

A welcome from your Conference Lay Leader

Fellow Lay Leaders,

Thank you for accepting the responsibility of serving your church as lay leader. This handbook provides a basic framework for your role, including major responsibilities, suggestions, and resources. Also included are several probing questions for you to answer, as well as suggested areas for contemplation and prayer. It's my prayer that this document will help you be the loving leader God is calling you to be.

You are an incredibly important part of this ministry. Our laity outnumbers our clergy in our conference by at least 100 to 1 - so we have an incredibly important opportunity to develop, encourage, and inspire our laity to exciting and vital ministry in our local churches. The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church leaves no doubt as to the "priesthood of all believers." Paragraph 134 in the Book of Discipline states, "***The United Methodist tradition has recognized that laypersons, as well as ordained persons, are gifted and called by God to lead the Church.***" You are an essential part of leadership in your church. In partnership with your pastor, you will be an advocate for the laity in your church.

Ultimately, we all need to keep in mind these three ministry objectives:

In all that we do, we need to

1. Keep Christ at the center
2. Make disciples of Jesus Christ
3. Develop lay leadership.

I'm excited to be in ministry and leadership with you. I pray that God will equip us for this ministry and give us wisdom to perceive His will. I do not doubt that God will bless us as we work for His Kingdom.

Blessings on your ministry!

John Hall
Conference Lay Leader, North Carolina Conference
Last update: January 2026

Much of the material in this handbook originated from the Central Texas Conference. We are deeply grateful for their willingness to share across our Connection.]

Job Description: Local Church Lay Leader

An effective lay leader functions as the primary representative and role model of Christian discipleship and faith lived out in the church and in daily life. The lay leader works with the pastor(s) to fulfill the mission and vision of the congregation.

Qualifications:

- This leader should be a growing Christian disciple who understands that everyone has spiritual gifts and experiences that are vital to the Body of Christ. As a leader, this person should seek to emulate Jesus' servant ministry. This person benefits from having one or more spiritual gifts: compassion, discernment, faith, helping, leadership, and servanthood.
- This leader should be a living example of one who "loves God and loves neighbor." It is essential for a lay leader to listen well and communicate with people of all ages. This person should demonstrate effective collaboration with clergy, laity, and various teams and task groups.
- This leader must maintain a broad view of the congregation's parts and work with the pastor(s) to align the entire ministry toward the church's mission.
- This leader should model the church's outward focus, connecting the congregation with the community and the world.

Responsibilities:

- Work with the pastor(s) to ensure that church ministries support the church's mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The lay leader meets regularly with the pastor(s) to discuss the state of the church and the opportunities for ministry.
- Engage personally in spiritual practices that build a relationship of attentiveness to God's will and direction. These include commitments made through the vows of church membership: prayer, presence, gifts, service, and witness.
- Collaborate with other church leaders to envision, support, and celebrate ministries of laity within and beyond the local congregation.
- Represent laity on the church leadership team and other committees or teams of the congregation, such as the finance committee, the pastor-parish relations committee, and the nominations and leadership development committee.
- Encourage teamwork between the pastor(s) and lay leadership and work to strengthen the relationship between the pastor(s) and the congregation.
- Work with the pastor(s) to identify committed laypersons who may be called to leadership in the congregation and help develop them as leaders.
- Participate in district and conference-level training; model an attitude of continual learning.
- Connect with lay leaders from other congregations and the district lay leader to share ideas and provide mutual support.

What does the lay leader do?

The primary task of the lay leader in a local church is to connect the people of the church, the leadership of the church, and the local community. This connection is multi-directional. As a member of important church leadership teams, the lay leader represents the laity and provides crucial insight into the wider community's needs. In the other direction, the lay leader helps to engage the people in the church's ministries. Before a church can become fruitful, however, it must first establish direction.

All United Methodist churches share a common vision—The United Methodist Church forms disciples of Jesus Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously in local communities and worldwide connections. And all United Methodist churches share a common mission—to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. What this will look like in any particular context can vary greatly. A local church must envision what living out the broader mission would look like in its community. Along with other church leaders, the lay leader helps to articulate a shared vision and set goals for moving toward that vision. Once the church has established its vision and set goals, the lay leader works to invite, equip, and encourage people to participate in ministry.

Like most worthwhile endeavors, the work of a lay leader isn't easy, but it should be fulfilling. To provide you with a clearer idea of how to proceed, the following sections offer helpful suggestions for fulfilling the responsibilities outlined in the job description.

Responsibility 1: *Work with the pastor(s) to ensure that church ministries support the church's mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The lay leader meets regularly with the pastor(s) to discuss the state of the church and the opportunities for ministry.*

The relationship between you and your church's pastor(s) is tremendously important and must be mutually supportive. Become a partner in ministry with your pastor by praying, sharing, and working together. Communicate regularly. An effective relationship begins with open minds and mutual respect. Above all, both must recognize that the Church is God's Church. It doesn't belong to the laity or the clergy. Egos and agendas must be put aside. Congregations respond positively to pastor-lay leadership when they see that both are spirit-filled and working in harmony for effective ministry. This kind of partnership ministry, with the whole congregation involved, becomes very important when pastoral leadership changes.

We suggest considering three characteristics of a good partnership:

Roles: What do each of you do to fulfill the ultimate mission? There are clearly things that only ordained clergy do, but the ministry of a local church must be more than the work of the ordained clergy. The challenge is to determine those tasks that the lay leader does that no one else does. Here are some examples:

- Hold the "big picture" perspective of the ministry of the church
- Serve as a confidant and sounding board for how ideas, vision, and plans of the clergy might be received by others
- Share things being said in the congregation in one-on-one settings
- Filter multiple messages from the congregation into those things that the pastor should hear to help her or him prioritize where to act
- Reinforce ideas and messages from the pastor in the congregation

Respect: You must respect each other as people and the importance of your roles. It becomes virtually impossible for two people to work together if they do not respect each other. You do not need to be best friends or buddies. If personal friendships develop (and they often will), that is a tremendous blessing. Friendship is not a requirement to perform this ministry; however, mutual respect for one another as disciples working for Christ is essential.

Reciprocity: When partnerships flourish, members of the tandem feel they receive something valuable from the partnership. If either of you feels that the time together isn't helping to achieve the ultimate purpose of the partnership, you will devalue the time together. Go into the relationship expecting God to produce the partnership between the two of you.

You and your pastor are a team, and teaming means sharing responsibilities. Identify opportunities to share, such as leading special events, visiting the sick and homebound, or contacting visitors to your church. This partnership will bless each of you as well as the church, in many unforeseen ways if you give it the chance.

Some things to pray about:

- **The pastor as a person and leader:** Ask God to strengthen and give your pastor a clear vision that reflects God's will. Ask God to provide physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Pray for the well-being of your pastor's family and relationships.
- **Spiritual connection:** Ask God to help you connect with the pastor around God's will for your shared ministry.
- **The ministry of the church:** Ultimately, the work the two of you do should bless others. Pray for that outcome.

Some things to think about:

- **What does vital ministry look like in the life of your congregation and its neighbors?** Along with the pastor and other leaders, you can help articulate your church's vision of how it will make disciples for the transformation of the world. You will help set goals to this end and ensure that the church invests resources (staff, facilities, funding, etc.) toward achieving these goals.
- **What am I offering the pastor?** What knowledge and skills will I provide to help her or his ministry thrive?
- **What do I need from a pastor to make my ministry flourish?** Clarifying what will help you makes it easier for the pastor to provide.
- **How best do you work with others?** Do you have a preferred communication format? (email, phone, face-to-face). How do you like to solve problems? Know these things and share them so that you can work well together.

Some things to try:

- **Plan ahead:** Everyone is busy. If your time is highly scheduled, plan ahead so you will have some time to meet face-to-face for an extended conversation. You may even need to plan phone calls. If you rely on spontaneity, communication will almost never be sufficient for the partnership to reach its fullest potential.
- **Meet with only prayer or fellowship as the purpose:** Friendship is not required, but getting to know one another is. Meetings out of the regular location and format can go a long way in helping you get to know one another better. If the meetings are "all business," you'll miss out on many possible blessings.
- **Listen to each other's stories:** Stories reveal much more about people than isolated facts. When building an effective partnership, listening to each other's stories will help you know and understand each other. Ask questions that invite stories as a means of building your partnership: how did you become a United Methodist? What was your call to ministry like? What did you learn from a disappointment in ministry? How did you come to know Jesus as opposed to knowing about Jesus? What excites you about being here? These types of conversations build meaningful partnerships.

Responsibility 2: *Engage personally in spiritual practices that build a relationship of attentiveness to God's will and direction. These include commitments made through the vows of church membership: prayer, presence, gifts, service, and witness.*

Ministry is not just a job; it is a spiritual endeavor. A Christian leader must have a healthy, dynamic, and active relationship with God. We have a mission because God gives it. Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We cannot fulfill this mission by leaving God out of it.

To be an effective leader, you need to model servant leadership as Jesus did. Servant leaders do not see power as a means of control. Their leadership is an opportunity to help. Servant leaders seek to empower others to accomplish the vision. It's important to note that you are in this position to work for Jesus—not to enhance yourself. You need to help your church focus on where God is leading. Your life should be a beacon for how others should live for God.

The demands of leadership in the church are significant. The only way to meet them is to rely entirely on God. Ministries of leadership are demanding spiritually, emotionally, and physically. The roles present particular challenges if you're working a full-time job and/or raising children. Leaders must stay engaged with God as the source of their vision and strength. This means regularly praying, studying the Bible, worshiping, performing acts of mercy, connecting to Christian friends and mentors, and taking Sabbath time. If a leader in the church loses any one of these dimensions, it becomes challenging to remain healthy and motivated to live out the role to which one is called.

When people join the United Methodist Church, they promise to support it through prayer, presence, gifts, service, and witness. As your church's lay leader, you should intentionally embrace these promises in your own life. Doing so will help sustain you and your community. In addition, you provide an essential model for how one lives out these promises.

Some things to pray about:

- **Ask God to assure you in every way possible that this is the role God intends for you.** Ask God to impress it on your soul so that you can move forward confidently, knowing that this is how God intends you to serve now.
- **If you are hesitant or lack clarity about being called to this ministry, ask God to increase your desire for God's will and decrease the desire for what is not God's will.** Ask God to close doors that are tempting you from God's intended path for you so that the door God has chosen becomes clearer.
- **Ask God to increase your faith.** Trust that if God brought you to this, God has equipped you to succeed. There will be challenges, struggles, and mistakes, but you must trust that God is with you and in control.

Some things to think about:

- **Why do you believe your church elected you to this role?** What is it they saw in you that you might not be seeing? Understanding this can help you discern what the church believes it needs.

- **What are some things you've always wanted for your church?** How might being in this role give you the chance to make them happen? We all bring hope for our churches and communities to the table. This ministry may provide an opportunity to bring these hopes to fruition, provided they are what God intends.
- **How do you feel this ministry will let you become more of a blessing to others?** Where are the opportunities to do some good you couldn't do previously? The biggest mistake a leader can make is believing that this ministry is more about self than others. Where do you see opportunities to make a difference for others?

Some things to try:

- **Feed yourself what you need.** You might look for a devotional focused on leaders, especially church leaders. These will focus your spiritual energy on resourcing and learning how to lead more effectively. If you want to deepen your prayer life, look for resources that will help. Chart an intentional learning path for yourself.
- **Join a small group.** Small groups are an excellent tool for growing as a disciple. Support, encouragement, and the wisdom of others can help you grow in faith and deepen your commitment to service.
- **Reach out to others.** Ask other local church lay leaders about the lessons they've learned. Your district and conference lay leaders are an excellent resource for this. Also, seek out other lay leaders at district or conference events.
- **Craft and master your talking points.** One common trait of excellent leaders is that they can state their mission, vision, and plan clearly and efficiently. Can you explain what God is doing with you and your church in a couple of sentences? If you encountered a friend at a district meeting, how would you answer the question, "So, what's happening with your church right now?" We know that where there is no vision, people perish. Toward what are you leading people? If you can't say it with confidence and believe it, no one else will, either. Is the vision clear? Does your vision inspire?

Responsibility 3: *Collaborate with other church leaders to envision, support, and celebrate ministries of laity within and beyond the local congregation.*

Being a lay leader involves helping people in the church understand that God calls all disciples to be active in ministry—not just a select few. The Book of Discipline explains:

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. Every layperson is called to carry out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20); every layperson is called to be missional. The witness of the laity, their Christ-like examples of everyday living, as well as the sharing of their faith experiences of the gospel, is the primary evangelistic ministry through which all people will come to know Christ, and The United Methodist Church will fulfill its mission. (§127)

God calls all people in the church to ministry—whether member or attendee, young or old, recent convert or lifelong participant. One of your tasks is to help people hear and respond to this call. Part of the challenge is to help folks recognize what we mean by ministry. Ministry is much more than preaching or teaching about God. Ministry also includes acts of service such as maintaining a church kitchen, driving someone to the pharmacy, or tutoring kids in math. This misperception keeps many laity from ministries to which God calls them. Helping your brothers and sisters understand ministry as a part of discipleship is a critical dimension of lay leadership in the church.

Along with other leaders of the church, the lay leader should strive to involve people in ministries that align with the vision and goals of the church. One hundred people pursuing one hundred disconnected ministries will be much less effective than the same group intentionally focused on achieving five or six shared goals. Within these parameters, leaders should empower the laity to minister in creative ways. In addition, church leaders need to be continuously attentive to new areas of focus to which God may be calling the church.

As a lay leader, you should ensure that people receive training and support for their ministries. Without preparation and continued encouragement, people can become discouraged by ministry challenges. Training and support can take many forms depending on the church. Some churches do their own training. Others band together. Training may also be available through your district or conference office.

Celebrating those actively in lay ministry is another form of support and encouragement. Publicly recognizing those in ministry doubles as a great way to communicate the values of the church and recruit new folks. Find stories of transformation and share them with your congregation.

Some things to pray about:

- **God, give me courage.** Ask God to make you comfortable approaching people in your church about ministry opportunities.
- **God, give me the words.** Ask God to guide your speech so you can communicate honestly and clearly about lay ministry.

- **God, please ready peoples' hearts.** Ask God to stir the passions of people so that when the explanations and invitations come, they are primed to respond affirmatively.

Some things to think about:

- **How can I reach the whole congregation?** Depending on the size of your church, it may be difficult to reach all of the laity with this message. Perhaps you need associate lay leaders or gifted partners who can make sure that everyone hears the message of expectation.
- **Refine the message.** We're not selling a used car here. This is a message designed to inform, inspire, and invite. We should not intimidate or make people feel guilty. Discuss with some trusted friends, your district lay leader, and your pastor the best ways to talk about the necessity, beauty, and power of lay ministry.

Some things to try:

- **Ask the pastor about her or his plans for new membership classes and baptisms.** These are perfect times to remind the entire congregation about the expectations of all of us as members of the church.
- **Teach and use the language of ministry** when discussing the work of the congregation until it becomes normal for attendees to think of themselves as serving God in ministry. ● **Celebrate lay ministries often.** People also tend to do what is rewarded and valued. If we don't treat lay ministry as if it matters, it doesn't. If we don't treat ministries that occur outside of worship and Sunday School as if they matter, they don't.
- **Organize Laity Sunday.** The UMC designates the third Sunday in October as Laity Sunday, an opportunity for the church to celebrate the ministry of all lay Christians (Discipline ¶264.2). This is an excellent opportunity for laity to partner with the pastor(s) and be more involved in planning and leading worship. Worship planning resources for Laity Sunday are typically available through the Discipleship Ministries website (see the Resources section).

Responsibility 4: *Represent laity on the church leadership team and other committees or teams of the congregation, such as the finance committee, the pastor-parish relations committee, and the nominations and leadership development committee.*

As the elected lay leader of your congregation, you are automatically on several important committees in your church. You are a voting member on the charge conference (generally meets once per year), the church council, the finance committee, the pastor-parish relations committee, and the nominations and leadership development committee. The key reason for you to participate in all of these bodies is your perspective. You provide an important connection between these groups. You help ensure that each group is pulling in the same direction. You or an associate lay leader should be present at each meeting, along with your pastor, to serve as an interpreter of the actions and programs of the annual conference and the general Church—a good reason for the lay leader also to be the church lay member of annual conference.

Something to pray about:

- **That the gifts and graces of explaining the connection come easily.** The structure and jargon can be difficult to understand. Others may look to you to help them understand the connectional nature of the United Methodist Church.

Some things to think about:

- **How does each committee serve the larger vision?** This is always a challenge, but none of these groups exists for its own sake. Each plays a part in helping the church fulfill its mission. One valuable role a lay leader can play is regularly assessing how all the parts are coming together to make the system function well.
- **How well are we using our time and energy?** What is the focus of most meetings? Do we spend our time considering how the mission is being accomplished, or do we discuss other things? Where is God in your meetings? Do meetings have a spiritual element and a sense of presence?

Some things to try:

- **Ask committees how they see their activities contributing to the church's mission.** Listening to these answers might surprise you. Also, challenge people to go beyond memorized words to what the mission means to them and how their group lives it. If people are far apart, building shared understanding and aligning efforts becomes a priority.
- **Tithe meeting time.** If a meeting lasts an hour, is it unrealistic to give six minutes of the meeting to God? Everyone wants to feel that time is well spent. Make a conscious effort to give meetings a worshipful character. Recognize the presence of God in the meeting intentionally.
- **Celebrate victories and appreciate each other.** It's tragic when people who devote time and energy feel that no one notices. Make a conscious effort as a leader to show every committee member that you value their contributions—sometimes publicly and sometimes privately, but always sincerely. Everyone likes to feel valued, and everyone needs to know he or she matters.

Responsibility 5: *Encourage teamwork between the pastor(s) and lay leadership and work to strengthen the relationship between the pastor(s) and the congregation.*

Just as you and the pastor(s) are partners in leadership, you need to work to strengthen the relationship between the pastor and other church leaders, as well as with the larger congregation. You should provide public support and private insight for your pastor. Clear, honest, and discreet communication is essential. If a congregant is dissatisfied, chat with them individually to assess the roots of their concerns. Encourage him or her to express concerns directly to the pastor; discourage criticism behind the pastor's back. If congregants are unwilling to communicate concerns directly to the pastor, you should encourage them to share their concerns directly with the pastor - don't allow yourself to be trapped in the middle. After all, this is their concern and their story - and they have the opportunity and the obligation to tell it. You don't need to agree, but you should make the pastor aware of people's feelings.

Something to pray about:

- **Unity of purpose within your congregation.** When folks are moving in the same direction, conflict is easier to resolve.

Something to think about:

- **How can you help build a team attitude within the church?** What positive behaviors can you encourage? What negative behaviors can you discourage?

Some things to try:

- **In meetings, draw people out who seem dissatisfied.** Encourage committee members to share their feelings so the group can address them. If doing so during the meeting is impractical, find people to listen to their concerns after the meeting. People who feel frustrated and unheard may vent their feelings in unproductive ways, such as behind people's backs.
- **Celebrate successes.** When you notice people functioning as a team, compliment them. Find good examples of teamwork in the church and publicly recognize them.

Responsibility 6: *Work with the pastor(s) to identify committed laypersons who may be called to leadership in the congregation and help develop them as leaders.*

Churches must continually cultivate new leadership—that is, unless you plan to serve as a lay leader for the rest of your life! While some new leaders will self-identify, churches need to create a culture of invitation. Identify those in your congregation who may have qualities of leadership, even if they may not be serving in this way. Encourage them to consider their calling. Help them to develop their skills through mentorship or formal training. Consider those folks who don't necessarily fit with stereotypes of church leadership. After all, God has done incredible work through unlikely leaders.

Something to pray about:

- **God will raise up leaders from your congregation.** Pray also that you will be able to recognize and affirm those whom God has called.

Some things to think about:

- **Who is already a leader outside of the church who isn't a leader in the church?**
How can you help such people apply their leadership skills in the church setting?
What barriers are keeping them from doing so?
- **How can your church help identify leadership gifts in people who don't recognize them themselves?** Your church could be a place where people discover their gifts and learn to use them to glorify God.
- **How can your church help people discern their calling?** Not everyone is called to ordained ministry, but we need to be attentive to those whom God has called in this way. At the same time, churches need to provide and recognize the value of other avenues of Christian service.

Some things to try:

- **Invigorate and challenge the church's nominations and leadership development committee.** This body is central to identifying people's gifts and inviting people into ministry, but often devolves into filling slots with warm bodies. Help build this group into a team, continually developing leaders and deploying them into ministry.
- **Intentionally focus on young people.** Rather than merely inviting young people to the tasks of ministry, offer important leadership positions to those with the appropriate gifts. Invite them to be a part of healthy committees. Treat them as peers. They may eventually move out of the area, but the leadership skills they acquire could easily translate to another congregation.
- **Organize a workshop or series of meetings dealing with spiritual gifts.** Help people understand their gifts and talents to participate in ministries they will find meaningful and fulfilling. While not everyone has gifts related to leadership, such exercises may identify potential new leaders.

Responsibility 7: *Participate in district and conference-level training; model an attitude of continual learning.*

As a lay leader, you will invite and connect people to training opportunities. At the same time, you must attend to your own development as a leader. Periodically, the district and conference offices will offer learning opportunities. We encourage you to participate (and invite others to join you). If you have ideas for potential topics, pass them to the district or conference lay leader.

We also encourage you to participate in Lay Servant Ministries—a leadership training and certification program of the United Methodist Church. While anyone can take classes in any order, the first step is usually the Lay Servant Ministries BASIC Course, which should be offered in your district or somewhere in our conference about twice a year. To be certified, you will also need the formal approval of both your pastor and your church (through the charge conference). Following the BASIC course, you will have opportunities to take advanced courses on specialized topics, including leading prayer, leading worship, preaching, and many other areas of ministry.

The North Carolina Conference has developed clusters of courses around particular ministries or areas of interest. These clusters, called pathways, provide a suggested set of courses to help laypersons become more proficient in their ministry or help them discover a particular ministry they would like to explore. There are currently eight pathways; you can find more details on the NCC website under Lay Ministry.

Something to pray about:

- **To be sensitized to areas where you need to grow further as a leader.** Pray also that the training opportunities in which you participate will empower and encourage you as a leader.

Something to think about:

- **What continual learning opportunities would you find most helpful?** In which areas do you feel like you need to grow in order to mature as an effective leader?

Some things to try:

- **If you haven't already, take the Lay Servant Ministries BASIC Course as an introduction to this helpful program.** Lay leaders are encouraged to become certified lay servants. Such preparation should benefit you in areas of ministry beyond your role as a local church lay leader. You can find out more about the program on the conference website: nccumc.org.
- **Commit to participating in at least two training opportunities related to leadership each year.** In addition, we encourage you to read a couple of books each year that will help you as a leader. Pass on to others the names of books you have found helpful.

Responsibility 8: *Connect with lay leaders from other congregations and the district lay leader to share ideas and provide mutual support.*

Formal leadership training is helpful, but we also encourage you to connect with lay leaders in other congregations. Few people will understand your role and those who fill it in other churches. One of the strengths of the United Methodist Church is its connectional structure. Churches and their leaders can learn from and support one another.

Something to pray about:

- **That God will help you to form bonds with other lay leaders.** Establishing strong connections will require you to invest time and energy, but being part of a healthy community of peers will help energize your leadership and sustain you through difficult times.

Something to think about:

- **What can you bring to the table?** Even if you're new to the role of lay leader, you likely bring a wealth of experience from other areas of your life. How can you help lay leaders from other churches to be more effective in their ministry?

Some things to try:

- **Invite lay leaders from other churches in your area to a gathering.** Contact your district lay leader for information about whom to contact. Propose that you start to meet monthly or quarterly. Pick a theme or topic for each meeting in order to focus the discussion.
- **Establish a mentoring relationship with another lay leader.** If you are experienced, you can mentor someone new. If you are new, seek out someone with more experience whose leadership you respect. Your district lay leader may be able to help you find a good match.

People Who Can Help:

- District Lay Leaders
 - Beacon – Tracy Manigault (tmanigault@nccumc.org)
 - Capital - Freda Davis, Co-Lay Leader (fedavis@gmail.com) and Clement Quintyne, Co-Lay Leader (cquintyne@nccumc.org)
 - Corridor – Tommy Humphries (tommy.humphries@nccumc.org)
 - Fairway – Deborah Murphy (deboramurphy@nccumc.org)
 - Gateway – Lucy Lowry (lmlowry@nccumc.org)
 - Harbor - John Kelso (jkelso608@gmail.com)
 - Heritage - David Johnson (david.johnson@nccumc.org)
 - Sound - Kim Smith (k.smith@nccumc.org)

- Conference Lay Leader – John Hall (john.hall@nccumc.org)
- Conference United Methodist Youth President – Matthew Wong (mattgeo1214@gmail.com)
- Conference United Women in Faith President - Janet Shew (janetshew@nccumc.org)
- Conference United Methodist Men President - Bill Huggins (sanhug@gmail.com)
- North Carolina Conference Staff Representative and Staff Coordinator for Lay Servant Ministry: Leah Wiebe-Smith (lwiebesmith@nccumc.org)

- Lay Servant Ministries (leadership development program)
 - District Directors of Lay Servant Ministries
 - Beacon - Tom Santa (tsanta5721@hotmail.com)
 - Capital - Janet Groberski (jgroberski@nccumc.org) and James Bernstein (jbernstein@nccumc.org)
 - Corridor - Vicki Ambrose (vambrose@nccumc.org) and Allen Burden (ga57burden@gmail.com)
 - Fairway - Pam Strug (pstrug@nccumc.org)
 - Gateway - Effie McGill (effie.mcgill@gmail.com)
 - Harbor - Sandy Core (sjcore@live.com)
 - Heritage - Ken Ripley (ripleykv@twc.com)
 - Sound – Elizabeth Harrison (eharrison@nccumc.org)
 - Conference Co-Directors of Lay Servant Ministries – Ann Davis (ardavis@nccumc.org) and Tom Santa (tsanta5721@hotmail.com)

Further Resources:

- North Carolina Conference website (www.nccumc.org)
 - District websites
 - Beacon District (<https://beacondistrictnc.org>)
 - Capital District (<https://capitaldistrictnc.org>)
 - Corridor District (<https://corridordistrictnc.org>)
 - Fairway District (<https://fairwaydistrictnc.org>)
 - Gateway District (<https://gatewaydistrictnc.org>)

- Harbor District (<https://harbordistrictnc.org>)
 - Heritage District (<https://heritagedistrictnc.org>)
 - Sound District (<https://sounddistrictnc.org>)
- *HIGHLY RECOMMENDED*: North Carolina Conference e-news, an email subscription service of key information and transformative tools for NCCUMC clergy and local church leadership. To subscribe, go to nccumc.org/subscribe and select areas of interest.
- [*Pathways in Lay Servant Ministry training*](#)
Pathways are clusters of courses that can be taken to enhance one's skills in a particular ministry or area of interest. They are suggestions we believe will help laypersons become more proficient in their ministry or help them discover a particular ministry they would like to explore.
 - United Methodist Church website (<https://www.umc.org>)
 - [*Lay Leader/Lay Member: Connecting Your Congregation and Your Annual Conference*](#).
By General Board of Discipleship. (Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation Series). Nashville, TN: Cokesbury, 2016.
This twenty-eight-page booklet is a great resource for lay leaders and lay members to annual conference. You can download it as a PDF from Cokesbury.com for \$3.99. The 'Guidelines' series includes many other titles that you may find helpful, as well.
 - [*Therefore, Go: The United Methodist Handbook*](#), United Methodist Communications 2017.
This forty-page booklet provides a broad overview of the United Methodist Church. It outlines basic concepts of UM beliefs, history, and structures.
 - [*The Book of Discipline, 2020/2024*](#)
Revised every four years, this is a fundamental book outlining the law, doctrine, administration, organizational work, and procedures of the United Methodist Church. The Book of Discipline and Book of Resolutions are also viewable online free of charge: <https://www.cokesbury.com/book-of-discipline-book-of-resolutions-free-versions>
 - [*Job Descriptions and Leadership Training in the United Methodist Church, 2017-2020: A Leader Development Guide*](#). Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 2016. This book is designed specifically for those who serve on the committee on nominations and leadership development in a local church. It outlines basic practices for ensuring that people are actively engaged in a form of fulfilling ministry with clear expectations. A significant portion of the book is devoted to sample job descriptions for many common church positions, both paid and volunteer.
 - [*What Every Leader Needs to Know about Leading Meetings*](#). By Betsey Heavner. Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 2004.

- [*Partners in Ministry: Clergy and Laity*](#) By Roy and Jackie Trueblood. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999. This brief but helpful book is designed to promote teamwork between clergy and laity. It is a good resource for understanding how to develop a cohesive and functional leadership team.
- [*Discipleship Ministries*](#) (Formerly the General Board of Discipleship-GBOD) This general agency of the United Methodist Church provides many useful resources for local churches.
- [*MissionInsite Community Demographics*](#)
MissionInsite provides instant access to community information for your church. You'll get desktop, web-based access to demographic data for various geographic levels. When you log in at missioninsite.com, many resources will be available, including Impression Reports, MOSAICs, and Congregant Plotting. Please contact The Center for Leadership Excellence for important information before registering for the MissionInsite: 984.257.0716 ext. 247, or email: cle@nccumc.org.
- [*UMC Spiritual Gifts Assessment*](#)
- [*ResourceUMC*](#)
ResourceUMC helps churches and their leaders by connecting them with each other and with inspirational and informational content, resources, and products. This site is a consolidation of resources from United Methodist Communications.
- Online courses are available through www.beadisciple.com (a program of Southwestern College)

Glossary of Useful Terms:

- **Annual Conference:** This has two meanings. First, it is a regional, organizational unit of the UMC that connects all the churches in its area. Second, it refers to the yearly meeting when an equal number of clergy and laity gather for focus and support as well as to conduct the business of the organization.
- **North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church (NCCUMC):** Our conference covers 56 counties in eastern North Carolina, from Elon to the coast and from the South Carolina border to the Virginia border. Membership in the North Carolina Conference in January 2025 was approximately 142,385 persons worshipping in churches within eight districts in eastern North Carolina. The conference service center is located at 700 Waterfield Ridge Place in Garner, NC.
- **Charge Conference:** The official annual business meeting of the local church. Most often, the district superintendent conducts this meeting in a group setting with multiple churches participating.
- **Conference Lay Leader:** A layperson elected to work in partnership with the bishop and represent the interests of the laity. He or she contributes to conference planning and decision-making and serves on several conference committees. In addition, he or she chairs the conference board of laity.

- **Conference Board of Laity:** This group cultivates and supports active lay leadership in local churches. It consists of all district lay leaders, the conference lay leader, conference presidents of the United Methodist Youth, Women and Men, and a staff liaison from the conference.
- **District:** The North Carolina Conference is organized into eight geographic districts (Beacon, Capital, Corridor, Fairway, Gateway, Harbor, Heritage, and Sound). The district serves as a primary point of connection for local churches. Each is supervised by a district superintendent.
- **District Lay Leader:** Works in partnership with the district superintendent and represents the interests of the laity. She or he serves on several district and conference committees, including the conference laity team. She or he also supports and connects local church lay leaders.
- **District Superintendent (DS):** The district superintendent's primary responsibilities relate to overseeing the work of the local churches and supervising the work of the pastors, including helping the bishop appoint pastors to local churches, a process called appointments.
- **Administrative Assistant to the District Superintendent (AADS):** The Administrative Assistant to the District Superintendent's (AADS) job responsibilities include supporting and assisting the District Superintendent with the administrative duties for the assigned Districts. This includes developing and maintaining effective working relationships with the clergy and laity of the churches within the District and providing clear and regular communication. Providing support to the groups and committees within the District, such as Lay Servant Ministries, Youth Ministries, and the official committees of the District. The AADS also ensures that the District records are well maintained and coordinates with pastors and churches to ensure the completion of all reports required by the Book of Discipline and NC Conference in a timely manner. There are four AADS, each serving two districts.
- **Lay Servant Ministries:** A leadership development program for the United Methodist Church laity. It consists of several certification tracks designed to train and equip the laity in effective ministry in local churches and beyond. Lay leaders are encouraged to become certified lay servants.