



PATHWAYS

— *for fruitful & healthy ministry* —

ORGANIZATIONAL MODULE

■ *A strategy for appropriate organization of the congregation for vitality.*

www.gnjumc.org/pathways

Intercultural competency is the ability to effectively relate with people of various backgrounds and practices. Culture is the customs, practices, ways of living, and worldview of a particular social group involving behaviors, values, symbols, and languages. Cultural standards are taught, learned and a central part of one's identity.

A deeper understanding of cultures other than our own helps us understand how others handle conflict and express anger, grief, joy, gratitude, and respect. Intercultural competence is a lifetime process of learning that involves humility and a willingness to build and cross bridges (Barnes) .

Within our local church's systems there is cultural bias. Often this bias is not conscious, but sometimes it is deliberate. Our local church norms not only prefer a particular cultural bias, but they support a system of dominance. While our church might claim to be open to all people to worship God as they wish, often there are systems in place that do not allow for the inclusivity of all cultures ways of worshipping.

It is important for the church to prepare themselves to evaluate church systems for bias. One of these areas is in our hiring practices. SPRC members need to ground themselves in understanding the theological, biblical, and doctrinal basis for cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments. Preparation needs to be offered to better equip SPRC members to address the concerns they and other parishioners may confront when preparing to receive CRCC appointments and working to make a successful ministry. Each year GNJ offers Cross-Racial Cross-Cultural training for churches that will receive a Cross-Racial or Cross-Cultural appointment. This resource helps us lift up God's gifts and works in the appointment, challenging us to reassess cultural assumptions focusing on the unity of Spirit that is possible in the Church.

It is necessary to acknowledge and honor cultural differences while working together for God's glory in Jesus Christ for the reconciliation of all the world. This task is for the whole body of the Church and is the assigned work of the local congregation in shared commitment with their clergy/pastor.

Cultural bias can also take place in our choosing of leadership in local churches. This area is significant for the Nominations Committee to examine. People tend to gravitate towards others who think, act, and look like themselves. As you choose leaders it is necessary to be mindful of all the people in your church and community and making sure every group's voice is represented. It is also important to look not just at who you are as a community today. Likely, your church will continually evolve, and it is important to prepare for a diverse future.

In your local church, currently who does your organizational system primarily cater to? Who does it possibly exclude?

How can local church organizational systems include or exclude certain people or cultures?

What are examples of local church systems that could work to include or exclude?

Compile the history and culture of your church and community. Use this as an opportunity to assess cultural traits that vary from place to place. This is an opportunity to understand why you do what you do, the way you do it. Consider practices that might be customary in your congregation such as how you celebrate national holidays, how are voices of different generations included in decision making, how accessible is your facility, who is worship designed for? Read your church budget as a document expressing its moral and spiritual priorities.

When setting your organizational goals what cultural biases need to be addressed to be the representation of Jesus to the world?

Adapted from Tara Barnes, Working Toward Intercultural Competence, United Methodist Women

WHY IS CONGREGATIONAL ORGANIZATION IMPORTANT?

To build and sustain an intentional discipleship system that grows healthy leaders and vital churches, a congregation needs to be organized for success. All churches are encouraged to develop an organizational structure that will best fit their size, budget, and leadership style. This module will guide your congregation in considering how to organize best to better focus on leadership equipping, missional alignment, and next steps in ministry.

HOW DOES THE CONGREGATIONAL ORGANIZATION FURTHER THE MISSION?

How your church is organized can affect your mission and ministry. Simplifying your committee structures allows lay and clergy leaders to shift their time and energy towards becoming spiritual leaders, rather than being board members concerned with routine administrative business. An appropriate organizational structure will coordinate and align all the church's ministries with the mission, vision, and goals as well as utilize a leadership style that combines accountability, responsibility, and authority.

WHO SHOULD ENGAGE IN THE CONGREGATIONAL ORGANIZATION MODULE?

This module is for any church that wants to increase their ministry effectiveness and is willing to explore new structures and systems to do so. In this module, you will examine your current organizational structure as well as explore congregational leadership models. This module will intentionally focus on the Simplified Board Model as an effective model for organizing the official committee work of a congregation. This is especially beneficial to small and medium sized congregations who cannot sustain the traditional structure. However, the church may set other organizational and leadership development goals based on their learnings, as they align with the Book of Discipline, to best organize for the future. In addition, you will develop goals to build ministry leadership skills.

BIBLICAL GROUNDING

Biblical grounding is for understanding and developing a plan to organize the congregation for mission and ministry.

You are like a building with the apostles and prophets as the foundation and with Christ as the most important stone. Christ is the one who holds the building together and makes it grow into a holy temple for the Lord. And you are part of that building Christ has built as a place for God's own Spirit to live. - Ephesians 2:20-22

United Methodists often speak of being "connectional." John Wesley set up an organized system of communication and accountability to best carry out the mission of the church. Every church is interconnected in a way that supports the whole denomination. Local churches and their organizational structures are an important part of this connection.

In Ephesians 2, Paul lifts up the connectedness of the believers for the sake of the gospel. He highlights that while the foundation of the church are the leaders, Jesus is the cornerstone. As leaders in the local church, you are an important part of this connection too.

Paul paints a picture of a diverse church that works together, connected to one another but most importantly to Christ to build up the holy temple for the Lord. In this module, you will look at how to be connected together as an organization that will lead to the same wonderful goal.

THE IDEAL TEAM

Ideally, to engage in a congregational organization learning, growing, and planning session, a church needs to form a team made up of current and future leaders. The Simplified Board Model will bring together the work of finances, trustees (property, and staff parish relations (personnel, as well as the board/council; therefore, representatives from these team will be essential. In addition, members from the nominations committee and other lay leaders will offer valuable input. Pick members from teams that are ready and willing to explore new ways to do the organizational work of the church. A charge conference is required to make certain organizational changes. This team can make recommendations for the Charge Conference to consider.

UNDERSTANDING CONGREGATIONAL ORGANIZATION

The goal of an effective change in local church governance structure is to successfully implement the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Your team needs to determine why making organizational changes are an essential next step for your congregation. A clear understanding of benefits as well as challenges around keeping your current governance structure, along with an honest evaluation of a structural change are essential. Naming this for your congregation moves a structural change from just being a technical modification into being a transformative opportunity.

What will participants learn?

1. Biblical Leadership attributes
2. Calling versus job
3. UMC Local Church polity
4. Simplified Board Model
5. NOW Ministry Team Model
6. Effective application of skills

Outcomes of Organizational Planning

1. Congregational leaders are living out their call.
2. Systems are in place to support mission and ministry.
3. New leaders/disciples are being made.

Supplemental Resources

1. Resource UMC
2. Leadership Academy Workshops
3. Spiritual Gift Assessment for leadership

Learning and Planning Design

The congregational organization module has two models for learning, growing, and planning. A congregation may choose one or the other or develop a hybrid.

Model 1 – 5-7 evening gatherings of two hours each over 12-16 weeks with 1-2 hours of work between each session.

Model 2 – 3 Saturday mornings over 10-16 weeks of 4 hours each session with 2-3 hours of work between each session.

Training Session	Topic	Outcome	Assignments
Session 1	Biblical and mindset grounding	Clarity principles of leadership and discipleship.	Complete the Preparing for Leadership Assessment questions.
Session 2	Leadership Assessment	Assess the current leadership and governance structure of the church.	Review the Guiding Principles in Session 3, collect any of these policies or procedures used by your church.
Session 3	Structure for Support	Understand the role and functions of local church leaders.	
Session 4	Introducing Simplified Board	Understand the whys and how of the Simplified Board structure.	Take time for discernment; create a draft timeline; plan the communication of the proposed change to the congregation, planning, congregational votes; and launch.
Session 5	Implementing Change	Create an initial draft of how to organize your church leadership.	Have each member review their own gifts and assets and prayerfully discern how they could best serve in the future.
Session 6	Mission and Ministry Teams	Create an initial draft to organize mission and ministry leadership.	Create a plan to present to mission and ministry leaders and teams on how their work will be led and supported.
Session 7	Effective Leadership	A guide for effective meetings has been drafted, and tools have been identified to assist the Nominations Committee in choosing leaders.	Complete writing your action steps.
Session 8	Simplified Board Applied	A proposal for the Annual Conference is complete, and the church leaders understand and support this change.	Complete all steps of the timeline.

ORGANIZATION SESSIONS

SESSION I: FOUNDATION: A TEAM OF LEADERS BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

Gifted and empowered lay and clergy leadership will direct the congregation towards vitality. Leaders emerge and are equipped. Just as your organizational structure is reliant on strong leadership, your leaders require a structure in place that values their gifts and time.

- *You are like a building with the apostles and prophets as the foundation and with Christ as the most important stone. Christ is the one who holds the building together and makes it grow into a holy temple for the Lord. And you are part of that building Christ has built as a place for God's own Spirit to live. - Ephesians 2:20-22*

The church is built on the lives of the believers with Jesus as the foundation. Therefore, everyone has a role to play in the building up of the church. Each contributes in their own way with their unique gifts. Some will serve in leadership roles, some in ministry roles; all will build upon the foundation by God. As Christians, we are called to constantly grow so that all might come to know the inclusive love of our God.

- What is Jesus' role as the cornerstone of this church?
- What is the role of the leaders?

CALLING

In scripture, calling has a broad meaning. However, over time the term "calling" has been narrowed into meaning a vocational minister. All Christians are ministers, and every person in the church makes an important contribution to the life and health of the church. Calling can be to a role, a responsibility, a specific ministry, mission or need or group of people. No matter how one serves, each person is called to reach out to others in love.

- *The ministry of the laity flows from a commitment to Christ's outreaching love. Lay members of The United Methodist Church are, by history and calling, active advocates of the gospel of Jesus Christ. ¶ 127*

To be called by God is an awesome and holy thing; it is also one that comes with responsibility. It is important that we teach people to hear and answer their call, as well as nurture and support them in their living out that call.

- What are some practical steps you could take to engage your call more fully?
- How might you encourage church members to fully embrace their call?

DISCIPLESHIP

- *"Christian leadership development is an extension of disciple making. Only good disciples make good church leaders (Resource UMC)."*

Discipleship and good leadership are connected. A vital congregation is built upon a foundation of strong disciples. It takes disciples to lead others in living a life as a follower of Jesus. Congregational leaders need to be deeply rooted and growing in their faith. Only when a church places a value on both developing discipleship and leadership skills will its mission and ministry flourish.

- What are some of the practices of someone rooted and growing in their faith?
- Does your congregation place a high value on your leaders' discipleship?
- How are your leaders following Jesus, being transformed by their faith, and joining in Jesus' mission?
- What are some of the obstacles to growing one's discipleship?
- How are the church leaders making disciples?

Too often our churches are organized for administrative purposes and success rather than making disciples. One of the goals of making adjustments to your organizational structure is to open more time and talent for mission and ministry versus fulfilling administrative obligations.

Disciples as Leaders

- Equip others to join in the mission of Jesus
- Centered in the mission of Jesus for their life and the life of the congregation
- Engaged in relationships that lead to holiness of heart and life

Do you have an intentional process to call and equip persons to carry out the mission of the church?

CHARACTERISTICS OF LEADERS

Building your leadership begins by looking at your current leaders. It is key that people feel valued and included. At the same time, it is important that people have the dimensions of a godly leader. When selecting people to serve in leadership positions in your congregation pay special attention to the following three dimensions of transformational servant leadership:

Spiritual Maturity

Spiritually mature leaders embody many of the following attributes.

- Christ-like leadership
- Spiritual centeredness
- Purposefulness
- Enthusiasm to develop and grow relationships and discipleship
- A passion to uncover God's calling and purpose in others
- Resilience
- The ability to unify people for God's mission

How might you identify these attributes in your current and potential leaders?

Outcome: Faith is deepened, and people are living God's calling and purpose through their life.

Emotional Maturity

Emotionally mature leaders embody many of the following attributes.

- Collaborative spirit
- Humility and confidence
- Outward mindset
- Emotional intelligence and self-awareness
- Positivity
- Curiosity and a hunger for learning
- Intercultural competence
- Openness to change
- Transparency
- Adaptiveness

How might you identify these attributes in your current and potential leaders?

Outcome: Hopefulness abounds, and disciple's engagement is increasing.

Leadership Maturity

Mature leaders embody many of the following attributes:

- Vision
- Strategic thinking
- Results orientation and fruitfulness
- Motivation to excel
- Inspiring communication that creates clarity and moves people to action
- An ability to lead people through change and conflict
- Ability to develop the leaders around them

How might you identify these attributes in your current and potential leaders?

Outcome: Increase in the number and quality of lay transformational leaders and congregational vitality.

These dimensions of transformational servant leadership should also guide the development process/program for preparatory and future leaders in your congregation. It would be helpful to take some time and resource the congregation on these aspects of leadership. This could be done as a one day workshop or a worship series. The more the congregation is involved in the leadership building process, the better you will be able to meet your goals.

Preparing for Leadership Assessment

In preparation for prayerful conversations about leadership and church structures, it will be important to assess your current leadership.

1. Review your congregation's Leadership Assessment scores from the assessment from your Pathways Toolbar as well as your strengths and assets. Considering this information, discuss the following:

- *What do you now know about our leadership assets?*
- *Do you have the leadership pool, including new leaders, necessary to sustain your current organizational structure?*

2. It is recommended you include the following leadership inventory and audit questions for the next meeting:

- What is the total number of elected leaders in your church?
- What is the percentage of active members who are in elected leadership?
- What is the percentage of elected leaders that regularly perform their responsibilities?
- How many leaders are currently in administrative/governance leadership (finance, trustees, SPRC, and administrative board) versus the number of members in programmatic/ ministry leadership (worship, evangelism, education, membership care, etc.)?
- How many leaders sit on more than one committee?
- How does your existing structure, both in the day-to-day and in written Charge Conference submission, conform to the requirements of the Book of Discipline?
- Think through the past few years and consider two or three large projects that your leadership had to approve:
 - o *How many committees were required to be involved to make a final decision?*
 - o *How long did the entire approval process take, from conception to implementation?*

The answer to these questions will provide the background information you will need as you discern a new way of leading your congregation. Please make the current Annual conference paperwork is available to the team for mapping out your current structure for the next meeting.

SESSION 2: LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT

Who are you Now?

The goal of an effective change in local church governance structure is to successfully implement the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. A clear **why** moves a structural change from just being a technical modification into being a transformative opportunity.

To get to a clear **why** for considering new ways to organize your church, the leaders and members of the congregation need to be able to describe the current structure of your church leadership system.

A way of determining your **why** is to do a study of the internal strengths and weaknesses of the congregation mapped out in comparison to the opportunities and threats the congregation faces.

The following activity will give you these insights:

- Describes all that is going well in your congregation and consider how your current structure is using your resources.
- Describes the obstacles and challenges that keeping your current governance structure will create or sustain, along with an honest evaluation of the cost of making a structural change
- Imagines the ways a new governance structure will enable the congregation to make faster and more holistic decisions on behalf of the mission
- Articulates the possible outcome(s) of the congregation if the change is not made.

Map out your current organizational structure, look to your Annual Conference paperwork to see who is officially named as committee members. Talk to the various committee leaders, who are actively participating regularly in the work of the committee. **Discuss as a group the following:**

- *What percentage of the congregation is actively serving in the organizational life of the church?*
- *Does the diversity in your pews reflect your leadership, age, gender, ethnicity, culture?*
- *How does your church make decisions and set goals now?*
- *Does your official Nominations Report approved at Charge Conference reflect your system of governance, or are there unwritten rules or unelected people that have a de facto power over the church decisions?*
- *How do you invite people to leadership in the congregation? Is there a process?*
- *How do you say thank you to volunteers, leaders, and pastor?*
- *Can your leaders explain the mission and the vision of the church?*
- *What is the current level of trust and conflict in the congregation?*

Review the agendas of the committee meetings

- *Is the committee doing work beyond accepting reports?*
- *Are there any imbalances in leadership power?*
- *How does your structure respond to new ministry opportunities, take risks, and set the strategic direction of the congregation?*

When reflecting on these questions, think about systems, not people. While relationships are vitally important in ministry, discerning a shift in governance structure must be about roles, responsibilities, limits to authority, policies, and ministry teams job descriptions.

LEADERSHIP STUDY FOR A GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE CHANGE

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Assess your current leadership structure	<p>What are you already doing well that you could build on?</p> <p>What is the best part of how you are currently using resources and people?</p>	<p>What is not working effectively?</p> <p>What are your motives for keeping the current structure?</p> <p>Are the motives missional or for other reasons?</p>	<p>How does your structure respond to new ministry ideas or creative solutions?</p> <p>How proactive is your current board in looking for opportunities, taking risks, and setting the strategic direction of the congregation?</p>	<p>How will your congregation make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world in our complex, fast changing culture that is quite different than the one in which our structure was built?</p>

Healthy churches have a solid organizational structure to support the work of their leaders.

- Church leadership is committed to actively pursue spiritual growth.
- The congregation has a strategic plan that guides the work of the church to bring about positive change.
- Strong, creative lay leaders are collaborating with the pastor for effective team ministry.
- People across the congregation are motivated to share their gifts to accomplish the church’s goals.
- Congregational leadership emerges and is integrated with the community.
- Leadership is distributed. No one person or group of people holds all the power; responsibility is shared in a sustainable way, and structure aims to create mutual accountability.

Reflecting on your present system as well as the markers of a healthy organizational structure, consider how a change could impact your community.

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Imagine a new leadership structure	How might a change in leadership structure be a better use of resources and people?	<p>What are the costs of shifting to a new leadership structure, particularly in the areas of relationships and trust?</p> <p>How might you mitigate the negative effects of the change, especially among those who feel a loss of power?</p>	<p>What opportunities are you missing, either because of lack of alignment or the over working of the same people for multiple committees?</p> <p>Imagine how the well-aligned and nimble system might be able to claim opportunities?</p> <p>Are there some groups that would operate better as ministry and mission teams rather than committees?</p>	How do you imagine reorganizing will be able to engage our complex and fast-moving world differently to lead the church in fulfilling the mission of the church?

- What would you want to keep based on what you have learned?
- What do you need to do differently based on what you have learned?
- What aren't you doing that you need to do in the future? Who are the people that are missing from leadership and why?

Preparing for Structure for Support

Review the Guiding Principles in Session 3, collect any of these policies or procedures used by your church.

SESSION 3: A STRUCTURE FOR SUPPORT

UMC Committees, Boards, and Leadership Roles

The United Methodist Church is structured to carry out its mission for making disciples. This session will focus on the functions that are required and the manner in which the local church is traditionally organized. As we consider other ways to organize, it will be important that we have included all the functions that are required yet understand there is flexibility in the manner this work is organized.

Every congregation must make provision for including these functions according to *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*. Positions may be combined except for the financial functions.

For more info, see the UMC Discipline or www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/local-church-officer-job-descriptions.

Trustees

- The group charged with the responsibility for the supervision and care of all property and equipment owned by the local church.
- Trustees ensure that the Articles of Incorporation of the congregation are kept up to date.
- Receive and administer all gifts made to the congregation and make certain that trust funds of the congregation are invested properly.
- The Board of Trustees is to plan and set policies for the maintenance and use of the property and equipment and receives and administers all bequests to the local church.
- Annually review property, liability, and crime insurance coverage on church-owned property, buildings, and equipment.
- Submit annual budget requests to the committee on finance for property maintenance and improvement and new property purchases.

Staff Parish

- This committee encourages, strengthens, nurtures, supports, and respects the pastor(s) and staff and their families. They confer regularly about the personnel conditions and issues that affect the congregation's total ministry, including healthy life-work balance. They help the staff set priorities.
- Approves job descriptions and supplies a written statement of policy and procedures for hiring, evaluating, promoting, retiring, and dismissing staff members who are not subject to episcopal appointment.
- Recommends compensation, travel, housing, and other financial matters for the staff.
- Meets with the District Superintendent in an advisory capacity related to clergy leadership.
- Provides an annual evaluation of the pastor(s) and other staff for ongoing effective ministry.
- Enlists, evaluates, and annually recommends candidates for professional ministry to the charge conference.

Finance Committee

- The finance committee annually compiles a budget for supporting the mission and vision of the local church and submits it for review and adoption.
- Develops and carries out plans to raise enough income to support the budget that has been approved.
- Assigns the following tasks: (1) payment approval or expenditures; (2) signs checks; (3) reconciles bank accounts. One person may be authorized to do any one of these tasks, however, no person should be authorized to do more than one.
- Arranges for an annual audit of financial records and makes a report of this audit to the charge conference.
- The finance chair works with the trustees to handle designated gifts and bequests.

Church Leadership Team/Church Council/Administrative Board

- Serves as the executive agency of the charge conference between meetings to oversee the administration and ministry of the congregation.
- Is the administrative agency of the charge conference to envision, plan, implement, and annually evaluate the ministry of the congregation?
- Initiates planning, establishes goals, implements action plans, and evaluates effectiveness for congregational ministries of nurture, outreach, witness, and administration.
- Maintains the congregation's connection with appropriate district and annual conference programs and structures.
- Recommends to the charge conference the compensation, housing needs, and benefits for the pastor(s) and other staff after receiving recommendations from the committee on staff/pastor-parish relations.

OTHER ROLES:

Financial Secretary

- Receives, records, and deposits all funds received by the congregation in a timely, thorough, and confidential manner.
- Works with the treasurer and committee on finance to develop policies and procedures so that funds can be made available to support the ministry of the congregation.

Treasurer

- Disburses all money contributed to the local church budget, keeping accurate records of how money is spent.
- Works with finances according to the guidelines established for total fiduciary responsibility. This includes maintaining compliance with all applicable governmental tax guidelines.
- Sends all world service and conference benevolence funds to the conference treasurer each month.
- Works with the financial secretary to maintain records of all funds received.
- Makes regular financial reports to the leadership board, the committee on finance, church council, the charge conference and, in some cases, the trustees.

Membership Secretary

- Works with the pastor to keep accurate records for all membership rolls.
- Understands and maintains the membership records.
- Conducts the annual membership audit.

Lay Member to Annual Conference

- Attends annual conference sessions as a member from the congregation and interprets the actions to the congregation.
- Builds the connection between the congregation and all United Methodist churches.
- Lay members serve on the church council, the committee on finance, and the committee on pastor-parish relations or the Simplified Board in addition to being a member of annual conference.

Lay Leader

- Represents the laypeople in the congregation in working with the pastor for the mission and vision of the congregation.
- Works with the pastor and other leaders to launch or strengthen ministries that build discipleship.
- Serves on the church council, the committee on finance, and the committee on pastor-parish relations or the Simplified Board in addition to being a member of annual conference.

Work that is outside what is required by the *Book of Discipline* will be addressed in Session 6, Mission and Ministry Teams.

SETTING GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding principles are a set of policies and procedures that allow the ministry of the church to function on a day-to-day basis with healthy guidance and boundaries. These principles are permission-giving strategies that protect the overall health and well-being of the congregation. No matter what organizational structure you set for your church, these are essential.

While the Book of Discipline provides ample guidance and direction, there is a need for local policies and procedures to clarify and complement the Book of Discipline.

Think of guiding principles as a living, breathing document that changes to adapt to new ministry realities, as needed.

Guiding Principles for your church to consider:

- Identification the board's role, powers, responsibilities, and authority, regarding the Book of Discipline
- Mission, vision, core values of the church, how to write, review and communicate
- Financial approval rules
- Hiring/ terminating authority of the pastor and other paid staff
- Creating church wide policies. Some examples include:
 - o Building and equipment usage policies (for example: rental policies for members, internal ministry groups, outside non-profit groups, or for-profit businesses)
 - o Safe sanctuary policies for child protection
 - o Employee handbook
 - o Building safety
 - o Internet usage
- Parliamentary rules of order, such as the usage of Roberts Rules of Order, the consensus method, or other variations
- Official record keeping and access to records of meetings and executive session minutes
- Creation of other teams such as building maintenance team, their roles and functions
- Authority and responsibility of the treasurer
- Relationship of Nominations and Lay Leadership Development committee to the Leadership board/Ad board
- Boundaries that state how individual board members may make (or not) demands on staff time outside formal board requests
- Relating to ministries that are separate from the church's ministry such as childcare ministries and AA.
- Defining public meetings vs executive session (such as personnel matters when the board is operating as the congregation's S/PPRC)

- *What guiding principles/practices does your church have in place?*
- *How do you familiarize new leaders to these principles/practices?*
- *What guiding principles/practices will you create as part of your action plan?*

SESSION 4: INTRODUCE SIMPLIFIED BOARD MODEL

The governance model used by most United Methodist congregations dates to the World War II, with a structure designed with multiple layers of checks and balances intended to maintain and preserve the ecclesiastical institution. In many instances, this structure gets in the way of the changes and adaptation needed to share the gospel in ways that are relevant to our communities today. Churches are so busy running their structure that the mission is no longer the focus. Without missional focus, it is simply not possible to thrive.

The 2016 Book of Discipline in paragraph 247.2 allows for a local church to adapt its decision-making structure:

■ *“The charge conference, the district superintendent, and the pastor, when a pastor has been appointed (see ¶ 205.4, shall organize and administer the pastoral charge and churches according to the policies and plans herein set forth. When the membership size, program scope, mission resources, or other circumstances so require, the charge conference may, in consultation with and upon the approval of the district superintendent, modify the organizational plans, provided that the provisions of ¶ 243 are observed.”*

A church must fulfill the requirements for the responsibilities of finances, trustees (property, and staff parish relations (personnel as well as the board/council as outlined in the Book of Discipline, however, the way these responsibilities are fulfilled can be done in more effective and efficient methods that reflect more modern organizational systems. The missional church of the 21st century must be creative and structurally enabled to make nimble changes in methods to fulfill its disciple-making mission. To do so, local churches must align all their resources and all they do to the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Local churches seeking to be vital and more fruitful must structure to be lean, effective, and efficient to reach the people of today with the good news of Jesus Christ. Leaders need to be allowed and empowered to lead. Governance meetings need to matter and be moments for accountability and missional alignment.

Some of the key benefits of a simplified leadership structure include:

- **Missional Focus** – moving outward from self-focus and institutional survival to incarnational ministry in the lives of the people in the community and the world.
- **Alignment** – of people, funding, facilities, program, and other resources.
- **Efficiency** – moving toward less meetings and more permission-giving culture and more leaders involved in direct ministry.
- **Accountability** – that enables leaders to hold themselves and others accountable for mission fruitfulness.

Simplifying the structure of a local church leadership board creates an environment where ministry can thrive.

- The congregation shifts the time and energy of lay and clergy leaders toward becoming spiritual leaders, rather than being board members concerned with routine administrative matters.
- This structure utilizes a leadership style that combines accountability, responsibility, and authority.
- This board will coordinate and align all the church’s ministries with the mission, vision, and goals.
- Adopting this style of leadership will assist congregations who cannot sustain the traditional structure

Sample of Simplified Board Model Responsibilities:

- The purpose of the committee is to envision, plan, and engage the congregation in mission and ministry. The format of the meeting is not to receive committee reports, this work will be communicated in other ways.
- Fulfill functions required by the BOD
- Confirm the vision cast by the pastor and establish yearly goals for the church.
- Collaborate with programs and ministries to ensure they fulfill the mission and vision of the church.
- Conduct an annual clergy appraisal to provide pastor(s) with feedback about their leadership and progress.
- Meet quarterly, at a minimum.
- Maintain three classes of leaders.
- Establish the church's yearly budget

Guidelines for Success:

- When making significant decisions for the entire congregation, the Leadership Board may solicit input from the congregation.
- It is recommended that the Leadership Board members rotate off after their term to eliminate small circles of power and promote the development of new leaders.
- It is highly recommended that each fall, all groups and teams within the church draft their budget requests for the following year, along with three goals for the new year.

SESSION 5: PLANNING FOR SIMPLIFIED LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

A church must fulfill the requirements for the responsibilities of finances, trustees (property, and staff parish relations (personnel as well as the board/council as outline in the Book of Discipline, However, the way these responsibilities are fulfilled can be done in more effective and efficient methods that reflect more modern organizational systems.

The Simplified Leadership Board rolls the four administrative teams required by the BOD into one single board. Technically, the trustees, finance committee, and S/PPRC all still exist, but they are all the Simplified Leadership Team.

In some cases, the transition into a Simplified Leadership Board might happen gradually over a period of two or three years to account for the complexities of current structures, especially trustees and endowment fund(s) team(s).

Work included in the Leadership Board

Keep in mind that the Simplified Leadership Board serves all the functions listed in the BOD for the Committees on Finance, Staff Parish Relations, Trustees and Council and members will serve in multiple roles, as appropriate.

Pay attention to disciplinary conflicts of interest. Household members cannot serve on the board together. If it cannot be avoided, the family members may need to recuse themselves from the room or not vote on issues with potential conflict of interest. Staff and family of staff cannot serve on the board because of SPRC membership restrictions.

It is recommended that the leadership board chair be elected as the trustee chair at the board's first meeting each January. Also, that board chair is to be named by the Nominations Committee as the staff/pastor parish relations liaison to the district superintendent to ensure clear lines of communications.

To comply with the mandate of the BOD and to keep the leadership team fresh and accountable, you will still need to place members into three classes. Approximately one-third of the board should rotate off each year and new people seated.

¹ We are using the name *Simplified Board*, but others use the term *One Board* or *Leadership Board*.

About the Work of Trustees

Trustees function as the stewards of property God has entrusted to the congregation. This includes supervising and maintaining both the physical property of the congregation and gifts made to the congregation so that the ministries of the congregation can be effective, and all legal requirements related to the property are satisfied. This includes taking care of the fiduciary responsibilities of the trustees, such as property insurance, facility and safe sanctuary policies, lease agreements, filing bylaws, etc. For a detailed description of the disciplinary required work of the trustees, see www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/trustees3

In many churches, trustees have been tapped, practiced, or labeled as being the people who perform the actual hands-on work on the building and grounds, in addition to taking care of the fiduciary responsibilities of the trustees (such as property insurance, facility and safe sanctuary policies, lease agreements, filing bylaws, etc.

The caretaking of the building and grounds obviously needs to continue in the new modeling, not necessarily by the trustees, but by people who enjoy hands-on work. It is recommended to have a Building Maintenance Team, which has the authority and responsibility to care for repairs and maintenance within healthy parameters set by the Leadership Board.

During the first meeting at the beginning of each new year, the Leadership Board will elect a Trustee Chair to satisfy the corporate resolution requirement. It is recommended, but not necessary, that the Board Chair serve as the Trustee Chair. The Leadership Board members, serving as the Trustees, are also the legal Board of Directors. Trustees must be over 18. The Trustee membership rule of minimum one-third laymen and one-third laywomen remains in effect. The Pastor cannot be a Trustee.

About the Work of Staff Parish Relations

The Staff Parish Relations builds a strong positive relationship between staff and congregation. This committee works with the lead pastor and other staff to fulfill legal and ethical responsibilities related to staff. Naming an SPRC Chair is important as this person is the congregation's primary connection with the district superintendent and bishop related to the appointed leadership of the congregation.

The Leadership Board will pick up other essential work of this committee including staff recommendations and job descriptions, recommendations of travel and housing allowances for charge conference approval, evaluations, and proper screening (including background checks for lay employees and volunteer staff.

Guidelines for Success:

- When making significant decisions for the entire congregation, the Leadership Board may solicit input from the congregation.
- It is recommended that the Leadership Board members rotate off after their term, to eliminate small circles of power and promote the development of new leaders.
- It is highly recommended that each fall, all groups and teams within the church draft their budget requests for the following year, along with three goals for the new year.

Discern the best Structure for your Context

To move into the most simplified structure, you will need:

- Nine to 13 members to align with the standard sized committees required by the BOD for trustees, finance, and SPRC.
- Additional members include: a lay leader, lay member of Annual Conference and a chair of the Admin Council, at least one youth and one young adult (if there are any in the congregation willing and ready to serve).
- Additional members may also include the chair of your congregation's United Methodist Women or United Methodist Men, if they request to be part of the board.

Keep in mind that the Simplified Leadership Board serves all the functions listed in the BOD for the Committees on Finance, Staff Parish Relations, Trustees and Council, members will serve in multiple roles, as appropriate.

Pay attention to disciplinary conflicts of interest. Household members cannot serve on the Board together. If it cannot be avoided, the family members may need to recuse themselves from the room or not vote on issues with potential conflict of interest. Staff and family of staff cannot serve on the board because of SPRC membership restrictions.

It is recommended that the leadership board chair be elected as the trustee chair at the board's first meeting each January. Also recommended is that board chair be named by the Nominations Committee as the staff/pastor parish relations liaison to the district superintendent to assure clear lines of communications.

To comply with the mandate of the BOD and to keep the leadership team fresh and accountable, you will still need to place members into three classes. Approximately one-third of the board should rotate off each year and new people seated.

Simplified Leadership Church Organizational Chart

This chart illustrates clear lines of authority, responsibility, and accountability. It provides clarity for who reports to whom and the role for each. **Take time to study it with your leadership team and answer the following questions:**

- *What shifts will need to be made to live into this new structure?*
- *What communication needs to occur?*
- *What training and coaching are needed?*
- *What resourcing is needed to overcome the natural learning curves?*

Planning the Leadership Structure

Ensure the congregation is prepared for the new Simplified Leadership Model.

- Prepare for and lead congregational conversations about potential changes, utilizing two-way communication. Lead with the why and then follow with the "what" and "how."
- Uncover and discuss feedback from congregation and use the feedback to adjust the discernment/implementation timeline and build your model.
- Ensure excellent communication and complete transparency to build trust amongst all constituencies.

Considerations for Multiple-church-point charge or cooperative parish

In the United Methodist Church, smaller congregations are often linked together as a multi-point circuit, a cooperative parish, or a single charge. If your church is part of a multi-point charge or a cooperative parish, make sure to consult with your district superintendent before planning for a shift in leadership structure.

Discernment

Take the appropriate time to discern whether your congregation is ready to make the shift to a simplified leadership board – do not rush through it. The time invested in this critical step will pay dividends if/when you decide to move forward with the change.

At this point, your goal may be to move to a Simplified Leadership Model, or you may have discerned to move forward in another direction. Based on these decisions, set goals for your future organization structure. For those who choose the Simplified Leadership Model, there is an appendix with next steps to complete this session. For those who do not create leadership goals, make sure you choose another leadership model that is in line with the UMC Book of Discipline.

What are three measurable goals that will help us become more like God is calling us to be that organizes your church for success? Some churches may have less than three goals in this area, and other churches may have more than three goals, depending on how many goals the congregation may be developing in other areas or the available people to work on the goals. A measurable goal includes the following.

- **Specific** – it is clear; everyone can understand what you want to do.
- **Measurable** – it has something you will accomplish and often has a number associated with it.
- **Achievable** – it is a stretch, but you can achieve it in a certain period of time.
- **Relevant** – it is core to your ministry and something with which people will connect.
- **Time** – it has an expected date to be accomplished.

What are the three actions for each goal you will take to accomplish each goal?

What person, not a committee, will be the champion for the goal? A champion is someone who gathers a team together to accomplish each goal.

SESSION 6: IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

Critical to the successful implementation and sustainability of a Simplified Leadership Board, or any other leadership structure, is selecting a strong initial leadership team and developing a regenerative culture that raises up new leaders to the Leadership Board.

Using Gifts and Assets

Spiritual Giftedness:

Every child of God is filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, especially gifted to play a unique and valued role in the body of Christ. No one is without gift or purpose.

Spiritual gifts are not our talents or skills. They are the grace of God at work within us, empowering us to match our deep passions with the world's deep need. The gifts are given to individuals, but they are given to build and strengthen community and to meet the needs of those around us. (UMC.org)

When congregational leaders lead from their spiritual gifts, there is life and vitality, as opposed to burnout and frustration.

- *How do you assess spiritual gifts in your congregation?*
- *What could be enhanced in your ministry if people knew their spiritual giftedness?*

The Board of Discipleship has put together resources on Spiritual Gifts, including a spiritual gift inventory. The team has also identified how certain gifts can serve leaders well in different roles.

Spiritual Gift Inventory: www.umcdiscipleship.org/spiritual-gifts-inventory/en

Matching Gifts to Leadership Positions: www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/matching-gifts-to-leadership-positions

Activity: Spiritual Gifts Interview

Working through discerning spiritual gifts as a group can be more engaging, and dialogue helps in the process of discovery.

Read through the spiritual gifts' narrative offered by Board of Discipleship: www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/spiritual-gifts-interview-method

Once all descriptions are read, go back through and rate yourself on a scale of 1-5.

Go back and identify your top three descriptions.

Have the team break up into groups of three.

Read over the description of the gift that matches each person's top selections.

- How do you affirm these findings?
- Are there any surprises?
- How well do your current roles match your gifting?
- How might these gifts correlate with the administrative, ministry and mission roles in the church leadership?

Assets:

- Consider your congregation's Hands, Head, and Heart assets from your Pathways Plan Toolbar
 - o *What gifts/assets do you have in your leadership pool?*
 - o *What additional gifts/assets including new leaders are necessary to sustain your current organizational structure?*
 - o *Can simplifying the organizational structure fill the gap between the needs and the gifts?*
 - o *Are there other ways to meet this need?*

SESSION 7: MINISTRY TEAMS

Being a member of the Simplified Board is one way congregants can lead in the life of the church. Ministry teams are another.

About Ministry Teams

The role of the Leadership Board is to provide direction to the ministry of the congregation via strategic visioning, mission alignment, accountability, and administration. Ministry teams organize and mobilize resources to make ministry happen. Disciples are made and grown through the work of these teams.

Ministry teams work differently from elected leaders on the Leadership Board.

- They are not nominated and elected for specific terms.
- They are selected based on their gifts and passion for an area of ministry.
- They are identified, recruited, equipped by team leaders (paid or unpaid) or a staff member, in consultation with the pastor.
- They may exist for specific projects or serve on an ongoing basis.
- They could be led by a volunteer or a staff member and should ultimately be accountable to the oversight of the pastor(s).
- They work within the budget and guidelines of the Leadership Board but have the freedom to carry out their ministry.

Every church needs a plan to move the congregation towards making and growing disciples. While the leadership board provides the structure for mission and ministry to happen, the ministry teams are the way mission and ministry happen. Ministry teams allow the church to use their gifts to the fullest.

When determining how to organize for mission and ministry to best happen, consider the following:

- *Who will you serve?*
- *What will you provide?*
- *How do you plan to accomplish it?*

The different ways to organize your ministry teams are Nurture, Outreach, and Witness. Because these are not required functions of the church, the configuration of the team and manner in which they meet can be set by the local congregation. Be mindful that it is easy to slip into too many meetings and lose the benefit of the simplified structure. These teams should meet as needed to move forward their goals, not because it is on the calendar.

Nurture: Worship, Fellowship & Education

■ *“The nurturing ministries of the congregation shall give attention to but not be limited to education, worship, Christian formation, membership care, small groups, and stewardship. Attention must be given to the needs of individuals and families of all ages.” BOD ¶ 252.2*

"The Nurture function focuses largely on the internal needs of a congregation - what we do for those who come to the church.

Nurture is teaching, preparing, and equipping the people of that church for ministry within their community and the world. Through fellowship, worship, Sunday School, small group ministries, and other nurturing experiences, people will grow in their Christian faith, understand the principles of stewardship, and will be equipped to serve as faithful disciples (Appleby)".

- *What are the current ministries that would be categorized as nurture?*
- *How do they currently interact with your boards?*
- *What would need to happen to keep them connected but not constrained by committee work?*

Outreach: Missions, Justice & Advocacy

- *“The outreach ministries of the church shall give attention to local and larger community ministries of compassion, justice, and advocacy. These ministries include church and society, global ministries, higher education and campus ministry, health and welfare, Christian unity and interreligious concerns, religion and race, and the status and role of women.” BOD ¶ 252.2*

"The Outreach function focuses on ministries beyond the four walls of the church building - what we do for those who do not come to the church.

Outreach is three-fold: Ministries of compassion involve a congregation in addressing the immediate needs of individuals, families, and communities. The congregation may respond to local community needs and provide food, clothing, emergency housing, counseling, and employment opportunities. Community ministries of concern and advocacy call for a congregation's involvement in the enrichment of community life.

The church should be an advocate for justice-related changes in its community related to welfare, housing, drug abuse, education, economic development, health, and other community concerns/issues.

Regional, national, and global outreach ministries call a congregation to engage in the structures and values of society by moving toward justice and righteousness in public policies. This should include human rights, land use and control, the environment, peace, and the world's economic systems. The congregation should give support and participate in the denomination's mission projects and programs (Appleby)".

Consider these questions below:

- *What are the current ministries that would be categorized as outreach?*
- *How do they currently interact with your boards?*
- *What would need to happen to keep them connected but not constrained by committee work?*

Witness: Evangelism & Communications

- *“The witness ministries of the church shall give attention to developing and strengthening evangelistic efforts of sharing of personal and congregational stories of Christian experience, faith, and service; communications; Lay Servant Ministries; and other means that give expressions of witness for Jesus Christ.” BOD ¶ 252.2*

"The Witness function gives people an opportunity to share their faith in word and deed - how we share our experience of the good news of God's love in Jesus Christ. They give attention to evangelistic outreach and the sharing of faith stories, communications, lay speaking ministries, and other means that express witness for Jesus Christ.

Caring, sharing, listening, visiting, preaching, praying, hospitality... all we do out of our experience of God's love in Christ is our witness, our work for justice, righteousness, and redemption of the world (Appleby)"

- *What are the current ministries that would be categorized as witness?*
- *How do they currently interact with your boards?*
- *What would need to happen to keep them connected but not constrained by committee work?*

SESSION 8: EFFECTIVE APPLICATION

Effective Meetings

As you move towards renewing your leadership structure but continue to use the traditional format for administrative meetings, such as old business, then new business, a meeting filled with long oral reports and scrutinizing of committee work, your new board will never be able to operate in a new way without a new means of doing meetings.

Your new Leadership Board needs to create an agenda format that reflects your goals, uses time efficiently, and assumes personal accountability of board members to come prepared to lead.

Some best practices for effective meetings include:

Consent Calendar Items and the Meeting Packet

At least five days prior to the leadership board meeting, a packet of documents should be emailed to each board member for review. This prepares leaders for the meeting and keeps the team from having to take time during the meeting to read reports or listen to long (and often unprepared) oral reports. This also allows board members to come ready with questions, comments, recommendations, and concerns so they can fully participate in conversations and decisions.

The items in the consent calendar can change as needed, but may include previous meeting(s) minutes, financial reports, ministry teams report, etc. If any requires a vote, a single motion can take care of any approval items in the consent agenda. If something needs to be removed from the consent items, you can do that and shift the item later in the agenda.

The packet's purpose is to provide information for board members to keep them abreast of the status of the church as well as receive information ahead of the meeting, giving each member time to review.

Below is a list of recommended content for the Leadership Board meeting packet:

- **Agenda**
- **Leadership Board Covenant**
- **Vital Signs of the Congregation:** these may include worship attendance, small group participation, giving, new visitors, new members. Your congregation already tracks these for your Year-End Report. Any other measurements tracked by the Leadership Board.
- **Bright Spots** (Describe-ables): Not all fruits of ministry will show up in the metrics. These are stories of healthy and fruitful ministry. The pastor usually provides any pertinent bright spots in the packet for the board, in consultation with staff and team leaders. Some guiding questions to help shape bright spots, include:
 - *What lives are being touched by the ministries of the church?*
 - *How are people growing in their faith?*
 - *How is the church impacting the community in the name of Christ?*
- **Guests:** Record and report the number of first- and second-time visitors the church hosts each week. These are important numbers to know and track to catch a glimpse of how well three critical systems are working: evangelism, hospitality, and connections.
- **Minutes from previous meeting(s)**
- **Financials:** These reports should indicate a budget vs. actual report for each category (not each line item). There might be a note from the treasury if there is something out of the ordinary or noteworthy for the board to know or understand.
- **Goals:** The pastor will provide a written update on progress of congregational goals and outline any strategy-level decisions that she/he may need from the board to move forward on the goals.
- **Reports:** While it is not desired to stack the meeting packet with monthly ministry reports, this is an opportunity for ministry teams to update the board on its progress. It is recommended to agree on a guiding question that will help team leaders shape the content of its report. For example:

- *What are the top three highlights (accomplishments) since the last board meeting?*
- *What challenges are you facing, what steps are you taking to address them?*

Specials: From time to time, there will be special reports and proposals for the consideration of the Leadership Board. Also, there will be a form from the Conference that will require action from the board. It is highly recommended that only specials submitted in advance with the packet are discussed in the meeting and that any proposal that has financial implications includes details/estimates the costs associated with the proposal.

The Meeting Agenda

The agenda is a guide for the most effective and efficient use of time and resources of the board members. Without an agenda conversations will drift off topic, and the team might not address the top priorities.

In preparing the agenda, the board chair can send a notice out to board members asking if there are any special items that might need to be discussed. Not all items requested need to be in a board agenda.

Sample Agenda for Simplified Accountable Leadership:

Gathering and Opening Prayer (3 minutes)

Each person takes turns giving the opening prayer. As servant leaders and disciples, board members need to become comfortable praying in a group.

Spiritual Formation (15 minutes)

This is a time to dive deep and help leaders mature in their faith and grown in their knowledge. You can create a list of topics at the beginning of each season.

Leadership Equipping (15 minutes)

This is a time to develop and grow the leaders who are modeling leadership to the congregation. Brainstorm together on leadership equipping topics and resources. Decide on a book to read through a season. Make this an interactive time.

Review of New People (5 minutes)

Take a quick look at the first- and second-time visitors metrics. What is noticed? Are there improvements to celebrate? Are there gaps to be addressed? Questions of accountability and next steps should be addressed to the pastor.

Goals Review and Accountability Conversation (15-20 minutes)

Pastor provides an update on the goals progress. This is the core of the meeting and team conversation. Celebrate progress and accomplishments. If progress is lacking, ask about it. How can we be encouraging? What support is needed? Are there gaps in training or resources? Is the pastor having problems holding staff/volunteers accountable? If goals are not on track, what progress is expected by the next meeting?

Packet and Consent Calendar Items (5 minutes)

This is the time where items sent in the packet are reviewed and or discussed. Begin with the Consent Calendar Items, then metrics, followed by specials.

Generative and Strategic Work (20-30 minutes)

This is a time to go deeper on opportunities and challenges impacting the ministry of the congregation. Do goals need to be reviewed, adapted, or changed? What strategic work is needed to keep the congregation aligned and moving forward? What is changing in our community and larger culture and how can the church adapt? What policies and guiding principles need to be reviewed, adapted, changed, or added? If stuck, what needs to happen, so we get unstuck? This is also a good time to work on your church profile, church and pastor's assessment and other important reports required by the Conference.

Communication

Every meeting should end with a time to discuss the communication plan: What decisions were made? Who needs to hear those decisions? What needs to be shared from this meeting? Who is responsible to communicate the decisions?

Closing Prayer (2 minutes)

Each person takes turns providing the closing prayer.

First meeting of new board:

- Create and join in a Leadership Covenant. A covenant is a sacred agreement with God and other board members. This covenant is a written agreement of the expectations and a code of conduct, which should be agreed upon by the entire board. Without a covenant, there will most likely be ambiguity.
- Explain and discuss your agenda model for healthy board meetings.
- Spend quality time working on the Guiding Principles. It will pay dividends for years to come. Be sure to orient the Board on Guiding Principles every year.
- Share and discuss the Accountable Leadership Cycle.
- Schedule the board meetings for the year.
- When using the Simplified Board Model - Elect a Chair of Trustees (annual requirement) from the board's membership. We recommend that the Leadership Board Chair be elected by the board to also serve as trustee chair.

The Nomination Process

A separate Nominations Committee, chaired by the pastor, is required because the board cannot self-nominate. The purpose of your nominations committee is to identify, equip and recruit leaders who can see the church from a "balcony" perspective – see beyond the ministries they are personally passionate about and that are concerned with the overall wellbeing and effectiveness of the ministry of the congregation.

Guidance for the Nominations Committee

Critical to the successful implementation and sustainability of a Simplified Leadership Board structure is selecting a strong initial leadership team and developing a regenerative culture that raises up new leaders to the Leadership Board. When selecting people to serve in leadership positions in your congregation, pay special attention to the following three dimensions of transformational servant leadership, spiritual maturity emotional maturity, and leadership maturity.

Before the nominations teams begins to explore names for potential members for the new Leadership Board (and at the beginning of each nominations cycle), it is important for the nominations team to gain clarity and alignment about general expectations for leaders in your congregation. Some key questions to consider include:

- What are the characteristics, expectations, and behaviors that would be beneficial to move forward the mission of the congregation, such as openly supporting the decision of the board regardless of their personal feelings about decisions; keeping information confidential; and attendance requirements.
- Is there expectations that board members would be regular worship attenders, participants in a small group, serving periodically, have a regular prayer life, and a proportional giver (i.e., living and modeling their faith)?

Consider the characteristics of leaders:

- **Spiritual Maturity:**
Outcome – Faith is deepened, and people are living God's calling and purpose through their life.
- **Emotional Maturity:**
Outcome – Hopefulness abounds, and disciple's engagement is increasing.
- **Leadership Maturity:**
Outcome – Increase in the number and quality of lay transformational leaders and congregational vitality.

Questions to consider before beginning the nominations process:

Before the nominations team begins to explore names for potential members for the new Leadership Board (and at the beginning of each nominations cycle), it is important to gain clarity and alignment about general expectations for leaders in your congregation. Some key questions to consider include:

- What are the characteristics, expectations, and behaviors that would be beneficial to move forward the mission of the congregation?
- Is there an expectation that members of the board would be regular worship attenders, participants in a small group, serving periodically, have a regular prayer life, and a proportional giver (i.e., living and modeling their faith)?
- Is there an expectation that leaders would be available to attend most all board meetings?
- Would there be an expectation that leaders check their personal agendas at the door?
- Would there be an expectation that board members be able to hold confidential information?
- Would the board member be able to openly support the decision of the board regardless of their personal feelings about the decision?

SESSION 9: ACTIONS AND GOALS

Send a letter to your district superintendent officially requesting a structure change and the convening of a Special Church Conference to approve it. **In this letter:**

- Share the purpose, process, and timeline used to present and communicate the Simplified Leadership Model.

Outline your proposed Simplified Leadership Model.

- Request permission to move forward with nominations of the new structure. Share your plan, process, and timeline for seeking nominations.
- Request that a Church Conference approves the new structure and the new slate of officers. Clearly state the date that the new structure and slate will become effective.

Consult with district superintendent to seek approval to move forward with the planning process.

Share the following items:

- Missional reasons for a possible structure change.
- Proposed timeline for the structure change.
- Names and roles of lay officers involved in the discussion as yet.
- Request the district superintendent consent to move forward to the next steps of the process.

If the answer from the consultation with district superintendent is “not yet,” continue to work with the team towards more clarity and alignment and to address any concern(s) raised.

The congregation’s Church Conference is called with proper notice to approve the new leadership structure, the nominations report and the founding set of guiding principles that the new board is authorized to adapt to meet the ministry and missional needs of the church.

If the structure is approved, all existing administrative teams cease to exist as separate bodies on the date set by the Church Conference (this does not include ministry teams). The responsibilities and authority of the constituent bodies will rest in the new board.

DISCLAIMER: This Simplified Model used in this guide synthesizes, adapts, and contextualizes the principles, and best practices presented in the book Mission Possible: A Simple Structure for Missional Effectiveness (Revised and Expanded Second Edition) by Kay Kotan and Blake Bradford, Market Square, 2019

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