Glossary

Annual Conference-A regional, organizational unit of the UMC and the yearly business of that unit, both presided over by a bishop. The business session is composed of equal numbers of clergy and laity. At least one layperson from each pastoral charge is a member. There are 56 annual conferences in the U.S. and 76 outside the U.S. in Africa, Europe and the Philippines. The conference is a time to review ministry, adopt policy and resolutions, and strengthen spiritual life.

Apportionment- A portion of the local church's offerings that are contributed to their district and conference to support the annual conference and general conference ministries.

Bishops- Lifetime election by the lay and clergy delegates at the Jurisdictional Conference. They oversee an annual conference and lead the UMC. Bishops are responsible for administering and following the rulings of the Judicial Council. They serve as general superintendents of the church and are responsible individually and collectively for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the denomination.

Book of Discipline (BOD)- Fundamental book of doctrine, rules and laws for the UMC.

Contains:
Doctrinal statements of belief

Affirmations of social principals

Rules of governance

Centrists- Accepts the scriptures as the authoritative word of God and believe that competing teachings on these matters can co-exist in one church.

Charge Conference- A local church meeting that meets at least once per year to elect new leaders, review goals and set clergy salaries. The DS leads a charge conference.

Christian discernment- decision making process, guided by God, to help an individual make a discovery that can lead to future action.

Church Conference- Local church where all members of the church vote on any matter presented. All members in order to vote must be a full and professing member of the church.

Church Council- Elected leaders by local church membership after nomination from the church pastors.

Council of Bishops- All active and retired bishops of the UMC. The council meets twice per year.

Discipline- The constancy of practices, organization, procedures of the church, including the spiritual, moral and administrative expectations of clergy and other leaders. The term *The Discipline* also refers to the United Methodist Church's *The Book of Discipline* and the Global Methodist Church's *The Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline.*

District Superintendent (DS)-Appointed by the Bishop of an annual conference. They lead and oversee churches in a defined geographical area within an annual conference.

Doctrine- A set of beliefs held as essential beliefs and taught by the Church, such as the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, the authority of scripture, the physical resurrection of the dead, etc. For the United Methodist Church, the doctrinal standards can be found in *The Book of Discipline* and include the Articles of Religion and the Confession of Faith.

General Conference (GC)- Governing body of the United Methodist Church (UMC). Meets every four years and includes all conferences worldwide. It is the only body authorized to speak on behalf of the UMC and make any changes to the Book of Discipline.

Global Methodist Church (GMC)- Newly formed Methodist denomination on May 1, 2022.

Jurisdictional Conference-Clergy and lay delegates from the annual conferences meet every four years to conduct business including the election and assignments of bishops.

Judicial Council- Supreme Court of the UMC with full and final authority. Nine persons made up of laity and clergy are elected by the General Conference.

Jurisdictions- The five geographic areas in the U.S. composed of several annual conferences.

Polity- Our denominational/church structure, organization, rules, practices and traditions of the Church, not just in the local church, but also in the denomination. It is the operational governance structure. It includes *The Book of Discipline* of the United Methodist Church and *The Transitional Book of Doctrine and Discipline* of the Global Methodist Church.

Progressives- Believe that as a matter of justice, the church must liberalize its sexual ethics, its teachings on marriage and its ordination standards.

Social Principles- Adopted by UMC in 1972-A prayerful and thoughtful effort on the part of the General Conference to speak to the human issues in the contemporary world from a sound biblical and theological foundation as historically demonstrated in United Methodist traditions. They are a call to faithfulness and are intended to be instructive and persuasive in the best of the prophetic spirit; however **they are not church law.** The Social Principles are a call to all members of the United Methodist Church to a prayerful, studied dialogue of faith and practice. (See paragraph 509 in the Book of Discipline, Book of Discipline & Book of Resolutions Free Versions/UMC Books/Cokesbury).

Texas Annual Conference (TAC)- Meets annually to address conference needs for our geographical region. Conferences are led by the current UMC Bishop of Texas.

Theology- Our belief about God, the divinity of Jesus, The Holy Spirit, the Trinity, and the authority of Holy Scripture (how it is interpreted and applied).

Transitional Leadership Council (TLC)- Council who has the ability to change the BDD until it is approved by the convening General Conference of the GMC.

Transitional Book of Doctrines and Disciplines (TBDD)- Created by the WCA and TLC. First convening conference to formally vote on adopting the BDD will be sometime in the next 18-24 months.

Traditionalists- Accepts the scriptures as the authoritative word of God and upholds the church's historic definition of marriage and ordination standards.

Trust Clause-A statement included in legal documents (deeds) declaring that the property and assets of a local church or United Methodist body are held "in trust" for the benefit of the entire denomination. The trust clause ensures that United Methodist property will continue to be used for the purposes of The United Methodist Church.

Unfunded Pension Liability- The monetary difference between the projected pension obligations of the annual conference to its retired clergy, and the pension reserve funds of the conference. The total is apportioned out to each congregation on the basis of its size and strength.

United Methodist Church (UMC)- Formed in 1968 by the union of The Evangelical United Brethren Church and The Methodist Church.

Wesleyan Covenant Association (WCA)- An association of individuals and congregations who share a common understanding of the Wesleyan doctrine.