



COMMITTEE HANDBOOK

GUIDE • SERVE • GROW • TOGETHER

*Equipping and empowering
our committees to fulfill God's mission
and strengthen the ministry
of Mountain Vista UMC.*



LOVE
Boldly



SERVE
Faithfully



GROW
Spiritually



REACH
Generously

Church Council

The Church Council is the congregation's primary leadership body. It serves as the place where the church's ministries come together to pray, discern God's direction, coordinate efforts, and evaluate how effectively the congregation is fulfilling its mission.

The *Book of Discipline* assigns the Church Council responsibility for planning and coordinating the ministry of the congregation. While other committees focus on specialized areas—such as finance, property, nominations, or staff relationships—the Church Council looks at the whole picture. It asks not only whether individual ministries are functioning well, but whether they are working together to accomplish the church's mission.

The Council should spend less time maintaining programs and more time discerning where God is leading the congregation next.

The Purpose of the Church Council

The Council exists to:

- Keep the congregation focused on its mission.
- Coordinate the work of ministry teams and committees.
- Encourage collaboration rather than competition.
- Steward the church's resources faithfully.
- Evaluate ministry effectiveness.
- Celebrate what God is doing.
- Discern future opportunities for ministry.
- Strengthen the congregation's witness in the community.

The Church Council is not simply a reporting body. It is the congregation's primary place of spiritual leadership and discernment.

Responsibilities of the Church Council Chair

The chair's primary role is not to control the meeting but to facilitate faithful discernment.

Before the Meeting

- Meet with the pastor to prepare the agenda.
- Review unfinished business.
- Request reports in advance.
- Pray for Council members.
- Ensure needed materials are distributed.

During the Meeting

- Begin with prayer and Scripture.
- Keep discussions focused on mission.
- Encourage balanced participation.
- Clarify motions and decisions.
- Summarize action items before moving on.
- Respect time while allowing space for discernment.

After the Meeting

- Ensure minutes are completed.
- Follow up on assigned tasks.
- Encourage ministry leaders.
- Communicate decisions to the congregation when appropriate.
- Celebrate progress.

For further reading: <https://www.umc.org/en/content/book-of-discipline-252-the-church-council> OR <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/church-committees-church-council>

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is responsible for overseeing the congregation's real and personal property on behalf of the church and in accordance with the provisions of the *Book of Discipline* and applicable civil law.

Trustees serve as faithful stewards of the church's physical resources so that the congregation can carry out its ministry safely, responsibly, and effectively. They care for these resources not as owners, but as caretakers, always seeking to support the mission and ministries of the church.

Primary Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees is generally responsible for:

- Caring for church buildings and grounds.
- Maintaining furnishings and equipment.
- Overseeing property records and legal documents.
- Monitoring insurance coverage.
- Recommending capital improvements.
- Ensuring routine maintenance is completed.
- Addressing safety concerns.
- Supporting accessibility improvements.
- Reviewing contracts related to property.
- Working cooperatively with the Committee on Finance regarding major expenditures.

Trustees generally do **not**:

- Determine the church's mission or vision (Church Council).
- Prepare or approve the church budget (Finance Committee and Church Council).
- Hire or supervise church staff (SPRC and pastor).
- Select worship themes or music (pastor and Worship Committee).
- Make unilateral decisions about major ministry priorities.

Their role is to support ministry through faithful stewardship of property.

Responsibilities of the Chairperson

(The chairperson serves as the coordinator of the Board of Trustees.)

Key responsibilities include:

Meeting Preparation

- Prepare agendas.
- Review unfinished projects.
- Gather estimates and reports when needed.
- Coordinate with the pastor and church administrator.
- Ensure members receive information before meetings.

Project Oversight

- Monitor ongoing repairs.
- Track maintenance schedules.
- Follow up on approved projects.
- Coordinate volunteers and contractors as appropriate.

Communication

- Keep the Church Council informed.
- Provide written reports.
- Communicate building concerns promptly.
- Coordinate with the Finance Committee on funding needs.

Leadership Development

- Mentor future trustees.
- Encourage shared responsibility.
- Identify volunteers with skills in maintenance, construction, engineering, landscaping, or project management.

For further reading: <https://www.umc.org/en/content/book-of-discipline-2525-ff-board-of-trustees> OR <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/church-committees-board-of-trustees>

Committee on Finance

The Committee on Finance ensures that the church's financial resources are managed wisely, ethically, and in support of the church's mission.

The committee works collaboratively with the pastor, treasurer, financial secretary, Board of Trustees, and Church Council to develop a comprehensive financial plan that equips the congregation for ministry.

Primary Responsibilities

The Committee on Finance generally oversees:

- Preparing and recommending the annual operating budget.
- Monitoring income and expenditures throughout the year.
- Encouraging faithful stewardship and generosity.
- Coordinating the annual stewardship campaign.
- Reviewing monthly financial reports.
- Recommending financial policies and procedures.
- Ensuring appropriate internal financial controls.
- Coordinating with the annual financial review or audit.
- Monitoring reserve funds and designated accounts.
- Recommending major financial priorities to the Church Council.
- Supporting long-range financial planning.

The committee's work is both strategic and pastoral, helping the congregation align its financial decisions with its mission and values.

The Finance Committee generally does **not**:

- Count weekly offerings (this is typically assigned to designated counters under established procedures).
- Perform the duties of the Treasurer or Financial Secretary.
- Supervise church staff (SPRC).
- Determine property maintenance priorities independently (Board of Trustees).
- Establish the church's mission or vision (Church Council).
- Spend funds outside the authority granted by the congregation or Church Council.
- Override donor restrictions or designated gifts.

Responsibilities of the Chairperson

The chairperson guides the committee's work with integrity, transparency, and a spirit of stewardship.

Spiritual Leadership

- Keep the committee focused on mission rather than scarcity.
- Foster a spirit of gratitude and generosity.

Meeting Preparation

- Prepare agendas with input from the treasurer, pastor, and other leaders.
- Review financial reports before meetings.
- Identify emerging financial concerns.
- Ensure members receive materials in advance.

Budget Leadership

- Coordinate preparation of the annual budget.
- Facilitate discussions about ministry priorities.
- Encourage realistic planning.
- Present recommendations to the Church Council.

Financial Oversight

- Review trends in giving and expenditures.
- Monitor compliance with approved financial policies.
- Recommend improvements in procedures when needed.
- Coordinate the annual financial review or audit.

Communication

- Provide regular reports to the Church Council.
- Help interpret financial information in ways that are clear and meaningful.

For further reading: <https://www.umc.org/en/content/book-of-discipline-2584-committee-on-finance> OR <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/church-committees-finance>

Lay Servant Ministry

Lay Servants work collaboratively with clergy and lay leaders to support the church's mission while encouraging the ministry of all believers.

Their role is flexible because every congregation has unique gifts and needs, yet their focus remains the same: helping people grow as disciples of Jesus Christ

Primary Responsibilities

Depending upon their gifts, training, and the needs of the congregation, Lay Servants may:

- Lead worship services.
- Share devotional messages or preach when authorized.
- Teach Bible studies and small groups.
- Visit members who are homebound, hospitalized, or in care facilities.
- Welcome and mentor new members.
- Encourage spiritual growth within the congregation.
- Support outreach and mission ministries.
- Assist in leadership development.
- Help identify and nurture spiritual gifts.
- Represent the congregation at district or conference events.
- Model Christian discipleship in everyday life.

Whatever their specific responsibilities, Lay Servants seek to inspire others to participate in God's mission.

Lay Servants generally do **not**:

- Perform sacramental ministries reserved to ordained clergy unless specifically authorized under the Discipline.
- Supervise church staff.
- Make decisions independently on behalf of the Church Council.
- Serve as the sole spiritual leader of the congregation.

Responsibilities of the Lay Servant Chairperson

Where a congregation has multiple Lay Servants or a Lay Servant ministry team, the chairperson provides coordination and encouragement.

Spiritual Leadership

- Pray regularly for Lay Servants and the congregation.
- Encourage continued spiritual growth.
- Foster servant leadership rooted in humility.

Coordination

- Help organize Lay Servant ministries.
- Coordinate schedules for worship leadership, visitation, and teaching assignments.
- Encourage participation in district and conference training.

Communication

- Keep the pastor and Church Council informed of Lay Servant activities.
- Share opportunities for ministry and service.
- Celebrate stories of lives impacted through Lay Servant ministry.

Leadership Development

- Mentor emerging Lay Servants.
- Encourage certification and continuing education.
- Help members discern spiritual gifts and possible calls to ministry.

Lay Servants serve as collaborators across the life of the church rather than functioning as a separate ministry silo.

For further reading: <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/churchwide/liderazgo-en-la-imu/laicado> AND/OR <https://www.mtnskyumc.org/lay-servant-ministries>

Committee on Nominations & Leadership Development

The Committee on Nominations & Leadership Development identifies individuals whose gifts and passions align with the congregation's ministry needs.

The committee is concerned not only with leadership placement but also with leadership formation.

Primary Responsibilities

The committee generally:

- Prayerfully identify potential leaders throughout the year.
- Discern members' spiritual gifts, interests, and experiences.
- Recommend leaders for elected and appointed positions in accordance with the *Book of Discipline*.
- Encourage leadership diversity across age, gender, ethnicity, experience, and spiritual gifts.
- Recruit new leaders rather than relying only on longtime volunteers.
- Provide orientation for newly elected leaders.
- Encourage continuing leadership development and training.
- Support succession planning.
- Maintain awareness of upcoming leadership vacancies.
- Celebrate faithful leadership and encourage emerging leaders.

The Committee on Nominations & Leadership Development generally does **not**:

- Pressure people into accepting leadership positions.
- Recruit leaders based solely on availability.
- Select leaders without prayerful discernment.
- Override requirements established by the *Book of Discipline*.
- Evaluate staff performance (SPRC).
- Direct the work of other committees.
- Fill every vacancy immediately if prayerful discernment suggests waiting for the right leader.

The committee seeks faithful matches rather than quick appointments.

Responsibilities of the Chairperson

By discipline the pastor is automatically the chair

Spiritual Leadership

- Lead the committee in prayer and discernment.
- Keep the focus on God's call rather than organizational needs.
- Encourage listening for the Holy Spirit's guidance.

Leadership Recruitment

- Coordinate conversations with prospective leaders.
- Ensure individuals understand the expectations of each role.
- Encourage thoughtful prayer before accepting leadership positions.

Leadership Development

- Maintain a year-round list of emerging leaders.
- Encourage participation in leadership training.
- Promote spiritual gifts discovery opportunities.
- Foster mentoring relationships between experienced and new leaders.

Communication

- Work closely with the Lay Leader, and Church Council.
- Coordinate recommendations for Charge Conference or other appropriate approval processes.
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the nomination process.

For further reading: <https://www.umc.org/en/content/book-of-discipline-2581-committee-on-nominations-and-leadership-development> OR <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/church-committees-nominations-and-leadership-development>

Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee

The Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) focuses on nurturing healthy relationships that enable effective ministry. The committee is often described as the bridge between the congregation and its pastoral leadership.

Support and Encourage Clergy and Staff

One of the committee's primary responsibilities is to care for those who care for others. Healthy committee chairs only allow discussions of sensitive matters only within official meetings and never through gossip or informal conversation.

Personnel Policies

When applicable, the committee works with church leadership to recommend and review personnel policies regarding:

- Employee handbooks.
- Position descriptions.
- Performance review processes.
- Vacation and leave practices.
- Continuing education.
- Professional expectations.
- Compensation recommendations in collaboration with the Finance Committee.

Confidentiality

Perhaps no responsibility is more important than maintaining confidentiality.

Confidentiality protects:

- Church staff, Clergy families, Congregational trust, The integrity of the committee, The effectiveness of ministry.

The SPRC generally does **not**:

- Direct the church budget (Finance Committee).
- Supervise buildings or maintenance (Trustees).
- Establish the church's mission or vision (Church Council).
- Schedule worship services (Pastor and Worship leaders).
- Function as a complaint committee for anonymous criticism.
- Attempt to manage the pastor's daily schedule

Responsibilities of the Chairperson

The chairperson plays a vital role in creating healthy relationships between the congregation and its clergy.

Meeting Preparation

- Prepare agendas with the pastor when appropriate.
- Schedule meetings regularly rather than only during crises.
- Ensure committee members receive materials in advance.
- Keep meetings focused and respectful.
- Provide adequate time for prayer and discernment.

Relationship Building

- Checking in with clergy between meetings.
- Encouraging honest dialogue.
- Celebrating ministry successes.
- Helping address concerns early.
- Supporting both clergy and congregation during seasons of transition.

Strong relationships are built long before difficult conversations become necessary.

Personnel Leadership

The chairperson helps coordinate:

- Annual evaluations.
- Continuing education discussions.
- Compensation recommendations.
- Sabbatical planning when appropriate.
- Orientation for newly appointed clergy.
- Staff appreciation initiatives.

Communication

The chairperson serves as a trusted communication link between:

- Pastor
- Staff
- Church Council
- District Superintendent (when appropriate)
- Congregation (through appropriate channels)
- Further reading.. <https://www.umc.org/en/content/book-of-discipline-2582-staff-or-pastor-parish-relations-committee> OR <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/church-committees-staff-parish-pastor-parish-relations>

Worship Committee

The committee works collaboratively with the pastor while respecting the pastor's responsibility for the ordering of worship.

Members assist by:

- Planning worship around the Christian calendar.
- Coordinating seasonal themes.
- Assisting with worship logistics.
- Supporting creative worship ideas.
- Providing feedback that strengthens worship.

The committee exists to support—not direct—the pastor's ministry.

Coordinate Worship Ministries

The committee helps coordinate the many people who make worship possible, including:

- Liturgists
- Scripture readers
- Communion stewards
- Ushers
- Greeters
- Acolytes
- Children's message volunteers
- Audio/visual volunteers
- Livestream teams
- Worship assistants

Prepare for the Christian Year

The Worship Committee helps the congregation experience the rhythm of the Christian year by preparing for seasons such as:

- Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, etc.

Care for the Worship Space

Working alongside the Board of Trustees when appropriate

- Clean
- Reverent
- Accessible/Safe
- Comfortable

- Appropriate for the liturgical season. **This includes preparing the communion table, paraments, candles, banners, seasonal decorations, and other worship elements.**

Encourage Congregational Participation

- Congregational singing
- Responsive readings
- Prayer
- Testimonies
- Children's participation
- Lay leadership
- Accessible worship practices
- Opportunities for intergenerational involvement

Evaluate Worship

- Are people able to participate fully?
- Are visitors welcomed warmly?
- Does worship reflect our theology and mission?
- Are we engaging multiple generations?
- Are there unnecessary barriers to participation?
- What feedback are we hearing?
- How can worship continue to grow?

The Worship Committee generally does **not**:

- Select sermons for the pastor.
- Supervise clergy or musicians.
- Determine theological content independently.
- Direct the order of worship apart from the pastor's leadership.
- Treat worship as entertainment.
- Focus primarily on personal musical preferences.
- Plan worship without considering the church's mission and theology.

Responsibilities of the Chairperson

The chairperson helps coordinate worship planning while fostering collaboration and creativity. All of the chair's responsibilities are also the responsibilities of the pastor. They will divide, delegate, and conquer together.

Spiritual Leadership

The chairperson should:

- Begin meetings with prayer and Scripture.
- Keep discussions centered on worship as an offering to God.
- Encourage creativity rooted in theology.
- Foster an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Every planning meeting should itself be an act of worship.

Meeting Preparation

The chairperson should:

- Meet regularly with the pastor and music leaders.
- Prepare meeting agendas.
- Review upcoming seasons of the Christian year.
- Coordinate schedules for volunteers.
- Ensure needed supplies are available.

Planning several months ahead helps avoid unnecessary stress.

Coordination

The chairperson helps organize:

- Worship volunteers.
- Communion preparation.
- Seasonal decorations.
- Special services.
- Worship calendars.
- Training for worship assistants.
- Hospitality ministries connected to worship.

Good coordination allows worship leaders to focus on ministry rather than logistics.

Communication

The chairperson serves as a communication link among:

- Pastor
- Music ministry
- Church office
- Audio/visual team
- Livestream ministry
- Hospitality teams
- Worship volunteers

Clear communication ensures that everyone understands both responsibilities and expectation

Leadership Development

The chairperson helps identify and mentor future worship leaders by:

- Encouraging new liturgists.
- Training Scripture readers.
- Inviting younger members into worship leadership.
- Supporting musicians and artists.
- Helping volunteers discover gifts for worship ministry.

Healthy worship ministries continually develop new leaders.

Relationship with the Pastor

The pastor provides spiritual leadership for worship and is responsible for its ordering within the traditions and practices of The United Methodist Church.

The Worship Committee supports, encourages, and collaborates with the pastor in planning meaningful worship experiences.

Healthy relationships are marked by trust, communication, and shared commitment to Christ-centered worship.

For further reading: <https://www.umc.org/en/content/ask-the-umc-who-is-in-charge-of-worship-in-the-local-church>

Other Required Officers (Not Committees)

The Charge Conference elects several officers who have responsibilities across multiple committees:

Position	Primary Duties
Lay Member to Annual Conference	Represents the congregation at Annual Conference and reports back to the church.
Church Treasurer	Receives and disburses funds, maintains financial records, and provides reports.
Financial Secretary	Records contributions and maintains confidential giving records.
Membership Secretary	Maintains membership rolls and statistical reports.
Recording Secretary	Keeps minutes of Charge Conference (and often Church Council).

Ministries Rather Than Standing Committees

One significant emphasis in the 2024–2028 Discipline is flexibility. Instead of requiring many standing committees, churches are encouraged to organize ministries around their mission. MVUMC ministry teams include:

- **Endowment Committee:** Unlike the Finance Committee, which focuses on the annual operating budget, the Endowment Committee focuses on permanent gifts and legacy giving.
- **Missions/Outreach:** Equips the congregation to serve our community and the world through acts of compassion, service, and mission.
- **Congregational Care:** Nurturing relationships within the church family and extending Christ's compassion during times of joy, illness, grief, and transition.
- **Children**
- **Youth**