



Commonly used terms in United Methodism

There are a lot of words and phrases associated with [The United Methodist Church](#) and its organizational structure. To help people to understand and navigate the language of the church, we've put together a glossary of terms commonly used along with their definitions.

Local churches: Most individuals have their initial contact with the denomination in the local church. Some local church members don't realize that they are part of a bigger whole or connection. Each church belongs to a district, an annual conference, an episcopal area, a jurisdiction, the General Church, connected through these structures in mission and ministry to churches and annual conferences around the world.

Annual Conference: A regional, organizational unit of The United Methodist Church **and** the yearly business meeting of that unit, both presided over by a bishop. The business session is composed of equal numbers of clergy and laity.

Below are the currently assigned Bishops of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church

(NOTE: assignments took effect on January 1, 2023 and Pendleton United Methodist Church is in the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference)

Bishop Tom Berlin

Florida Area, which includes the Florida Conference

Address: 450 Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave.

Lakeland, FL 33815-1522

Phone: 863-688-5563

Fax: 863-687-0568

Email: bishopberlin@flumc.org

Bishop Ken Carter

Charlotte Area, which includes the Western North Carolina Conference

Address: P.O. Box 18750

Charlotte, NC 28218

Phone: 704-535-2260

Fax: 704-535-9160

Email: bishop@wnccumc.org

Bishop Robin Dease

North Georgia Area, which includes the North Georgia Conference

Address: 1700 Century Circle, NE, #100

Atlanta, GA 30345

Phone: 678-533-1360

Fax: 678-533-1361

Email: bishop@ngumc.org

Bishop Leonard Fairley

Louisville Area, which includes the Kentucky and Central Appalachian
Missionary Conferences

Address: 7400 Floydsburg Road

Crestwood, KY 40014-8202

Phone: 502-425-4240

Fax: 502-425-9232

Email: bishop@kyumc.org

Bishop David Graves

Alabama-West Florida Area, which includes the Alabama-West Florida
Conference

Address: 4719 Woodmere Boulevard

Montgomery, AL 36106

Phone: 334-277-1787

Fax: 334-277-0109

Email: bishop@awfumc.org

South Georgia Area, which includes the South Georgia Conference

Address: P.O. Box 7227

Macon, GA 31209-7227

Phone: 478-475-9286

Fax: 478-475-9248

Email: dgraves@sgaumc.com

Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson

Richmond Area, which includes the Virginia Conference

Address: P.O. Box 5606

Glen Allen, VA 23058

Phone: 804-521-1102

Fax: 804-521-1178

Email: bishop@vaumc.org

Bishop Jonathan Holston

Columbia Area, which includes the South Carolina Conference

Address: 4908 Colonial Drive, Suite 121

Columbia, SC 29203-6000

Phone: 803-786-9486

Fax: 803-754-9327

Email: bishop@umcsc.org

Bishop Sharma Lewis

Mississippi Area, which includes the Mississippi Conference

Address: 320-E Briarwood Drive

Jackson, MS 39206

Phone: 601-948-4561

Fax: 601-948-5981

Email: bishop@mississippi-umc.org

Bishop Bill McAlilly

Nashville Area, which includes the Tennessee-Western Kentucky
Conference

Address: 1908 Grand Avenue

Nashville, TN 37212

Phone: 615-742-8834

Fax: 615-742-3726

Email: bishop@twkumc.org

Bishop Connie Mitchell Shelton

Raleigh Area, which includes the North Carolina Conference

Address: 700 Waterfield Ridge Place

Garner, NC 27529

Phone: 919-779-6115

Fax: 919-773-2416
Email: bishop@nccumc.org

Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett

Birmingham Area, which includes the North Alabama Conference
Address: 898 Arkadelphia Road
Birmingham, AL 35204-5011
Phone: 205-226-7991
Fax: 205-226-7998
Email: dpadgett@umcna.org

Holston Area, which includes the Holston Conference
Address: P.O. Box 850
Alcoa, TN 37701-0850
Phone: 865-690-4080
Fax: 865-690-7112
Email: dwp@holston.org

Districts: Each Annual Conference is typically divided up into different geographical areas known as districts where the church ministry is guided by a District Superintendent who is also the supervisor for clergy and pastoral staff serving in that area.

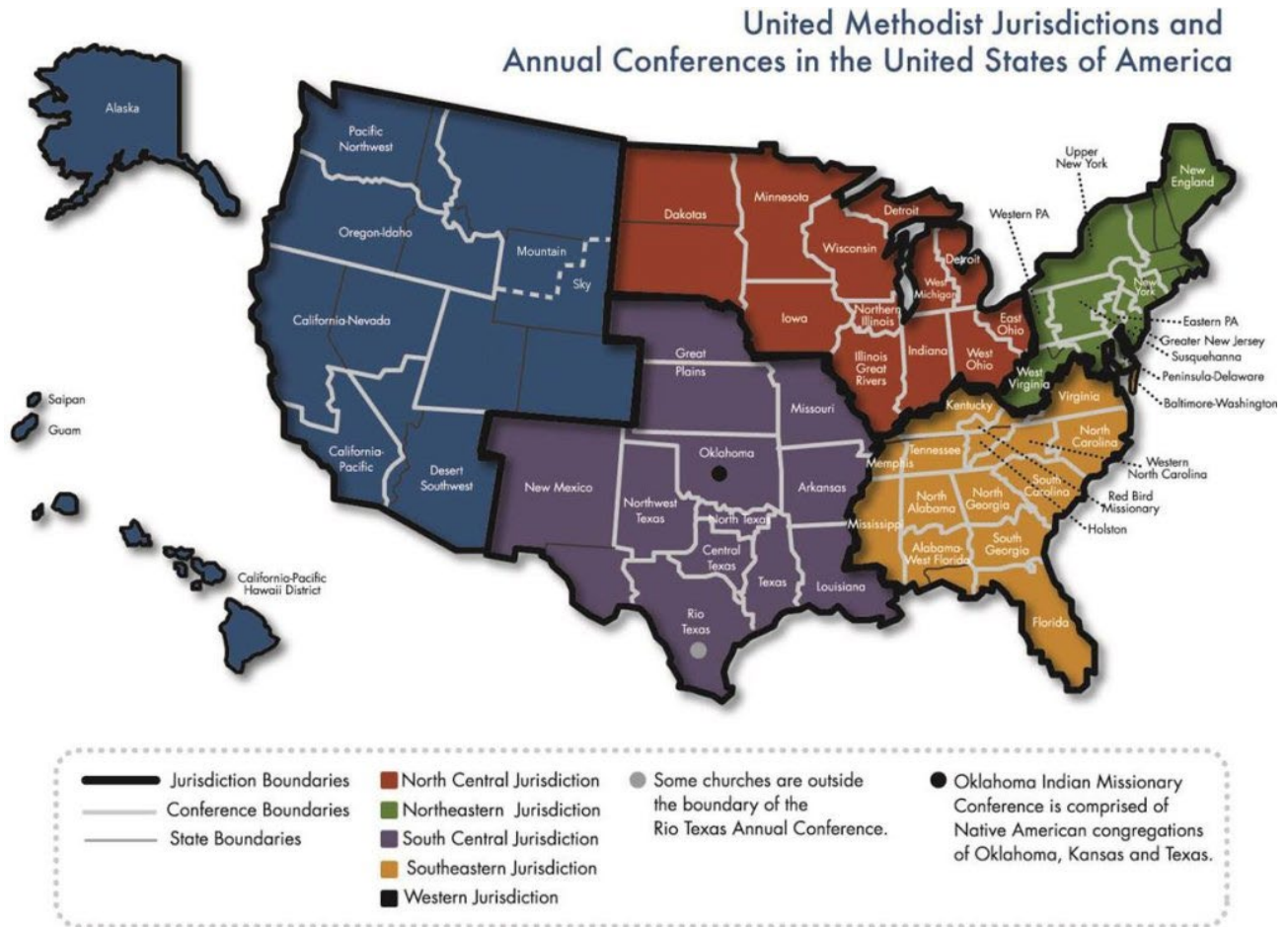
Episcopal Area: The annual conference or conferences to which a bishop is assigned by the Jurisdictional or Central conference. The bishop lives within the bounds of the episcopal area and presides over the work of one or more annual conferences.

- Bishops in The United Methodist Church are assigned to Episcopal Areas.
- There are more than 958 local churches and ministry settings across South Carolina.
 - [Church Directory - South Carolina UMC \(umcsc.org\)](http://umcsc.org)

General Conference: The General Conference is an international body of nearly 1,000 delegates that generally meets every four years. The delegates are elected by annual conferences (at annual conference sessions) to attend General Conference. They represent all annual conferences around the world. Half of the delegates are laity (non-clergy members), half are clergy.

Jurisdiction: The United States is divided into five geographic areas known as jurisdictions, each composed of several annual conferences as determined by

the General Conference: North Central, Northeastern, South Central, Southeastern and Western.



The Book of Discipline: A fundamental book outlining the law, doctrine, administration, organizational work and procedures of The United Methodist Church. Each General Conference amends *The Book of Discipline*, and the actions of the General Conference are reflected in the quadrennial revision. Often referred to as *The Discipline*.

Council of Bishops: Bishops of The United Methodist Church provide spiritual leadership to almost 12 million persons in a broad range of settings on four continents, including North America, Europe, Africa and Asia. All bishops are members of the Council of Bishops, which collectively is charged with the general oversight and promotion of the temporal and spiritual interests of the entire Church. Bishops are specifically assigned to preside over the work of a regional area.

College of Bishops: The bishops of each jurisdictional and central conference constitute a College of Bishops. They provide episcopal leadership for the

Annual Conferences, Missionary Conferences, and missions within the Jurisdiction. The College of Bishops holds responsibility for providing leadership in the event of a leave of absence, retirement, or death of an active bishop, and it receives any complaints against bishops in the Jurisdiction.

Judicial Council: The Judicial Council is the highest judicial body or “court” of The United Methodist Church. Its nine members are elected by the General Conference. The Judicial Council 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. This is done in accordance with procedures established in The Book of Discipline.

Apportionment: The share each annual conference or local church pays to support international, national and regional (annual conference, jurisdiction) mission.

Delegate: A pastor or layperson elected by an annual conference as its representative to General Conference, Jurisdictional Conference or Central Conference.

Church Conference: The convening of the Charge Conference as a meeting in which all members of a local United Methodist church are invited to attend and are extended the privilege of a vote. A Church Conference is called to have broad participation of the members of the congregation. The Church Conference must be authorized by the district superintendent.

Quadrennium: The official four-year period beginning January 1 following each regularly scheduled General Conference, during which time The United Methodist Church implements General Conference legislation.

Consecration: The act of conferring a ministerial office or function through prayer and the laying on of hands, as for a bishop at a session of the Jurisdictional Conference.

Sacraments: The United Methodist Church recognizes two sacraments, baptism and communion. These two acts have a special place in the church because Jesus commanded them and participated in them. Baptism marks the beginning of our lifelong journey as disciples of Jesus Christ. Communion nourishes and sustains us on the journey.

Membership Vows: Taken when a person joins a United Methodist church as a baptized or professing member. By taking the baptismal and local church

membership vows, the individual agrees to covenant with God and the members of the local church to keep the vows that are part of living the baptismal covenant and reception into membership in the local church.

Council of Stewards: The chief decision-making body of a local church, responsible for envisioning, planning, implementing, and annually evaluating the mission and ministry of the church. The Council of Stewards consists of the chairs of committees, elected “at large” members, church staff members, and other key leaders within the church. This committee is also sometimes referred to as the Church Council or Administrative Board.