

Guide for First-Time Members to the Tennessee Annual Conference

There are 132 annual conferences around the world, with 56 in the United States. The Tennessee Conference, in the Southeastern Jurisdiction, is led by Bishop Bill McAlilly, who was elected as a bishop at the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference in 2012. Bishops often serve for two consecutive four-year terms. Our conference has 564 churches or charges and approximately **116,740** members. Bishop McAlilly presides over the Annual Conference Session but, as in the General Conference, does not vote.

We offer this short guide to help familiarize new members – and remind others – of the nuts and bolts of our holy conferencing.

THE MISSION OF THE TENNESSEE CONFERENCE

...is to discover, equip, connect, and send lay and clergy leaders who shape congregations that offer Jesus Christ to a hurting world one neighborhood at a time

Conference staff includes the bishop; five district superintendents and their respective district administrators; several program and support staff; and financial/operations and communications staff. The District Superintendent's are:

Caney Fork River District - District Superintendent Donna Parramore

Cumberland River District - District Superintendent Scott Aleridge

Harpeth River District - District Superintendent Allen Black

Red River District - District Superintendent Ken Murray

Stones River District - District Superintendent Chip Hunter (*projected to begin July 1, 2018*)

Each local church and charge belongs to a district. Most churches or charges (two or more churches with one pastor) are presided over by either an ordained Elder or a probationary Elder, local pastors, part-time local pastors, student pastors, certified lay ministers or certified lay speakers.

Who are “Members of Annual Conference”?

All clergy (Elders and Deacons) hold their membership in the annual conference, not in a local church. Deaconesses and diaconal ministers, both retired and active, are “Lay Members of Annual Conference.”

The Book of Discipline requires an equal number of laity and clergy to be members of the Annual Conference Session. To be a voting member, a lay person must be elected by his or her local church through a nomination and voting process that is held at the annual Charge Conference.

The Charge Conference is to the local church what the Annual Conference Session is to the conference; i.e., the annual business meeting. Charge Conferences may happen more often, but they must happen at least once a year, under the rules of the Book of Discipline. A district superintendent or her/his designee presides.

The laity are *members* of Annual Conference – not *delegates*. There are several “at-large” members to annual conference, who, by virtue of their district, conference or national positions, are also voting members of the annual conference.



51st SESSION OF THE TENNESSEE CONFERENCE

Theme: “*See All The People*”

The Annual Conference Session is presided over by Bishop Bill McAlilly, who is the legal chairperson of the annual conference. Other officers include the Conference Secretary (Monica Mowdy), elected for a four-year term at the beginning of the quadrennium; the Conference Treasurer (Jim Allen); the Conference Lay Leader (Holly Neal); and the Chancellor (Lisa Carson).

The bishop’s decisions must conform to the Rules of Order. Under our rules, during speeches, the bishop recognizes each person asking to speak, and allows three minutes. See rules at www.tnumc.org/rules.

What is the business of Annual Conference Session?

This year, members will be called upon to vote on several items including the 2018 annual budget and several resolutions, which are all presented on the conference website.

Annual conference also includes many opportunities for inspirational worship, reports from areas of the conference; and the Ordination and Commissioning service. Worked in are celebrations of various kinds, prayers for discernment and times of learning and fellowship.

View the Conference Schedule for a list of planned events at www.tnumc.org/ac2018

Annual Conference 2018 Offering



This year's annual conference offering goes to the Mama Lynn Center for Survivors of Sexual Violence. Based in Kindu, Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Center (named after Lynn McAlilly) will help women physically, psychologically, spiritually and provide opportunities for economic empowerment.

California-Pacific, Memphis and Tennessee Annual Conferences are supporting the East Congo Episcopal Area in this effort that shines Christ's light in a war-torn part of the world. Gifts to complete the building and begin programming are greatly needed. Bring your gifts to annual conference or give online through [PayPal](https://www.paypal.com).

Churches can submit donations by signing in to their [electronic payments account](#).



Who can vote and how do I vote?

When you register, you are given a nametag that indicates who can vote (this is your voter ID card). Early in the conference schedule, the bishop declares the boundaries of the bar. People who are not allowed to vote, i.e. guests and friends, staff and a few others, must sit “outside the bar.”

To be eligible and able to vote, you must sit “inside the bar” (note: the balcony is NOT inside the bar) and have your nametag/voter ID card at the time of voting, otherwise, you will not be allowed to vote - even if you are an eligible voter. Lay members vote. Clergy vote. Guests do not.

Any voter may speak from the floor to a motion. The bishop controls who speaks, speeches are limited to three minutes. Robert’s Rules of Order are followed.

Alternate Members, elected by each church, may attend to hear the debate and procedures, but may not vote. If a Lay Member to Annual Conference is unable to fulfill their duties as the representative of a charge to annual conference, the Alternate Lay Member to Annual Conference from that charge, elected at charge conference, can fill their position. However, they can only vote as a substitute for the Lay Member after they have officially been recognized by the Conference Secretary.

To fill this substitute position, the Lay Member needs to turn in their voting credentials (name tag) to the Annual Conference Help Desk at Brentwood UMC and then the new voting credentials can be distributed to the Alternate Lay Member to serve in the role of Lay Member.

If that is not possible, the pastor of the charge can submit an email to izzie.zimmerman@tnumc.com OR sign the appropriate form at the Annual Conference Help Desk at Brentwood. (If the pastor is not able to do so, the same can be submitted by the District Superintendent of the District for that charge.)

Until something official has been submitted, the Alternate to Annual Conference will not be given voting credentials.

Someone speaking to a motion is asked to give his or her name and their church before beginning to speak to only one issue. If proposing an amendment, the speaker is asked to write out a statement and give a copy to the secretaries who are sitting in the front of the sanctuary to assure that the words are recorded properly.

Any member may “move for the question,” which takes precedence over the debate going on. It requires two-thirds agreement. The Annual Conference Session follows its own “Rules of the Session.” In any parliamentary situation not clearly covered by the Rules of the Session, the Conference is governed in its actions by the current edition of **Robert’s Rules of Order**.

What if I have questions while attending annual conference?

Staff and volunteers will wear blue “Ask Me” t-shirts or buttons. You’ll find all staff friendly and willing to help; if the person you ask doesn’t have the answer, he or she can probably point to someone who does.

The Communications team will do daily recaps – available on the new TNAC2018 App and on the conference website at www.tnumc.org/AC2018. That page is where you can find links to just about everything you will need to know about annual conference. These daily summaries of the actions of annual conference are posted on the website to assist you in reporting to your local church.

Sometimes I don't understand what is meant. Can you help?

Here is a list of “jargon,” words that we United Methodists use without thinking, but that someone new to the process might have trouble with. It's in alphabetical order for easy reference.

Apportionments: Every church is expected to pay its apportionments, the share of the overall expenses of running a large denomination, jurisdiction, annual conference and district. Apportionment giving financially underwrites United Methodist ministry and mission beyond the local church. The amount for each church is reached by a specific formula.

Book of Discipline: This is the official manual of procedures and regulations. It covers every aspect of church life, doctrine, guidance for Christian behavior, procedures for becoming a church member or minister, protocols for organizing and administering local churches, annual conferences, districts and churchwide boards and agencies, as well as rules of church law. It is revised every four years at General Conference. The current one is dated 2016. The last General Conference was May 10-20, 2016, in Portland, Ore. The next officially scheduled General Conference is May 5-15, 2020, in Minneapolis, Minn.

Book of Resolutions: This book explains the many social and justice ministries' actions that The United Methodist Church believes in, teaches, and practices. It contains all resolutions or pronouncements on issues approved by the General Conference and currently valid.

Cabinet: The Appointive Cabinet includes the bishop and five district superintendents.

Central Conference: This refers to the seven geographic areas of Africa, Europe and the Philippines, each composed of annual conferences. In the Central Conferences, there are currently 76 annual conferences with 14,212 active clergy. Our partner conferences in Zimbabwe and Russia are each part of the Central Conferences. We are also partners with Methodist churches in South Korea and Puerto Rico.

Charge Conference: The basic policy-making body of the local church. It reviews the congregation's ministries, endorses candidates for ministry and sets clergy compensation.

Connectional: You often hear this word used, as in “We're a connectional church.” It's unique to The United Methodist Church and simply means all United Methodist leaders and congregations throughout the world are connected by certain loyalties and commitments that call us to live in covenantal accountability. “Connectionalism” empowers us to be in ministry around the world and our relationships are on equal footing, not one dominating over another.

Deacon: A person ordained to lifetime ministry of Word and service to community and congregation. Deacons are not part of the itinerant system, which appoints pastors to churches; they find their own positions that are then approved by the bishop. They, along with the Elders, are ordained at annual conference. After ordination, they carry the title “Reverend.”

District: Regional group of churches or charges, supervised by a district superintendent. The TN Conference has five district superintendents, who are appointed by the bishop to administer the work of the church within a particular geographic area.

Elder: A person ordained to a lifetime ministry of service, Word, sacrament and order. He or she is authorized to administer the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion and to order the church for mission and ministry. After ordination, they are referred to as “Reverend.”

Itinerancy: The system of The United Methodist Church by which pastors are appointed to their charges by the bishops, unlike other denominations where a pastor is “called.” Pastors are under obligation to serve where appointed.

Local Pastor: A licensed pastor, annually approved by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry, who is authorized to perform all duties of an ordained minister while assigned to a particular church or charge under the supervision of a district superintendent.

Provisional or Probationary Elder or Deacon: In the process toward ordination for either Deacons or Elders, there is a three-year period that is somewhat like an internship. He or she serves in a church as its leader or in an associate position, studies, takes tests and develops their spiritual life. After successfully completing the time, the person can be ordained. The term has changed from “probationary” to “provisional,” but the old name lingers.

Social Principles: A document setting forth the basic position of The United Methodist Church on important social issues. Each General Conference reviews the **Social Principles** document, makes changes, and reissues it in full in the Book of Discipline.

Information on the General Church



The United Methodist Church had 7,067,162 full members in the United States at the end of 2015, and 5,525,924 full members in 2013 in the Central Conferences (Conferences located outside the United States). This does not include the more than 61,000 clergy worldwide. In total,

The United Methodist Church counts more than 61,000 churches around the globe. Average attendance at weekly worship services in the United States was 2,749,926 in 2015. There are 46 active bishops who govern and administer the roughly 32,000 churches in the United States. Outside the U.S., there are 20 active bishops, of whom 13 are in Africa.

The United Methodist Church was formed in 1968 with the union of the Evangelical United Brethren (thus the “United”) and Methodist Episcopal churches.

The United Methodist Church does not have a central headquarters or a single executive leader. Duties are divided among bodies that include the General Conference, the Council of Bishops and the Judicial Council. Each of these entities is required by our Constitution, a foundational document, to be part of our structure, and plays a significant role in the life of the church.

The General Conference: The United Methodist General Conference meets every four years, with no fewer than 600, nor more than 1,000 delegates. It **last met in 2016**, in Portland, Ore. At the General Conference session, delegates from all over the world voted on many items which then amend and add to the **Book of Discipline** and the **Book of Resolutions**. The General Conference might be compared to the legislative branch of the U.S. government. The General Conference is the only official voice of The United Methodist Church. Though bishops preside over the General Conference, they have no vote.

The Tennessee Conference had four clergy and four laity delegates elected to the 2016 General Conference during the Annual Conference Session in 2015. Tennessee Conference also had four alternates. Those twelve delegates became the first people elected to the Jurisdictional Conference delegation. In addition, two clergy and two laity were elected to the Jurisdictional Conference, with four alternates from the laity and four from the clergy.

Working with the General Conference is the **Council of Bishops**, 164 active and retired bishops from all over the world, who meet somewhat like the executive branch of the U.S. government. Currently, the U.S. has 46 bishops who administer 56 annual conferences. They elect their own leader each quadrennium.

The president of the Council of Bishops is Bishop Ken Carter, who serves the Florida Episcopal Area. In Africa, Europe, and the Philippines are 20 bishops administering 74 annual conferences, varying a great deal in geographic size.

As the denomination's "Supreme Court," a nine-member **Judicial Council** composed of both laity and clergy, interprets church law and determines constitutionality of proceedings at all levels of church life. It usually meets twice a year in the spring and fall to consider whether actions of various church bodies adhere to the constitution and Book of Discipline.

The next largest body is the Jurisdictional Conference. There are five jurisdictions in the United States: Northeastern, North Central, Southeastern, South Central and Western.

The Tennessee Conference is one of 15 conferences (13 bishops) that belong to the Southeastern Jurisdiction.

The Jurisdictional Conference meets every four years following the General Conference; its primary function is to elect bishops. It also conducts business of interest to the whole region, such as mergers of Conferences. The last Jurisdictional Conference was held July 11-15, 2016, in Lake Junaluska, NC. At this meeting the Tennessee Conference, Bishop Bill McAlilly was reassigned to serve our conference.

Much more information about the United Methodist Church is available at www.umc.org.