

**Living the
Connection:
The United Methodist
Church in 2022.**

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**The Season In Which We
Find Ourselves**

COVID-19 continues to impact our lives, our communities and our churches well beyond what any of us imagined.

Loss, division, fear and exhaustion are prevalent in our churches and communities.

War in Ukraine.

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**We are in
need of
healing ...
James
5:13-16**

The Prayer of Faith

¹³ Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing + • songs of praise. ¹⁴ Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

3

Our Sources of Strength ...

- Our God is faithful.
- Jesus is with us.
- Reading the Bible together.
- God's call on our lives as disciples of Jesus.
- Worship.
- Other spiritual disciplines.
- Our strong and vital connection.

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Big Question: What may happen in the future?

- ~ There are still a lot of unknowns.
- ~ We are walking across a bridge not yet completed.
- ~ There is plenty of time for this conversation.

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The United Methodist Church

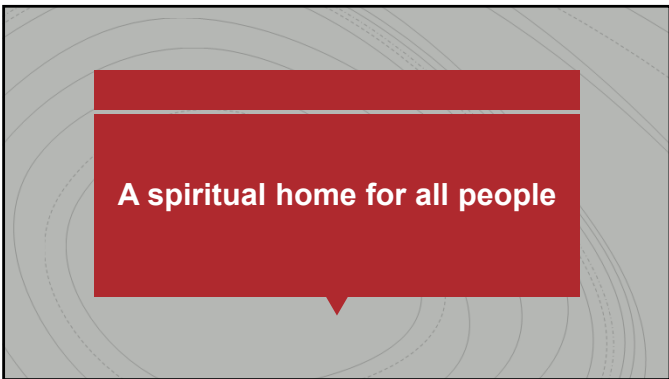
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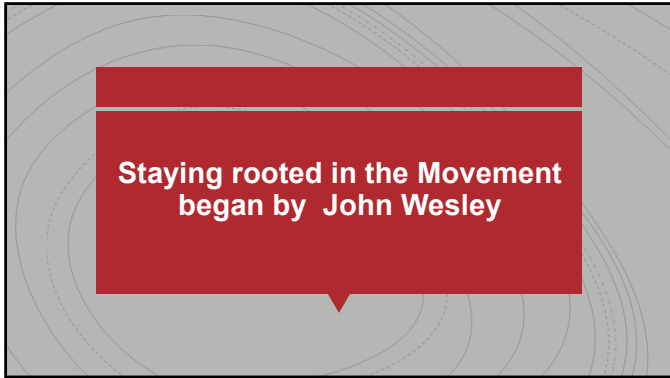
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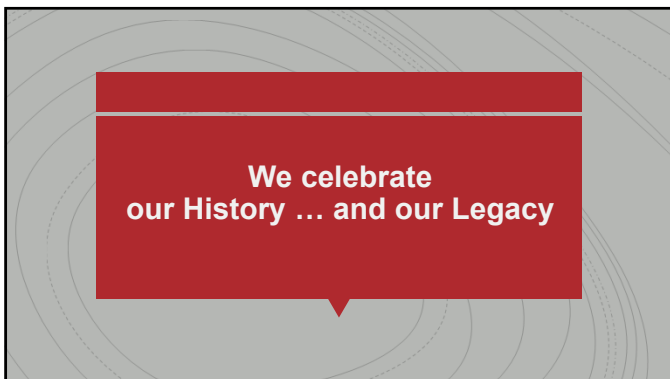
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The United Methodist Church came from the Episcopal/Anglican Tradition

John Wesley
1703-1791
Anglican Priest

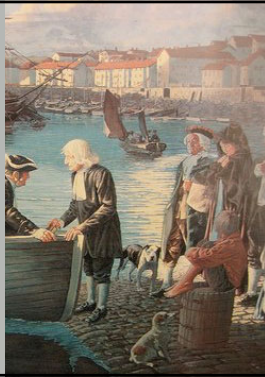


Charles Wesley
1707-1788
6300 Hymns



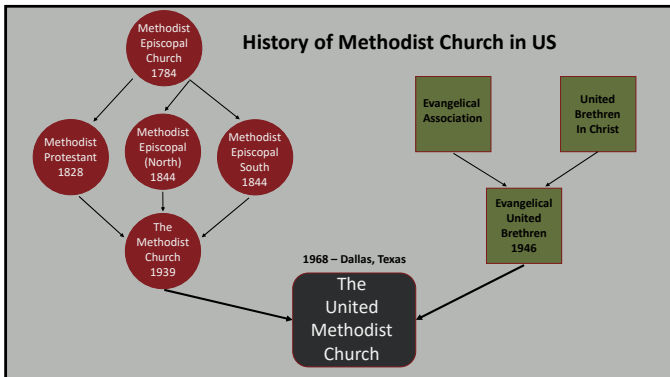
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- The People called "Methodist"**
- Evangelical Experience
 - Disciplined Faith Development
 - Connectional Ministry

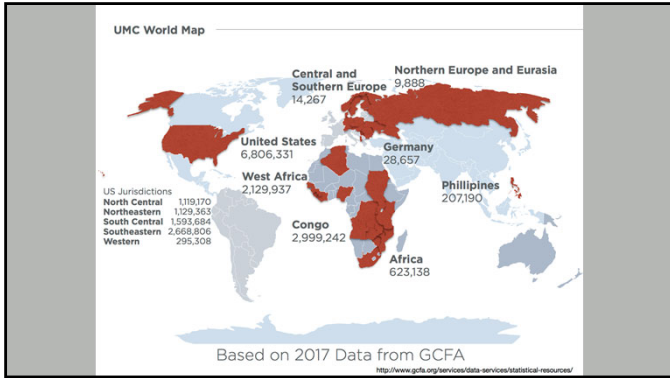


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History of Methodist Church in US



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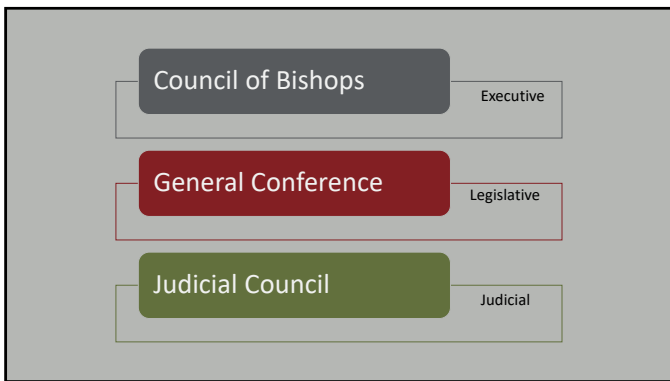


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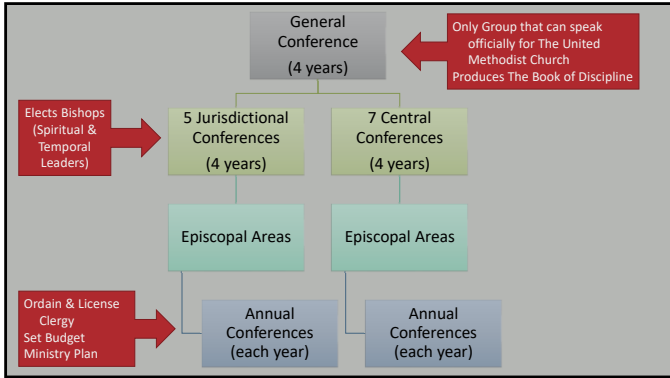
United Methodists Around the World

	US (2018)	Africa, Asia & Europe (2017)
Lay Members	6,448,992	6,452,265
Clergy Members	38,308	12,866
Baptized Members	525,913	N/A
Local/Organized Churches	30,543	12,869
Districts	419	451
Annual Conferences	54	80
Bishops/Episcopal Areas	46	20
Jurisdictions	5	N/A
Central Conferences	N/A	7

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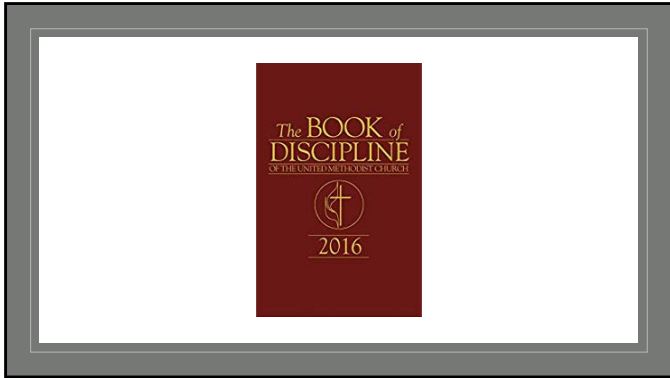
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Elder An ELDER is ordained minister that has the responsibilities to preach and teach, preside at the celebration of the sacraments, administer the Church through pastoral guidance, and lead the congregations under their care in service ministry to the world.

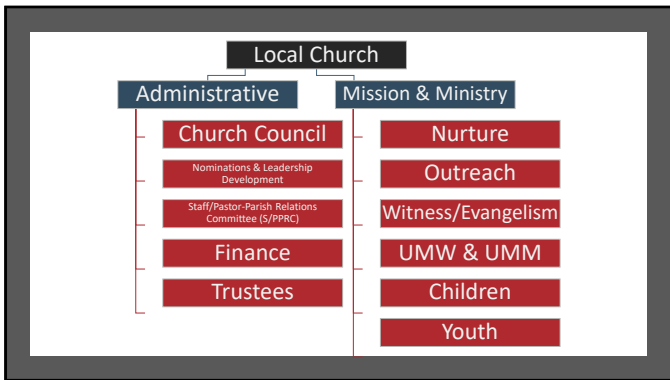
Deacon A DEACON is an ordained minister who teaches and preaches, officiates at funerals and weddings, offer pastoral care, lead discipleship development ministries and helps lay people identify and claim their own ministries. Deacons help to connect the local church to the world.

Local Pastor A LOCAL PASTOR is not ordained but is licensed to preach and conduct divine worship and perform the duties of a pastor in a particular local church.

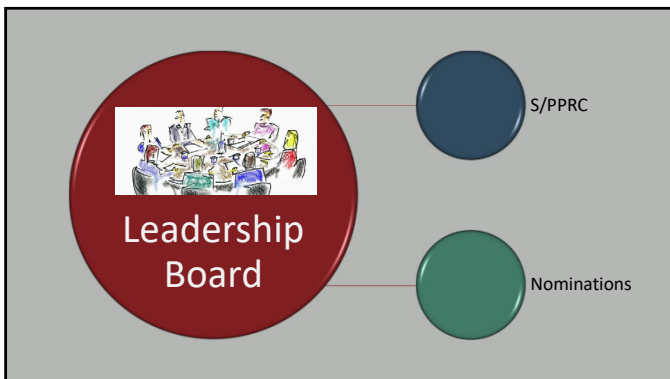
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A note about theology ...

- Our doctrinal standards are clear and have not changed:
 - The Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit
 - The Lordship of Christ
 - The virgin birth
 - The bodily resurrection
 - Scripture “contains all things necessary to salvation...”

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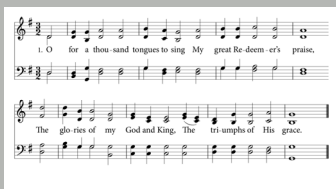
Our Common Core as Methodists

- The Apostles' and Nicene Creeds
- Articles of Religion & Confession of Faith
- The General Rules
 - Do no harm.
 - Do good.
 - Stay in love with God.

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Our Common Core as Methodists

- The Wesley Hymns



I O for a thou-sand tongues to sing My great Re-deem-er's praise,
The glo-ries of my God and King, The tri-umphs of His grace.

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O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing

O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King, the triumphs of his grace!

My gracious Master and my God, assist me to proclaim,
to spread through all the earth abroad the honors of thy name.

In Christ, your head, you then shall know, shall feel your sins
forgiven; anticipate your heaven below, and own that love is
heaven.

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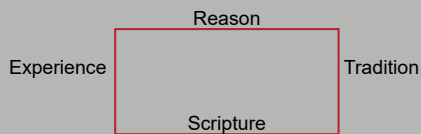
Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
with th'angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

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Our Common Core as Methodists

- A Connectional Way of Life
- Disciplined Engagement with Scripture



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Our Common Core as Methodists

- Works of Piety, Mercy and Justice
- Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist
- Small Group Accountability and Support

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Foundational Values of UMC

- + •
 - We are confident of what God has done in Christ Jesus for all humankind.
- - We are committed to personal salvation and transformation that leads to the transformation of our communities and the world.
 - Common Theological Center – “a deep well”.

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Foundational Values of UMC

- + •
 - Driven by the values of Unity and Mission - We are all United Methodists
- - We value remaining connected in mission.
 - We wish to honor differences in practices and non-essentials for the sake of contextual mission.
 - Allow for contextualization. Enable people with convicted humility to reach new people.

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We have a big gospel and a vital connection

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Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation

- One of many legislative proposals that will come before the postponed General Conference.
- Began as a vision of Bishop John Yambasu of Sierra Leone.
- Developed by a very diverse team of clergy, laity, and bishops with the help of a trained mediator – Kenneth Feinberg.

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Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation

- Released in January of 2020, placed in legislative form and sent by several annual conferences to the General Conference that was to take place in May of 2020.
- The original dates in the legislation will need to be updated and other amendments may be needed or considered.

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Goal of the Negotiated Protocol

To try and give something of value to those who have real differences.

- For some on the mediation team, this meant ensuring the continuation of The United Methodist Church that could focus on the mission of the church and avoid trials.
- For others on the mediation team, this meant ensuring the ability for local churches to separate from The United Methodist Church while retaining property and caring for clergy pensions.

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Agreement with local church

- Local Church joining a New Methodist denomination (pursuant to the Protocol Legislation if passed):
 - Retains its properties, assets and liabilities
 - Annual Conference will not exercise the historic trust clause. (Note: The basis for the trust clause is that a United Methodist Church was founded for the purpose of being a United Methodist Church.)
 - Expected to maintain connectional responsibilities prior to departure.

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Conference commitment ...

- We will walk with you. We will respond appropriately and timely to your questions and concerns.
- We will continue to guard the unity of the church by allowing for a contextual approach to ministry.

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Conference commitment ...

- We understand that some may depart. We will treat any persons or churches who choose to depart with respect and dignity and follow the *Discipline* process.
- We will continue to highlight ways to be in ministry together by creating pathways to the post-COVID church.

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Pathways to the post-COVID church

1. Vital, Sustainable, Innovative Local Churches and Fresh Expressions of Church.
2. Anti-Racism as Discipleship and Sanctification
3. Resilience and Health of Clergy and Spiritual Leaders
4. The Continuing United Methodist Church as a source of Unity and Connection for the purpose of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

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Time of Questions and Answers

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To learn more ...

- www.umc.org
- www.resourceumc.org
- www.umnews.org
- acoles@wnccumc.org

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A few closing reminders ...

- Stay in connection with one another.
- Keep prayer at the center.
- A spirit of convicted humility.
- We are all on a journey toward the Kingdom of God, a place where ... God's will is done on earth, as it is in heaven.

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- God is not done with any of us yet. We are all on a journey of discipleship and sanctification.
- This is an act of surrender ... of denying ourselves ... taking up our cross ... and following Jesus. Believing that God can do immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine ...

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- If we do this work with complete surrender to God's unlimited imagination and kingdom purposes, we will be blessed beyond our limited human imagination.
 - God remains God; Christ is with us; God will never let us go. To God be the glory!
