

# Q

## quadrennium

A four-year period of program work in The United Methodist Church. Use years when possible to explain the meaning of the word: 2001-2004 quadrennium.

## quotes

Use partial quotes sparingly and only in cases where the quoted material is distinctive. Otherwise, leave the quotation marks off; the attribution makes it clear to the reader that the paraphrased material originated from someone else, not the writer.

# R

## race

In general, we don’t list a person’s racial or ethnic background unless it’s relevant to the story. If it is relevant, such as in a story about candidates for bishop, include a sentence explaining to readers why the racial or ethnic identification is included. Following AP style, capitalize the proper names of nationalities – African, American, Caucasian, Chinese, Japanese, etc. Use lowercase letters with words such as “black,” “white,” etc. Do not use black or white as singular nouns. When relevant, both are acceptable as adjectives. Avoid Caucasian as a synonym for white, unless in a quote.

## Reconciling Ministries Network

An unofficial advocacy group within the church that seeks the full participation of LGBTQ individuals in the life of the church. Formerly known as the Reconciling Congregations Program. Individual congregations and United Methodist communities such as Sunday school classes and small groups identify as Reconciling. Its offices are in Chicago. [rmnetwork.org](http://rmnetwork.org)

## Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

The coalition consists of more than 40 organizations, including Protestant, Jewish and Roman Catholic groups, that advocate for reproductive health and choice. The United Methodist Board of Church and Society and the Board of Global Ministries’ Women’s Division were founding members. The 2016 General Conference ended The United Methodist Church’s membership in the organization. The coalition, founded in 1973, is based in Washington. [rcrc.org](http://rcrc.org)

## Renew Network

Founded during the summer of 1989. Launched as the Evangelical Coalition for United Methodist Women, its name was later changed. Renew is the women’s program arm of the Good News organization. It aims “to connect women across The United Methodist Church into a strong network for mutual support and encouragement in ministry, outreach, and discipleship and to enable and equip women to grow spiritually in their relationship with Jesus Christ.” Its offices are in The Woodlands, Texas. [RenewNetwork.org](http://RenewNetwork.org)

**reverend**

The title can be used for all clergy. On first reference, use “the” in front of “Rev.” Drop the title on second reference and use the last name only. Do not combine with another title, such as “Dr.” The title of “The Rev.” is not used when referring to a clergy person who loses his or her ministerial credentials.

**Russia/Eurasia Initiative**

A program of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries to assist The United Methodist Church in Eurasia in its various ministries, including education, mission, evangelism and social outreach. The Partner Church Program, with U.S.-based churches providing relational and financial support to the emerging churches in Eurasia, is the first Global Ministries mission program based on a church-to-church partnership model that empowers local leaders and ministries. The Russia/Eurasia initiative is transitioning into annual conference structures within the United Methodist connection, completing the initiative phase of the program in 2015.

S

**Sabbath**

Follow Associated Press style. Use lowercase letters when the reference is general; capitalize otherwise.

**sacraments**

The United Methodist Church recognizes two: baptism and communion. Other faith traditions, such as the Catholic Church, recognize more sacraments. Capitalize the proper names used for a sacramental rite that commemorates the life of Jesus Christ or signifies a belief in his presence: the Lord’s Supper, Holy Communion, Holy Eucharist. Lowercase baptism.

**saint**

In accordance with Associated Press style, abbreviate as St. in most instances, such as the names of saints and cities. However, exceptions do exist, such as Saint Paul School of Theology in Leawood, Kansas. In such cases, check on the organization’s preferred spelling.

**St. Simons Island, Georgia**

There is no apostrophe in the name of this island where the Wesley brothers once ministered. Epworth By The Sea, a conference and retreat center maintained by the South Georgia Conference, is on St. Simons Island.

**savior**

Use the lowercase “S” and avoid “saviour.”

**Scarritt-Bennett Center**

A United Methodist-related conference and retreat center in Nashville, Tennessee. It was formerly known as Scarritt College for Christian Workers and was founded in 1892 by the women’s organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. Scarritt-Bennett, owned by United Methodist Women, ceased operating as a degree-granting institution in 1988 because of debts and low enrollment.

**schools**

About 118 schools, colleges and universities are related to The United Methodist Church. The church has 13 affiliated seminaries in the U.S. The United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry in Nashville, Tennessee, guides the denomination’s academic ministries.

**Scripture, Scriptures**

Use capital letters when referring to biblical writings. Use lowercase letters for other references.

**seasons**

Seasons are not consistent for a global audience, so provide clear context when referring to them. When mentioning a season, lowercase the name: rainy, dry, winter, spring, summer, fall or autumn, etc.

**series**

When listing a series of items, consider setting each one off with a bullet. Capitalize the first word after each bullet and, if the bulleted item is a complete sentence, use a period at the end. If the bulleted item is not a complete sentence, do not use a period.

**Shalom Zone Ministries**

The 1992 General Conference approved the creation of the Shalom Zone program as a way to address the types of issues that surfaced during urban riots in Los Angeles that year. “Shalom” is the Hebrew word for peace. Shalom zones were conceived as areas where churches and communities could be empowered to work together to rebuild and renew community life. Through mission evangelism, collaboration, systemic change and asset building strategies, Shalom initiatives focus on four areas: spiritual renewal, including congregational development, community economic development, strengthening of race and class relationships, and health and healing within the community.

**Social Principles**

Found in the front section of the Book of Discipline and Book of Resolutions, the Social Principles “while not to be considered church law, are a prayerful and thoughtful effort on the part of the General Conference to speak to the human issues in the contemporary world from a sound biblical and theological foundation as historically demonstrated in United Methodist traditions.” The Social Principles address a wide range of social and economic concerns, as well as issues regarding stewardship of creation. The 2012 General Conference charged the United Methodist Board of Church and Society with overseeing a revision that would be more succinct, more theologically grounded and more globally relevant. The 2016 General Conference directed the board to continue the work with a final report to come to the 2020 session.

**Society of St. Andrew**

Founded in 1979 by two United Methodist pastors, the Society of St. Andrew is a nonprofit ecumenical organization that focuses on salvaging food and feeding the hungry. It is based in Big Island, Virginia. [EndHunger.org](http://EndHunger.org)

**South Central Jurisdiction**

One of five U.S. jurisdictions, South Central includes Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. [scjUMC.org](http://scjUMC.org)

**Southeastern Jurisdiction**

One of five U.S. jurisdictions, Southeastern includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. [sejUMC.org](http://sejUMC.org)

**states**

Spell out the names of the 50 U.S. states when used in the body of a story, whether standing alone or in conjunction with a city, town, village or military base. No state name is necessary if it is the same as the dateline. The names of eight states are never abbreviated in datelines or text: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah. When a state name falls in the middle of a sentence following the name of a city, set it off with commas: The bishop drove from Nashville, Tennessee, to Atlanta.

**Stephen Ministries**

An ecumenical program through which lay people provide service and support to others in the local community.

**Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century**

Approved by the 1996 General Conference, this churchwide initiative works to match up growing black congregations as mentors for struggling churches. The initiative also has worked to form congregational resource centers for African American churches. [sbc21.org](http://sbc21.org)

**Sunday school**

“School” is not capitalized.

# T

## teenager

No hyphen, per AP style.

## Ten Commandments

Capitalize and spell out “Ten.”

## telephone numbers

Use figures. The form: 212-621-1500. For international numbers use 011 (from the United States), the country code, the city code and the telephone number: 011-44-20-7535-1515. Use hyphens, not periods. The form for toll-free numbers: 800-111-1000. If extension numbers are needed, use a comma to separate the main number from the extension: 212-621-1500, ext. 2.

## that vs. which

Follow AP style: Use that and which in referring to inanimate objects and to animals without a name. Use that for essential clauses, important to the meaning of a sentence, and without commas: I remember the day that we met. Use which for nonessential clauses, where the pronoun is less necessary, and use commas: The team, which finished last a year ago, is in first place. (Tip: If you can drop the clause and not lose the meaning of the sentence, use which; otherwise, use that. A which clause is surrounded by commas; no commas are used with that clauses.)

## The United Methodist Church (name)

In a departure from secular press style, capitalize the “T” in “The United Methodist Church,” as noted in the Book of Discipline. Spell out The United Methodist Church whenever possible rather than using UMC.

## titles

Put quotation marks around the titles of books, but not the Bible or the Book of Discipline. Capitalize the principal words in titles, including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters. Capitalize an article — the, a, an — or words of fewer than four letters if it is the first or last word in a title.

## TMS Global (formerly The Mission Society for United Methodists)

The unofficial church organization was formed in 1984 as a voluntary group of clergy and lay members “to expand the missions outreach of local United Methodist churches.” It sponsors missionaries working around the globe. Its offices are in Norcross, Georgia.

## transgender

An adjective that describes people whose gender identity does not match the sex or gender they were identified as having at birth. Does not require what are often known as sex reassignment or gender confirmation procedures. Identify people as transgender only if pertinent, and use the name by which they live publicly. Also use preferred pronouns.

# U

## UMC.org

This is the style for The United Methodist Church’s official member website.

## underway

One word in all uses.

## United Brethren in Christ

See Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

## The United Methodist Church (name)

In a departure from secular press style, UMNS capitalizes the “T” in “The United Methodist Church,” as noted in the Book of Discipline. Spell out United Methodist Church whenever possible rather than using UMC.

## United Methodist Church (history)

The United Methodist Church grew out of the Methodist movement, which began in 1729 in England. Brothers John and Charles Wesley met with other young men attending Oxford University to help one another become better Christians. Their systematic religious habits and rules of conduct led other students to call them “Methodists.” John became a lifelong Anglican clergyman, logging thousands of miles a year as an itinerant preacher. Though he never intended to form a new church, he guided the Methodist movement and dispatched ministers to establish and lead Methodist communities in the American colonies. The Methodist Episcopal Church grew independently of the British Methodist Church. In 1844, differences over slavery split the denomination. In 1939, The Methodist Church was created with the union of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. A few years later, in 1946, the Evangelical United Brethren Church was born through the merger of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Church. Today’s United Methodist Church was created in 1968 with the merger of the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren churches.

[UMC.org/who-we-are/history](https://www.UMC.org/who-we-are/history)

## United Methodist Church (structure)

United Methodists describe themselves as being in a connectional system, a principle that dates back to John Wesley. Unlike many other faith traditions, the denomination does not have a headquarters nor does it have a top leader, such as a pope, archbishop or president. Churches support one another through a system of conferences and agencies. Individual United Methodist laity belong to a local congregation, while clergy are members of an annual conference. Each congregation is part of an annual conference led by a bishop. Each annual conference elects delegates to the General Conference, the denomination’s top lawmaking body, which meets every four years. The General Conference is the only entity that speaks for The United Methodist Church. The church’s executive branch is represented by the United Methodist Council of Bishops, which consists of all active and retired bishops. Bishops are elected by central and jurisdictional conferences. The legal branch is the nine-member Judicial Council, which serves as the top court for the church. General boards, agencies and commissions carry out specific ministries of the church on a worldwide level. Their work is supported financially by the connection.

[UMC.org/who-we-are/constitutional-structure](https://www.UMC.org/who-we-are/constitutional-structure)

## Foundation Investment Management (FIM)

The United Methodist General Council on Finance and Administration of The United Methodist Church voted in December 1998 to establish the United Methodist Church Foundation. Now rebranded as Foundation Investment Management (FIM), the organization provides service, skill and investment expertise to help fund ministry and secure financial security for its clients.

[investumc.org](https://www.investumc.org)

## United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)

The disaster response and relief agency of the church. It is a unit of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries in Atlanta. UMCOR is acceptable on second reference.

[UMCOR.org](https://www.UMCOR.org)

## United Methodist Communications

Abbreviate as UMCom.

## United Methodist Higher Education Foundation

The foundation’s stated purpose “is to raise, manage and distribute funds to foster education in a Christian context in schools, colleges, universities and theological schools within The United Methodist Church and other institutions approved by its trustees.” Its headquarters are in Nashville, Tennessee. It was formerly called the United Methodist Foundation for Christian Higher Education.

[umhef.org](https://www.umhef.org)

### United Methodist News Service

Gathers news of The United Methodist Church for dissemination to the religious and secular media, the church's websites and e-mail subscribers. UMNS is a news agency, not a public relations or promotional organization. UMNS is an advocate for open meetings throughout the church (see "sunshine" rule in the Book of Discipline). Since the creation of its predecessor unit in 1940, UMNS has been given the editorial freedom to cover the church at its best and worst. [2016 Book of Discipline](#), Paragraph 1806.1. "It (United Methodist Communications) shall be the official news-gathering and distributing agency for The United Methodist Church and its general agencies. In discharging its responsibilities, in keeping with the historic freedom of the press, it shall operate with editorial freedom as an independent news bureau serving all segments of church life and society, making available to both religious and public news media information concerning the church at large."

[umnews.org](http://umnews.org)

### United Methodist Publishing House

Based in Nashville, Tennessee, the United Methodist Publishing House is the self-supporting publishing agency of the church. Its units include the Abingdon Press imprint and Cokesbury, an online retail operation.

[umph.org](http://umph.org)

### United Methodist Queer Clergy Caucus

The unofficial advocacy group is made up of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex people called, commissioned and ordained as United Methodist clergy.

[umqcc.org](http://umqcc.org)

### United Methodist Women

United Methodist Women is the largest denominational faith organization for women, with approximately 800,000 members, whose mission is fostering spiritual growth, developing leaders and advocating for justice. UMW is acceptable on second reference.

[UnitedMethodistWomen.org](http://UnitedMethodistWomen.org)

### University Senate

A group of 25 academic professionals, the University Senate establishes the criteria that must be met by schools, colleges, universities and theological schools to achieve and keep affiliation with The United Methodist Church. The senate also provides a review process to ensure that schools that have or seek affiliation have institutional integrity, well-structured programs, sound management and clearly defined church relationships. The University Senate is affiliated with the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry in Nashville, Tennessee.

### The Upper Room

A unit of United Methodist Discipleship Ministries in Nashville, Tennessee, the Upper Room publishes books, periodicals, devotional guides and other materials.

[UpperRoom.org](http://UpperRoom.org)

## V

### vacation Bible school

Lowercase vacation and school. VBS is acceptable on second reference.

### Volunteers in Mission

The VIM program places volunteers from local congregations in short-term settings of ministry around the globe. The program is administered by the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.

[UMCmission.org/volunteers](http://UMCmission.org/volunteers)

## W

### Washington

No need to say "D.C." when referring to the U.S. capital unless to avoid confusion with the state of Washington.

### Web addresses

When giving a web address or email address in a story, do not leave off the period at the end of the sentence. If concerned that the reader might become confused and incorporate the period into the address, then place the address in the middle of the sentence without surrounding punctuation. Website is one word, lowercase.

### Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

The youngest son of Samuel and Susanna Wesley, Charles and his brother John started what became the Methodist movement. An ordained Anglican clergyman, he is most famous as a hymn writer and made a substantial contribution to the body of Christian music.

### John Wesley (1703-1791)

The founder of Methodism, John Wesley was a lifelong Anglican clergyman. He founded Methodism as a movement in the Church of England. Though ordained as a deacon in 1725 and as a priest in 1728, it wasn't until 1738 that he had his famous conversion experience. This occurred during a Moravian Bible study meeting, where Wesley at one point felt his heart "strangely warmed" and knew that Christ had died for him. He was an untiring itinerant preacher, writer and hymn composer. He was an advocate for the needy and poor, as well as for disenfranchised groups such as miners, and he was an outspoken opponent of slavery. He traveled some 250,000 miles on horseback during his career, ministering all over the British Isles and once crossing the Atlantic to America.

### Samuel Wesley (1662-1735)

Father of John and Charles Wesley. The elder Wesley was an Anglican clergyman, biblical scholar and author. He was the rector at Epworth, in Lincolnshire, England, which resulted in the wide use of the word Epworth in Methodist place names.

### Susanna Wesley (1669-1742)

Mother of John and Charles Wesley and wife of Anglican clergyman Samuel Wesley. She bore 19 children and carried most of the responsibility for raising and educating them.

### Wesleyan

Used generally, this term refers to anything relating to the beliefs espoused by John Wesley, founder of Methodism. It also is the name of an evangelical denomination. Today's Wesleyan Church was formed by the union of the Wesleyan Methodist and Pilgrim Holiness churches in 1968.

### Wesleyan Covenant Association

An unofficial advocacy group within the church that identifies as traditionalist and evangelical. It formed officially in 2016. The new Wesleyan Covenant Association holds the church's teaching on homosexuality to be essential to biblical orthodoxy. What differentiates the Wesleyan Covenant Association from other similar affinity groups is that, rather than relying on donations, it charges membership fees. Association members also must commit to a statement of faith and moral principles and declare a willingness to cooperate in ministry through the association.

[WesleyanCovenant.org](http://WesleyanCovenant.org)

### West Africa Central Conference

One of seven central conferences in The United Methodist Church, it has four episcopal areas, six annual conferences and ministry in six countries.

### Western Jurisdiction

One of five U.S. jurisdictions, Western includes Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Territory of Guam, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

[WesternJurisdictionUMC.org](http://WesternJurisdictionUMC.org)

### who, whom

Who is grammatically the subject (never the object) of a sentence, clause or phrase: The woman who rented the room left the window open. Who is there? Whom is used when someone is the object of a verb or preposition: The woman to whom the room was rented left the window open. Whom do you wish to see?

### -wide

In keeping with AP style, do not use a hyphen when adding this to the end of another word. Examples: churchwide, denominationwide.

### women, ordination

Full clergy rights were granted to women in the Methodist Church in 1956. Some women had been licensed and ordained in predecessor denominations as early as the late 1800s.

**World Council of Churches**

Founded in 1948, the Geneva-based WCC is an ecumenical fellowship of Christian churches in more than 110 countries. Its members represent about 500 million Christians. The United Methodist Church is a major supporter in providing funds and leadership. The Roman Catholic Church is not a member but it works with the council in certain areas. Every seven years or so, the WCC holds an assembly, at which people from the member denominations adopt resolutions on a range of issues and ministries. Representatives of the Catholic Church and other faith traditions also attend as observers.

[oikoumene.org/en](http://oikoumene.org/en)

**World Methodist Council**

The council, based in Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, consists of about 80 Methodist and related churches. Its supporting churches represent more than 51 million people worldwide. “It engages, empowers and serves the member Churches by encouraging Methodist unity in witness, facilitating mission in the world, and fostering ecumenical and inter-religious activities.”

[WorldMethodistCouncil.org](http://WorldMethodistCouncil.org)

**Y****Young People’s Ministries**

A division of Discipleship Ministries, Young People’s Ministries aims to develop youth/young adult spiritual leaders of local congregations, advocate for the issues and concerns of young people, empower young people to work as agents of peace, justice, and mercy and build a network of support and resources for youth and young adults in local ministries.

[UMCYoungPeople.org](http://UMCYoungPeople.org)

# APPENDIX A:

## United Methodist boards and agencies

**The United Methodist Church has 13 general (churchwide) agencies, each governed by a board of directors selected from across the denomination, with attention given to racial, gender, age and lay-clergy balance. Chief staff executives are usually called “general secretaries.”**

The **Connectional Table** coordinates mission, ministries and resources. Organized on Jan. 1, 2005, the group includes people elected by jurisdictional conferences and central conferences, as well as the presidents of the general agencies. Top staff executives of the general agencies have voice, but no vote.  
[UMC.org/topics/the-connectional-table](http://UMC.org/topics/the-connectional-table)

**The General Commission on Archives and History** houses historical documents, photographs and other materials of The United Methodist Church and forerunner denominations. Identified as the United Methodist Commission on Archives and History on first reference in UMNS reports. Based at Drew University, Madison, New Jersey.  
[gcah.org](http://gcah.org)

**The General Board of Church and Society**, the social action arm of the denomination, addresses issues of global justice — political, human and economic rights, human welfare and environmental protection. Identified as the United Methodist Board of Church and Society on first reference in UMNS reports. Based in Washington.  
[UMC-gbcs.org](http://UMC-gbcs.org)

**United Methodist Communications** works to meet the strategic communications, public relations and marketing needs of the global church in order to invite people into relationship with Jesus Christ and advance life-changing ministries. Serves as the central agency for promoting the general funds and programs of the denomination. Is the official news-gathering and distribution agency of the church. Partners with local churches, districts and annual conferences by offering services, tools, products, resources and training designed to meet their needs. Manages the denomination’s official website, [UMC.org](http://UMC.org). Based in Nashville, Tennessee.  
[ResourceUMC.org/UMCom](http://ResourceUMC.org/UMCom)

**Discipleship Ministries** provides leadership and resources for local churches, districts and annual conferences in areas of spiritual growth and development, devotional literature, curriculum resources, Christian education, evangelism, worship, stewardship, and ministry of the laity. It develops and oversees the work of Path 1/New Church Starts and programming for Youth and Young People. Discipleship Ministries works with the central conferences through Discipleship Resources International, organizing indigenous writing and publishing teams. The agency also oversees the work of The Upper Room, a global ministry dedicated to supporting the spiritual formation of Christians through prayer, publishing and program ministries. Based in Nashville, Tennessee.  
[UMCdiscipleship.org](http://UMCdiscipleship.org)

**The General Board of Global Ministries** connects United Methodists in mission in 136 countries by coordinating mission, evangelism and service efforts. The mission agency addresses diseases of poverty and global health and responds to natural and civil disasters through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and The Advance, the Church’s designated mission-giving channel. Based in Atlanta.  
[UMCmission.org](http://UMCmission.org)

**The General Council on Finance and Administration**, the fiscal and record-keeping agency for the denomination, administers trusts, coordinates and distributes church funds, and keeps official membership, real estate and other records. Identified as the United Methodist General Council on Finance and Administration upon first reference and GCFA on following reference in UMNS reports. Based in Nashville, Tennessee.  
[gcf.org](http://gcf.org)

**The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry** leads and serves The United Methodist Church in recruitment, preparation, nurture, education and support of Christian leaders, both lay and clergy. Prepares and assists those pursuing professional ministry through ordination, certification or licensed ministry. Offers resources for those experiencing God’s call and considering beginning the ministry candidacy process. Supports a network of 118 denominationally related schools, colleges and universities in the U.S., including 13 schools of theology. Maintains a network of chaplaincies, Wesley Foundations (campus ministries), ecumenical ministries and church-based ministries reaching more than 1,300 campuses around the world. Assists current and future lay and clergy leaders through student loans and scholarships. Fosters educational access through The Black College Fund, The Ministerial Education Fund, The Africa University Fund and other colleges and schools of theology. Helps prepare global lay and clergy leaders through ministry hubs in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and North America and works with central conferences to expand opportunities for training clergy. Identified as the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry on first reference in UMNS reports. Offices are in Nashville, Tennessee.  
[gbhem.org](http://gbhem.org)

**Wespath Benefits and Investments** (formerly The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits) cares for those who serve by providing investment and benefit services according to the principles of The United Methodist Church. Serves as primary financial institution for long-term savings and retirement plans and programs. Administers health and disability and death benefit plans and programs for clergy and their families, employees of general agencies, lay employees of local churches and denominationally affiliated institutions. Administers an internationally recognized, socially responsible investment program with more than 100,000 participants and \$20 billion in assets; it is the largest denominational fund and is ranked as one of the top 100 U.S. pension funds. Develops and helps fund — through the Central Conference Pension Initiative — sustainable pension programs for all clergy outside the U.S. who need them. Offices are in Glenview, Illinois.  
[wespath.org](http://wespath.org)

# APPENDIX A

**The General Commission on Religion and Race** focuses on bringing about the full and equal participation of the racial and ethnic constituencies in the work, witness and life of The United Methodist Church. Works toward engaging the church in seeking unity through leadership development, cultural competency training, research and evaluation, resourcing and relationship-building. Identified as the United Methodist Commission on Religion and Race on first reference in UMNS reports. Offices are in Washington.  
[gcorr.org](http://gcorr.org)

**The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women** advocates empowerment of women and monitors gender inclusiveness in all institutions and agencies of the church. Identified as the United Methodist Commission on the Status and Role of Women on first reference in UMNS reports and abbreviated COSROW on following references. Offices are in Chicago, Illinois.  
[gcsrw.org](http://gcsrw.org), [umsexualethics.org](http://umsexualethics.org)

**The General Commission on United Methodist Men** was created in 1996 to coordinate programs and resources for men’s ministries, including Scouting, within the denomination. Identified as the Commission on United Methodist Men on first reference in UMNS reports. Offices are in Nashville, Tennessee.  
[gcumm.org](http://gcumm.org)

**United Methodist Women** and its predecessor organizations have been in mission for more than a century. The agency 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 in the U.S. and around the world. Based in New York City.  
[UnitedMethodistWomen.org](http://UnitedMethodistWomen.org)

**The United Methodist Publishing House** is independent and self-supporting. It does not receive funding through the general church funding program of the church, as other agencies do. The agency’s origins date back to 1789. It distributes the official publications, records and forms of the denomination, publishes books through Abingdon Press, and provides a vast array of products and services through the Cokesbury online retail division. Offices are in Nashville, Tennessee.  
[umph.org](http://umph.org)

# APPENDIX B:

## Timeline of Methodism

[UMC.org/who-we-are/timeline-of-the-united-methodist-church](http://UMC.org/who-we-are/timeline-of-the-united-methodist-church)

**1728**

John Wesley, a deacon since 1725, is ordained a priest in the Anglican church.

**1729**

Charles Wesley forms the Holy Club at Oxford.

**1735**

The Wesley brothers set sail for Georgia, where John forms fellowship societies. Charles returns home in 1736; John in 1738.

**1738**

John Wesley has his “Aldersgate experience” on May 24 and launches a renewal movement in the Church of England.

**1771**

Francis Asbury sails to America.

**1773**

The First Methodist Conference in America is held in St. George’s church in Philadelphia.

**1784**

The Methodist Episcopal Church is organized at the “Christmas Conference,” held in Baltimore. Asbury is ordained superintendent by Thomas Coke and Philip Otterbein. Asbury and Coke are joint superintendents and later renamed bishops. The United Methodist Church recognizes this year as its founding date (Paragraph 724, 2000 Book of Discipline).

**1787**

Richard Allen forms the Free African Society and the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia.

**1792**

First quadrennial General Conference of American Methodism is held.

**1796**

James Varick leads the founding of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in New York.

**1800**

Philip Otterbein and Martin Boehm start the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

**1803**

Jacob Albright starts the Evangelical Association.

**1830**

The Methodist Protestant Church is created.

**1843**

The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America is started.

**1844**

The Methodist Episcopal Church splits over the issue of slavery, resulting in the creation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

**1870**

The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, later renamed the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, is started.

**1939**

The Methodist Church is created with the union of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church. The racially segregated Central Jurisdiction is also created.

**1946**

The Evangelical Church and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ merge to form the Evangelical United Brethren Church.

**1968**

The United Methodist Church is created with the merger of the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren denominations. The last vestiges of the Central Jurisdiction are eliminated and remaining members absorbed into geographic units of the larger church.

**1980**

Marjorie Matthews is elected a United Methodist bishop, the first female bishop in any major Protestant denomination.

**1984**

Leontine T.C. Kelly becomes the first African American woman elected bishop in The United Methodist Church. She remains the only one until 12 years later, when she is joined by three others: Violet Fisher, Beverly Shamana and Linda Lee.

**2000**

The United Methodist General Conference, meeting in Cleveland, repents for past and current racism in the church by performing an Act of Repentance for Reconciliation. The act is repeated throughout the annual conferences.

**2004**

The United Methodist General Conference in Pittsburgh holds a service of appreciation for African Americans in the church, recognizing their contributions and showing appreciation for their involvement in the church and its predecessor denominations despite acts of racism.

**2005**

The Rev. Rosemarie Wenner of Germany becomes the first woman elected bishop in the central conferences. A United Methodist radio station is established in Liberia, West Africa.

**2006**

The United Methodist church is a founding partner of the Nothing But Nets initiative, an effort to fund and distribute insecticide-treated bed nets in Africa to prevent malaria.

# APPENDIX B

**2008**

The Protestant Methodist Church of Côte d’Ivoire is received into full membership in The United Methodist Church with the Rev. Benjamin Boni as bishop. The Rev. Joaquina Filipe Nhanala is elected the first female United Methodist bishop in Africa, leading the church in Mozambique. General Conference celebrates full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**2009**

“La Voix de L’Esperance” (The Voice of Hope) radio station is launched in Côte d’Ivoire.

**2012**

General Conference celebrates full communion with five historically black Methodist denominations and participates in “An Act of Repentance toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous Peoples.” Delegates vote to make United Methodist Women a separate organization rather than a part of the Board of Global Ministries. They also authorize a fourth episcopal area for the Congo Central Conference to accommodate church growth in that region.

**2015**

The United Methodist Radio Network of Africa, formed by the directors of the denomination’s four radio stations in Angola, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia, shares content in French, English and Portuguese.

**2016**

The Board of Global Ministries moves to Atlanta and opens the first of three planned global regional offices in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Approval is given for five new bishops in Africa starting in 2020. N. Oswald Tweh Sr., a layman from Liberia, is the first member from outside the United States to be elected president of the Judicial Council. General Conference authorizes the Council of Bishops to create a commission to study how the church can find unity amid growing divisions over homosexuality. The Western Jurisdiction elects the Rev. Karen Oliveto as the denomination’s first female bishop married to a woman.

**2017**

The Council of Bishops announces a call to a special General Conference Feb. 23-26, 2019, in St. Louis to act on their report based on recommendations from the Commission on a Way Forward. The Board of Global Ministries opens a second regional office in Seoul, South Korea.

**2018**

The United Methodist Church celebrates its 50th anniversary on April 23.

**2019**

A called, special session of the General Conference strengthened restrictions related to homosexuality, leading to stronger resistance against the denomination’s prohibitions and uncertainty about the church’s future.



## APPENDIX C:

### Working in global contexts

The United Methodist Church is a global community, diverse in culture, language, nationality and ethnicity. As the communications agency of the denomination, United Methodist Communications is committed to engaging the people of the church and the communities that we serve. Our faith lives are richer for being on the journey with 13 million other United Methodists, from Germany to Zimbabwe to the Philippines.

#### BEING A GLOBALLY FOCUSED AGENCY MEANS:

- ▶ Developing relationship-based ministry, listening to and learning from the people of the church
- ▶ Adopting agencywide ownership of the work of global communications
- ▶ Integrating multicultural, multilingual staff fully into planning and strategy with each team
- ▶ Communicating in the most widely used languages of the church
- ▶ Working in partnership with agencies and ministries across the church

#### THIS MEANS WE:

- ▶ Cultivate a mindset of working in a global context and striving to be non-U.S.-centric. Present the work of United Methodist Communications as globally focused.
- ▶ Introduce resources and content in multiple languages at the same time when possible.
- ▶ Adopt a way of talking about our work that moves away from the use of words such as “foreign,” “overseas,” etc. Global work does not have geographic boundaries and does not refer only to work outside the United States.
- ▶ Recognize the degree to which our perceptions are shaped by our cultural backgrounds, and use sensitivity in describing the cultural backgrounds and national identities of God’s people. For example, the generic terms “Hispanic/Latino,” “Latino/a” and “Hispanic” were instituted by the majority culture in the United States as labels for people of many different nationalities and cultures. When appropriate, identify people based on their specific cultural identity instead of generically as African, Asian, European, Hispanic/Latino.

- ▶ Keep a sense of proportion when responding to disasters and other events, particularly regarding the United States as compared to other regions we serve in Africa, Asia and Europe. For example, in 2018, while Hurricane Florence was bearing down on the Eastern U.S. Coast, super-Typhoon Manghkut was hitting the Philippines. As a global agency, we are communicating about both of those catastrophes in ways that are contextual.
- ▶ Care for the details, such as including an international code with phone numbers on business cards and other documents, and ensuring that the forms we ask people to fill out for our services don’t require U.S.-style addresses and contact information.
- ▶ Reflect a global perspective in our writing and design. This includes:
  - ▷ Using culturally appropriate currency references in our content, instead of automatically using U.S. dollars.
  - ▷ Being sensitive to time references in our communications, and use the time zone reference that is most relevant to the audience and circumstance, instead of automatically referring to a U.S. time.
  - ▷ Being sensitive to the cultural differences within language groups. English, French, Portuguese and Spanish are spoken on multiple continents, so usages and spellings vary from location to location. Be aware that in many English-speaking African countries, British spellings are used instead of American spellings – “theatre” instead of “theater,” for example. Use the proper spelling for the context. For denominationwide content, our style preference is to use the American English spellings.
  - ▷ Avoiding euphemisms and idiomatic expressions that wouldn’t be understood across the connection.
  - ▷ Ensuring that the context of our writing doesn’t reflect a presumption that the audience is in “our nation,” “our country,” or has “our president,” etc.
  - ▷ Ensuring that people see themselves and their cultures in church communications.

Many United Methodists are not aware that the church is global, so talking about our work can help them get a bigger view of the denomination as a whole.

## By the numbers: members and participants

Here is a statistical snapshot of some of The United Methodist Church’s communities, based on data from the General Council on Finance and Administration (2016).

#### MEMBERS (UNITED STATES JURISDICTIONS):

- ▶ African American – 421,101
- ▶ Asian-American – 91,808 (includes Korean)
- ▶ Korean – 50,000 adults and 80,000 total
- ▶ Hispanic – 79,003 (doesn’t include people attending Hispanic/Latino congregations at non-Hispanic churches or Latinos who are members of non-Latino congregations. Of this number, 17,000 to 20,000 are non-Spanish speakers.)
- ▶ Pacific Islander – 14,613
- ▶ Native American – 21,064
- ▶ Multi-Racial - 66,043
- ▶ White – 6,104,105

#### MEMBERS AND PARTICIPANTS:

- ▶ **English-speaking — 8 million estimate**  
Botswana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, Philippines, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, United States, Zambia, Zimbabwe
- ▶ **French-speaking — 4.4 million**  
Democratic Republic of Congo – 3,679,296  
Côte d’Ivoire (overseeing Cameroon, Senegal, Niger, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic) – 677,355  
Burundi – 211,844  
East Africa (includes Rwanda) – 70,734  
Central and Southern Europe (Switzerland, France, Belgium, Algeria, Tunisia) – 11,983
- ▶ **Portuguese-speaking – 401,000**  
Angola – 213,329  
Mozambique – 188,164
- ▶ **German-speaking: 72,500**  
Germany – 71,112  
Austria – 1,486
- ▶ **Swahili and Kiswahili-speaking**  
A figure is not available for United Methodists who speak Swahili, but it is widely spoken in African episcopal areas in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- ▶ **Russian-speaking – 4,007**  
Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Moldova

#### ADDITIONAL AUDIENCES:

- ▶ Brazilian United Methodists (Portuguese)
- ▶ Methodists in Central America (Primarily Spanish)
- ▶ Philippines (Filipino (Tagalog))
- ▶ Zimbabwean diaspora in Canada, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand (English)
- ▶ Languages of small UMC countries (Hungarian, Polish, Finnish, Latvian, Lithuanian)

## APPENDIX D:

### Photography

United Methodist News Service seeks to adhere to the highest standards of integrity in visual journalism.

Our visual journalists operate as trustees of the public and of The United Methodist Church.

Our primary role is to report visually on the work of our denomination in the world. Our primary goal is the faithful and comprehensive depiction of the subject at hand. As visual journalists, we have the responsibility to document our church and its role in society and to preserve its history through images.

Photographs can reveal great truths, expose wrongdoing and neglect, inspire hope and understanding, and connect people around the globe through the language of visual understanding. Photographs can also cause great harm if they are callously intrusive or are manipulated.

This code of ethics is intended to promote the highest quality in all forms of visual journalism and to strengthen public confidence in the visual report of United Methodist News Service.

The trust that readers place in our reporting is both precious and perishable. To that end, visual journalists and those who manage the UMNS photo report should seek to uphold the following standards in their daily work:

1. Be accurate and comprehensive in the representation of subjects.
2. Resist being manipulated by staged photo opportunities.
3. Be complete and provide context when photographing or recording subjects. Avoid stereotyping individuals and groups. Recognize and work to avoid presenting one's own biases in the work.
4. Treat all subjects with respect and dignity. Give special consideration to vulnerable subjects and compassion to victims of crime or tragedy. Intrude on private moments of grief only when the public has an overriding and justifiable need to see.
5. While photographing subjects, do not intentionally contribute to, alter, or seek to alter or influence events.
6. Editing should maintain the integrity of the photographic images' content and context. Do not manipulate images or add or alter content in any way that can mislead viewers or misrepresent subjects. We do not flip news photographs.

7. Do not pay sources or subjects or reward them materially for information or participation.
8. Do not accept gifts, favors or compensation from those who might seek to influence coverage.
9. Do not intentionally sabotage the efforts of other journalists.
10. Do not engage in harassing behavior of colleagues, subordinates or subjects, and maintain the highest standards of behavior in all professional interactions.

Ideally, visual journalists should:

1. Strive to ensure that the public's business is conducted in public. Defend the rights of access for all journalists.
2. Think proactively, as a student of psychology, sociology, politics and art, to develop a unique vision and presentation. Work with a voracious appetite for current events and contemporary visual media.
3. Strive for total and unrestricted access to subjects, recommend alternatives to shallow or rushed opportunities, seek diverse viewpoints, and work to show unpopular or unnoticed points of view.
4. Avoid political, civic and business involvements or other employment that compromise or give the appearance of compromising one's own journalistic independence.
5. Strive to be unobtrusive and humble in dealing with subjects.
6. Respect the integrity of the photographic moment.
7. Strive by example and influence to maintain the spirit and high standards expressed in this code. When confronted with situations in which the proper action is not clear, seek the counsel of those who exhibit the highest standards of the profession. Visual journalists should continuously study their craft and the ethics that guide it.

*Substantial portions of this code of ethics were adapted from the National Press Photographers Association.*

#### UMNS PHOTO CAPTION GUIDELINES:

A picture is not a news photo unless it has a caption.

The first sentence of the caption describes the action of the photo, in the present tense, and includes where it was taken.

This would mean city and state in the U.S. or city and country for photos from outside the U.S. If it's a remote place, we may locate it further by relating it to the nearest larger city. (Evungu village, near Tunda, Congo.)

If the photo was made at a United Methodist facility, we name it and give its location. (First United Methodist Church in Shelbyville, Tenn.; Camp Wesley Acres in Dazey, N.D.)

UMNS uses AP style for state abbreviations in captions, rather than the two-letter postal abbreviations.

Name people who are prominently featured in the photo whenever possible. Identify them by location within the photo (left, right, front, at microphone, etc.). Such position identifiers are set off by parentheses. If more than three or four people are in a photo, we usually don't identify each person.

Identify clergy members by title (the Rev. Paul Purdue, Bishop John Yambasu). We do not use academic courtesy titles for clergy. We use "Dr." only for medical doctors.

A second sentence may be used to give background on the news event or describe why the photo is significant to a particular story. This sentence may be in the past tense.

Photo credit goes at the end of the caption using the following style: Photo by Photographer Name, Affiliation.

If a photo was provided to UMNS and the photographer is unknown, say "Photo courtesy of," rather than "Photo by."

To boil it down,

- ▶ Who
- ▶ What's happening
- ▶ Where
- ▶ Second sentence with background and context
- ▶ Photo credit

Here's an example:

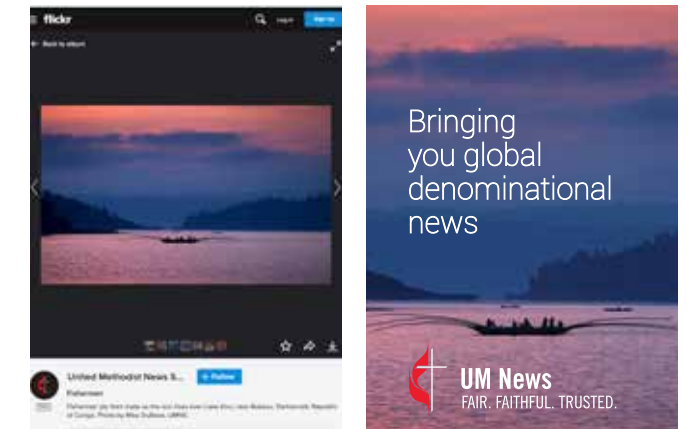
Mothers bring their babies for routine checkups and vaccinations during a clinic at the United Methodist Mangobo Health Center in Kisangani, Congo. The center was revitalized using funds from the denomination's Imagine No Malaria campaign. Photo by Mike DuBose, UMNS.

#### USING IMAGES FOR MARKETING PURPOSES

When an image is used for journalistic purposes, it is part of the overall reporting and attribution should follow guidelines previously outlined in this appendix.

Using an image for marketing purposes is a bit different. While the image should not be taken out of context, it may be used to promote the mission and ministries of the church and should not require attribution.

Here is an example of an image used for journalistic purposes and how it is later used as a promotional image in a marketing space:



Likewise, attribution is not needed when the image is used as a web page element (such as a header):



Or, part of a creative treatment or photo illustration:



Oftentimes, images are purchased as stock photography or acquired through Creative Commons (open source) outlets. These images, generally, do not receive attribution and may be manipulated to achieve a creative effect.

## APPENDIX D (con't):

### Photography release templates

Use one of the following templates when taking photos at an event, worship service or other gathering. By having participants complete a form, or by displaying a notice, the church will ensure that it has full permission to use the photos online, in a printed document, etc.

#### Photography template: Crowd notification

### CROWD NOTICE / RELEASE

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT BY ENTERING THIS AREA, YOU CONSENT TO YOUR VOICE, NAME, AND/OR LIKENESS BEING USED, WITHOUT COMPENSATION, IN FILMS AND TAPES FOR EXPLOITATION IN ANY AND ALL MEDIA, WHETHER NOW KNOWN OR HEREAFTER DEvised, FOR ETERNITY, AND YOU RELEASE [insert Church Name], ITS SUCCESSORS, ASSIGNS AND LICENSEES FROM ANY LIABILITY WHATSOEVER OF ANY NATURE.

DO NOT ENTER THIS AREA IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO BE SUBJECT TO THE ABOVE.



#### Photography template: Photo release

### Photo Release

*(must be completed for all adults and children under the age of 18)*

I hereby grant all rights to [Church Name] to use my photograph and/or other reproduction of me or my physical likeness for publication purposes, whether electronic, print, video, digital or electronic publishing via the Internet. I further agree that any uses described may be made without additional compensation or consideration.

I acknowledge Church's right to crop or treat my photograph(s) at its discretion. I also acknowledge that Church may choose not to use my photo at this time, but may do so at its own discretion at a later date. I waive any right that I may have to inspect or approve the copy and/or finished product or products that may be used. I understand that in signing this release, I agree to all these terms and that I cannot participate without this release.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### For anyone under 18 years of age:

I certify that I am a custodial parent and have the aforementioned rights to assign.

Signature of Parent or Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX E:

### Branding guidelines

#### THE CROSS AND FLAME LOGO

Since the formation of The United Methodist Church in 1968, the official insignia of the denomination is the iconic Cross and Flame. It depicts a cross linked with a single flame with dual tongues.

Only official United Methodist agencies and local churches may use the insignia. Because it is a registered trademark, it cannot be altered in any way.

#### THE BRAND PROMISE

In the early 2000s, the denomination developed the brand promise to appeal to potential members: *Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors. The People of The United Methodist Church.* It is the commitment to everyone who interacts with The United Methodist Church. The brand promise appeals strongly to people who are not United Methodist but who may be looking for a church community to call home or who are open to Christianity, in general.



Like the Cross and Flame, the brand promise is a registered trademark and cannot be altered.



#### ONLINE BRANDING TOOLKIT

United Methodist Communications' toolkit makes it easy for local churches, annual conferences, general agencies and other denominational entities to adopt more unified branding across the connection.

With downloadable logos, guidelines for fonts and colors and more, this toolkit provides all assets and guidelines needed for maintaining visual consistency.

We can develop standard branding logos for your church. Please contact us about our logo development service at [brand@UMCom.org](mailto:brand@UMCom.org).

This service is paid for through your World Service dollars. [ResourceUMC.org/brand](http://ResourceUMC.org/brand)

#### FONT FAMILIES

Trade Gothic Condensed is the official typeface family of United Methodist branded logos. Our secondary font family, Adobe Garamond, is a highly legible, classic, serif font.

#### TRADE GOTHIC CONDENSED 18

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy  
 ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
 0123456789

#### TRADE GOTHIC BOLD CONDENSED 20

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy  
 ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
 0123456789

#### ADOBE GARAMOND

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy  
 ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
 0123456789

These fonts cant be purchased fonts.com. A no-cost alternative font to Trade Gothic is Oswald and can be downloaded at [fonts.google.com](https://fonts.google.com).

#### COLOR PALETTE

Red and black are the main colors in our visual identity.

Below each, you will see its Pantone number and the numbers associated with the RGB (red, green, blue), CMYK (cyan,magenta, yellow, black) and hex color systems (for web use).

<b>UMC Red</b> Pantone: 185 CMYK: 0 93 70 0 RGB: 228 0 43 Hex: #E4002B	<b>100% Black</b> CMYK: 0 0 0 100 RGB: 35 31 32 Hex: #231F20
<b>UMC Blue</b> Pantone: 631 CMYK: 76 14 19 0 RGB: 4 167 194 Hex: #04A7C2	<b>UMC Gray 1</b> Pantone: 421 CMYK: 13 8 11 26 RGB: 178 180 178 Hex: #B2B4B2

#### THE CROSS AND FLAME ICON

- 1 Please keep open space around the Cross and Flame. Nothing should crowd the logo or the space around it.
- 2 The registration symbol must also be visible.
- 3 Don't alter the shape or proportion of the Cross and Flame.
- 4 Don't change or swap the colors.

#### BRAND PROMISE LOGO

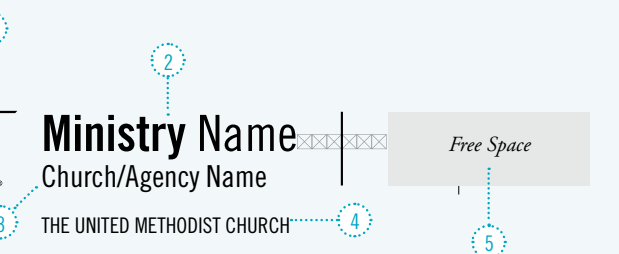
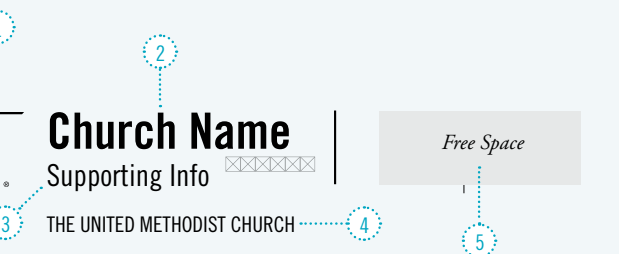
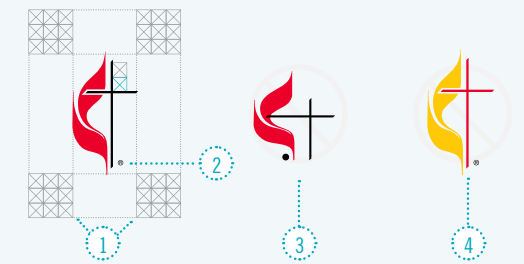
- 1 BRAND PROMISE  
 The "Brand Promise" of The United Methodist Church is "Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors." The Brand Promise always sits to the right of the Cross and Flame and over "The people of The United Methodist Church" in a smaller font.
- 2 HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL OPTIONS  
 Please never display horizontal at less than ¼ inch or the vertical version less than 1".
- 3 MINISTRY/CHURCH NAME  
 You may add your ministry/church name in black type below the denomination line.

#### CHURCH LOGO TEMPLATE

- 1 CROSS AND FLAME
- 2 CHURCH NAME
- 3 SUPPORTING INFO  
 Optional space is provided for a tagline or church location. If unneeded, the denomination name moves up into this space.
- 4 DENOMINATION NAME
- 5 FREE SPACE  
 Space is provided on the right for your church identity to join The United Methodist Church brand. Not required but available. The box height shown is preferred but width will vary.

#### MINISTRY LOGO TEMPLATE

- 1 CROSS AND FLAME
- 2 MINISTRY NAME  
 The first word in the name is a heavier weight than the second to help identify the ministry quickly.
- 3 CHURCH NAME
- 4 DENOMINATION
- 5 FREE SPACE



## APPENDIX F:

### Other writing styles

#### PRESS RELEASE WRITING STYLE

Strive to achieve maximum impact in your headline while using the fewest words necessary. The “lead” or first sentence of a news release must grab the reader’s attention so he or she wants to read further. Within the first few sentences, answer these questions: who, what, where, when and why?

Write news releases in an “inverted pyramid” format. Begin with the most important information, followed by other facts in descending importance. Ask yourself if your reader would have the primary information if an editor deleted the last few paragraphs. Keep your news release to one page, if possible.

Add interest and value to your story by including quotes attributed to one or two knowledgeable sources within your organization. Quotes also are a good way to include subjective information such as opinions, thoughts and beliefs. Consider the key ideas you want to get across and include those in your quotes.

While a poorly written news release often is rejected, smaller newspapers often print well-written releases word-for-word. Make sure your news release follows AP style and is free of misspelled words, typographical errors and grammatical mistakes. Strive to use active, not passive, voice. Use language aimed at the reader, not jargon only insiders will understand.

Include contact information at the top of the news release so media can call for more information. Include a name, phone number and alternate phone number. Time the release so your contact and/or spokesperson will be available for media calls the day of and the day following the release. Be sure to include your organization’s web address on your letterhead and news releases.

#### MARKETING WRITING STYLE

Marketing content is not intended for journalistic use; therefore, AP style is only loosely adhered to in marketing copy. Sentence structure, punctuation, casual tone, contractions, etc. can be more fluid and flexible because this type of content is meant to be personal, conversational, relatable and tailored to the reader. It also has to be as brief as possible in most circumstances.

Sometimes, the visual appearance of copy is also considered; for example, the format of a sentence might change so that it is more visually pleasing and powerful.

It is vital that marketing copy:

- ▶ Focuses on the specific audience it is intended to reach (i.e., church leader copy is much different than spiritual seeker copy)
- ▶ Is benefit-focused; rather than telling the reader what a new article is about and what *we* are doing/offering, marketing copy is all about the reader and uses action verbs so that the audience can engage with the content (use ‘you,’ not ‘we/our’)
- ▶ Contains a clear call to action...the reader must understand what you are asking them to do

*Example:*

**DON’T:** “Our communication best practices help churches by ensuring they are reaching out the community effectively. Click here to read our latest communication tips.”

**DO:** “Learn how to reach out to the community and grow your church with the help of the latest communication tips and best practices.”

#### DISPLAYING URLS AND HASHTAGS

To assist our audience with quick readability, UMC has adopted specific formatting for URLs and Hashtags.

- ▶ In all cases, UMC should be capitalized; a second word after UMC is lowercase to help the eye differentiate between words  
*Example:* [UMCmission.org](#), [#UMC](#)
- ▶ When URLs contain just one word after the “/”, initial capitalization isn’t necessary  
*Example:* [UMC.org/topics/the-connectional-table](#)
- ▶ When two or more words are used, all words should use initial capitalization to differentiate them from each other  
*Example:* [UnitedMethodistWomen.org](#), [#LiveWesley](#)
- ▶ “http://” and “www.” are not necessary in print because those elements are common knowledge  
*Example:* [UMC.org](#), [ResourceUMC.org/UMCom](#)

## APPENDIX G:

### Words to watch

These are words and terms that a reporter covering The United Methodist Church is likely to run across from time to time.

#### anti-gay

This is a loaded word. Many people in the church who oppose the practice of homosexuality will emphasize that they are not anti-gay.

#### fired

Avoid using this word if writing about a pastor who has not been reappointed to a church.

#### human sexuality

This is viewed as a euphemism for “homosexuality” or “LGBTQ issues.” People on both progressive and traditional sides of the church encourage the use of more clear and direct language about the topic at hand.

#### national

The United Methodist Church is a global connection, so be careful when using the word “national.” Make clear what nation is being referred to, and avoid using it as a general synonym for “U.S.”

#### pro-homosexual

Like “anti-gay,” this word carries a certain connotation that some supporters of gay and lesbian rights dislike.

#### racist

This potentially defamatory word should only be used with care, even in quoted material.

#### scam, scheme

These are hot words, potentially libelous.

#### unity

This has become a loaded term for people on the traditional and progressive ends of the church, both of which view it through a political filter.

The following words should not be used as verbs except in quoted material.

- ▶ conference
- ▶ disciple
- ▶ pastor
- ▶ resource

## APPENDIX H:

### Church open meetings: 2016 Book of Discipline excerpt

#### ¶1722. RESTRICTIONS ON CLOSED MEETINGS

In the spirit of openness and accountability, all meetings of councils, boards, agencies, commissions, and committees of the Church at all levels of the church, including subunit meetings and teleconferences, shall be open. Regardless of local laws or customs, all participants shall be notified at the beginning of any meeting, including telephone or video conference calls, if the meeting is being recorded electronically and the intended use of such recording. Portions of a meeting may be closed for consideration of specific subjects if such a closed session is authorized by an affirmative public vote of at least three-fourths of the voting members present. The vote shall be taken in public session and recorded in the minutes. Documents distributed in open meetings shall be considered public.

Great restraint should be used in closing meetings; closed sessions should be used as seldom as possible. Subjects that may be considered in closed session are limited to real estate matters; negotiations, when general knowledge could be harmful to the negotiation process; personnel matters; ¶16 issues related to the accreditation or approval of institutions; discussions relating to pending or potential litigation or collective bargaining; communications with attorneys or accountants; deployment of security personnel or devices and negotiations involving confidential third-party information. Meetings of the committee on pastor-parish or staff-parish relations are to be closed meetings pursuant to ¶258.2e. While it is expected that the General Conference, the Judicial Council, and the Council of Bishops will live by the spirit of this paragraph, each of these constitutional bodies is governed by its own rules of procedure.

A report on the results of a closed session shall be made immediately upon its conclusion or as soon thereafter as is practicable.

¶16. SEE JUDICIAL COUNCIL DECISIONS 751, 869, 1173

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