



Governance Policies

Updated 4/26/2026 by the Leadership Board of Manchester UMC

- The mission of Manchester United Methodist Church (MUMC) is to make a difference for Christ by transforming church and community.
- The vision of the congregation is to be an inclusive community of people who love Christ deeply, worship Christ passionately, and serve Christ boldly.
- The Leadership Board is the governing body of the congregation.
- Governance: The process of creating and implementing lasting policies that affirm the mission and vision of the congregation by delegating managerial responsibility and authority, directing multiple individual decisions, setting congregational goals that align with the mission, and evaluating the congregation's ministry in light of the mission. These are the tasks of MUMC's Leadership Board.

1. ENDS POLICIES

1.0 - To "be an inclusive community"

All people, in particular those who have been excluded from or marginalized by other communities, will find an authentic affirmation and welcome when participating in the ministries of MUMC.

- A) One way to measure this end is increasing diversity in the demographics of those who are participating in the life of the church and serving in leadership roles.

1.1 - To "love Christ deeply"

People who are seeking a loving relationship with Jesus Christ will be able to engage in a group setting in which to nurture that relationship. This end will be measured by

- A) Increasing numbers of people in group settings.
- B) Increasing frequency of participation in group settings.
- C) Deepening sense of engagement among those who participate in group ministry experiences.

1.2 - To "worship Christ passionately"

People seeking meaningful connection will discover ample worship opportunities, in a variety of worship styles, offered weekly, with additional services offered in particular seasons of the liturgical year. This end will be measured by

- A) Increasing numbers of people in worship.
- B) Increasing frequency of participation in worship opportunities.
- C) Deepening sense of engagement among those who participate in worship opportunities.

1.3 - To "serve Christ boldly"

People who are called to serve will be equipped to do so through the ministries of MUMC. This end will be measured by

- A) Increasing numbers of people serving.
- B) Increasing frequency of participation in mission and service ministries.
- C) Deepening sense of engagement among those who serve.

1.4 - To "transform church and community"

- D) Decisions will be made by consensus building whenever possible. When appropriate, decisions will be made by simple majority vote of the members present, unless otherwise specified by the chair and the lead pastor. A board member must be present at the meeting to vote, unless there are extenuating circumstances that have been approved ahead of time by the chair and the lead pastor.

The communities, including local, regional, global communities, and including the church itself, with which the people of MUMC are connected will be transformed for God's sake. This end can be achieved in simple, specific actions that transform a smaller component part of a larger issue.

- A) This end can be measured by improving, even incrementally, conditions of homelessness, hunger, poverty, abuse/neglect, prejudice, discrimination, etc. in our communities.

2. GOVERNANCE PROCESS POLICIES

2.0 - The purpose of the Board, on behalf of Christ Jesus, is to see to it that MUMC achieves the ends that are stated in its Ends Policies, at a cost that is faithful to the resources provided by God, and without violating the actions prohibited in the Executive Limitations Policies. The Board as a whole fulfills the functions of Church Council, Trustees, Finance, and Pastor-Parish Relations Committee as defined in the United Methodist Book of Discipline.

2.1 - Governing Style

The Board will govern faithfully, lawfully, and ethically, with an emphasis on a) an outward vision rather than internal preoccupation, b) grace-filled, respectful, transparent, and honest communication toward a common vision, c) strategic leadership rather than administrative detail, d) clear distinction of Board and Lead Pastor/staff roles, e) collective rather than individual decisions, and f) a focus on the future while acknowledging the past.

- A) The Board is responsible for excellence in governing, acting as the initiator of governance policy rather than merely a reactor to staff initiative.
- B) Individual expertise may be used to enhance the understanding of the Board as a body, but all decisions are made collectively. An individual opinion will not be substituted for a collective decision.
- C) The Board will govern the congregation through the creation of written policies reflecting Christ's priorities and mission for the church. The Board's policy focus will be on intended long-term impacts of the congregation's work, not on the administrative or programmatic means of attaining those impacts.
- E) The Board will hold discussions and make decisions in a manner that is open for congregational awareness and review.
- F) The Board will provide accountability for its members in a way conducive to excellence in governance. Accountability may apply to such matters as attendance, preparation for meetings, policy making principles, respect of roles, and behaviors that are not aligned with the mission of the congregation.
- G) Board development will include training for new Board members and periodic Board discussion of policy and process to ensure full understanding of the principles of the policy governance model.

2.2 - Board Work Output

The Board has the direct responsibility to create written governing policies that realistically address the broadest levels of all organizational decisions and situations, including policies on:

- A) Ends: congregational results, outcomes, impacts, benefits, and their recipients.
- B) Governance Process: specification of how the Board conceives, carries out, and monitors its own work.
- C) Management Delegation: how power is delegated and its proper use; the Lead Pastor's role, authority, and accountability.

- D) Executive Limitations: constraints on the authority by which the delegated power is executed; the establishment of boundaries within which all executive decisions and work must take place.

2.3 - Agenda

To accomplish the stated work output, the Board will follow an annual agenda that renews and reforms the Ends policies and improves Board performance through education and conversation.

- A) The Board will determine the annual agenda and set annual goals so that administrative planning and budgeting can be based on accomplishing a one-year segment of the Board's most recent long-term ends.
- B) Throughout the year, decisions that can be made by consent agenda will be made as expeditiously as possible.

2.4 - Board Composition

The Board shall consist of from 9-15 lay members who will serve for three years each on a rotating basis of three classes beginning with each calendar year. In addition, the Lead Pastor and Executive Pastor are members of the Board with voice but no vote.

- A) Members will be nominated by MUMC's Nominations Committee, then approved at Charge Conference, utilizing the "Local Church Officials" form provided by the Missouri Annual Conference for Simplified (Alternative) Structure governance.
- B) The Nominations Team of MUMC shall, each year, nominate a Leadership Board Chairperson and Lay Leader for the following year. These nominations will be made in close consultation with current Board members, and approved at the annual Charge Conference.
- C) The composition of the Board shall reflect the diversity of Manchester's welcome statement. *"We extend God's love and grace to ALL people. Therefore, as we journey toward a greater understanding of one another, we respect our human family's diversity of age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental ability, family structure, marital status, socioeconomic status, education, political perspective, faith history and life experience."*

2.5 - Role of the Board Chair and Lay Leader

The Board Chair is a particularly empowered member of the Board who ensures the integrity of the Board's processes and occasionally represents the Board to outside parties. The Lay Leader is the primary lay representative of the laity who, along with the Board Chair, serves as a sounding board for the Lead Pastor on church matters.

- A) The outcomes of the Board Chair's work are that the Board functions consistently with its own rules, meeting discussion content remains focused on appropriate issues, and meetings are fair, honest, grace-filled, and respectful at all times.
- B) The Board Chair and the Lay Leader will serve as accountability partners for the Lead Pastor, to ensure that the mission of the congregation is upheld and the policies of the Board are being achieved.
- C) The Board Chair will serve as the Pastor-Parish Relations Chair and the Trustees Chair.
- D) The Board Chair may delegate authority to the Lay Leader, or to another Board member, at any time. (Paragraph 251.1 of the 2016 Book of Discipline addresses further duties of the Lay Leader specifically.)

2.6 - Board Members Conduct

The Board commits itself and its members to ethical, respectful, mature, and lawful conduct, including appropriate decorum and integrity when acting as Board members.

- A) Members must live a pattern of discipleship that demonstrates loyalty to Christ Jesus as Head of the Church, before loyalties to staff, other organizations, or any personal interest.
- B) A Board member will not attempt to exercise individual authority over the congregation. No single Board member has authority over any staff member, though all Board members shall cultivate supportive, encouraging, ongoing relationships with staff members. No single Board

member may speak on behalf of the Board or the congregation as a whole except to repeat explicitly stated Board decisions.

- C) All Board members must respect the need for information of a sensitive nature to remain limited to Board members only, and to be available to all Board members. Any breach of limited information boundaries may result in dismissal from the Board.
- D) Each Board member will support the authority and legitimacy of final Board decisions, irrespective of the individual member's personal position on the issue.

2.7 - Board Task Forces

Task forces may be assigned so as to reinforce the wholeness of the Board's work.

- A) Board task forces are to help the Board do its work, not to supervise the staff. Normally task forces will prepare policy alternatives and implications for broader Board consideration.
- B) Task forces will not speak for the Board except when formally given such authority.
- C) Task forces will be used sparingly and ordinarily in an ad hoc capacity.
- D) This policy does not apply to teams and committees formed under the authority of the Lead Pastor.

2.8 - Conflict of Interest

All the members of the Board shall not enter into a transaction or participate in a decision when an actual or perceived conflict of interest exists.

- A) A conflict of interest exists when a Board member is in position to derive benefit from actions or decisions made in their official capacity, or when the decision would benefit a member of the Board person's family.
- B) When the Board is to decide an issue about which a member has an unavoidable conflict of interest, that member shall excuse himself or herself from any conversation and vote on the question.

3. MANAGEMENT DELEGATION POLICIES

3.0 - Lead Pastor Authority and Accountability

The Church Leadership Board's official connection to the operational management of the congregation is through the Lead Pastor.

- A) The Lead Pastor shall serve as the Spiritual Leader and the Head of Staff for the congregation.
- B) All Board authority and accountability delegated to staff is delegated through the Lead Pastor so that all authority and accountability of staff is considered the authority and accountability of the Lead Pastor.
- C) In consultation with the Leadership Board, the Lead Pastor is authorized to hire, fire, and adjust compensation for staff, provided the executive limitations policies are met.
- D) The Board delegates implementation and management of the approved budget to the Lead Pastor, except for endowments and memorial funds, provided the executive limitations are met. The Board reserves the right to amend the current budget should financial conditions warrant.

3.1 - Lead Pastor Evaluation

The Board will direct the Lead Pastor to achieve specific goals through the establishment of Ends policies. The Board will limit the executive authority of the Lead Pastor through the establishment of Executive Limitations policies. The Board does not have the authority to countermand direction to the Lead Pastor given by the current Resident Bishop of the Missouri Annual Conference and/or the District Superintendent of the Gateway Central District, who is the Lead Pastor's immediate supervisor.

- A) As long as the Lead Pastor uses a reasonable interpretation of the Board's Ends and Limitations policies, the Lead Pastor is authorized to establish further policies, make decisions, take actions, and create ministry opportunities.
- B) The purpose of the Lead Pastor's evaluation processes will be to determine the degree to which the Board policies are being met.
- C) The Board will evaluate the Lead Pastor via the pastor's self-evaluation, Board evaluation, and/or additional reports (such as a periodic "360-degree Review" including staff input).
- D) Criteria for evaluation.
 - 1. The Board will view the Lead Pastor's job performance as identical to congregational performance in terms of the stated ends policy for the congregation.
 - 2. The Board will evaluate 1) the reasonableness of the Lead Pastor's interpretation of the stated Ends policy and 2) the demonstrable or describable accomplishment of that interpretation.
 - 3. The Board will evaluate the Lead Pastor as requested by the District Superintendent and utilize District evaluation tools to supplement internal ones, if needed.
- E) If the evaluation of the Lead Pastor's performance determines that Board policies are not being met, the Board will work to reconcile the situation directly with the Lead Pastor. If no reconciliation is possible through these means, the Board has authority to seek a solution from the Bishop of the Annual Conference via the District Superintendent.

3.2 - Compensation

Compensation for the Lead Pastor and all appointed clergy will be determined by a vote of the Charge Conference. Recommendations to the Charge Conference regarding compensation for appointed clergy will be made by the Board.

- A) It is understood that in The United Methodist Church the Lead Pastor and all appointed clergy are employed by the Annual Conference, and that the local church is the "salary paying unit" of the Annual Conference. Therefore, should there be a change in appointments, it is understood that the total compensation package for the new Pastor and/or appointed staff will be that which was approved at the most recent Charge Conference.

4. EXECUTIVE LIMITATION POLICIES

4.0 - The Lead Pastor shall not cause or allow any practice that is unlawful, imprudent, or in conflict with the United Methodist Book of Discipline, the direction of the Missouri Annual Conference, or the congregation's mission.

The clergy of Manchester UMC may conduct "ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions" (UM Book of Discipline, ¶1341.6) and officiate at same-sex wedding ceremonies, which may be held in the building if desired. We believe this practice aligns with the idea that "certain basic human rights and civil liberties are due all persons. We are committed to supporting those rights and liberties for all persons, regardless of sexual orientation." (UM Book of Discipline, ¶162.J)

4.1 - Treatment of Staff

The Lead Pastor shall not cause or allow conditions that are unlawful, unfair, undignified, or unclear to staff. Further, the Lead Pastor:

- A) Shall not structure and equip the staff in a way that hinders the accomplishment of the mission of the congregation.
- B) Shall not neglect to provide clearly stated desired work outcomes and job descriptions for staff.
- C) Shall not cause or allow adverse treatment of any staff member for non-disruptive expression of dissent to a supervisor or to the Leadership Board.

- D) Shall not place unreasonable expectations upon the staff.
- E) Shall not create or allow the existence of a hostile, unsafe, or unhealthy working environment.
- F) Shall not require any staff member to perform duties beyond those stated in the job description.

4.2 - Financial Concerns

The Lead Pastor shall not cause or allow the development of financial jeopardy or material deviation of actual expenditures from Board priorities established in Ends Policies. Further, the Lead Pastor:

- A) Shall not expend more funds than have been received in the fiscal year to date without Board approval.
- B) Shall not cause or allow reserve funds to be used for non-emergency spending.
Notwithstanding the normal fluctuations in cash flow, the goal is to maintain a reserve fund balance that would allow the congregation to function for 90 days without any other income.
- C) Shall not allow disbursement of funds from the Endowment Fund without specific direction from the Endowment Team, or undesignated Memorial Funds without specific direction from the Board.
- D) Shall not allow money given for a designated purpose to be used for a purpose other than intended.
- E) Shall not fail to settle payroll in a timely manner.
- F) Shall not allow tax payments or other filings to be overdue or inaccurately filed.
- G) Shall not purchase or sell real property.
- H) Shall not purchase or sell titled vehicles for church use without express direction from the Leadership Board.
- I) Shall not raise the overall budget without Board approval.

4.3 - Budgeting

The Lead Pastor shall present a budget for board approval. The budget presented shall not:

- A) Risk financial jeopardy for the congregation or deviate from Board priorities established in the Ends Policies.
- B) Fail to take at least three to five years of generosity trends into consideration in projecting future generosity.
- C) Fail to consider a reasonable projection of expenses and cash flow required to advance the mission.

4.4 - Asset Protection

The Lead Pastor shall not cause or allow Manchester UMC assets to be unprotected, inadequately maintained, or unnecessarily risked. Further, the Lead Pastor:

- A) Shall not fail to reasonably insure against theft and casualty losses and against liability losses to staff and the congregation itself.
- B) Shall not allow staff to handle funds without adequate background and credit checks.
- C) Shall not subject the facilities and equipment to unreasonable wear and tear or inadequate maintenance.
- D) Shall not make a significant expenditure a) without reasonable protection against conflict of interest, b) without obtaining comparative prices and quality, and c) without ensuring long-term quality and cost effectiveness.
- E) Shall not receive, process, or disburse funds via procedures that are illegal, careless, or imprudent.
- F) Shall not hold operating capital in insecure instruments, including uninsured checking accounts, or in non-interest bearing accounts except where necessary to facilitate ease of operational transaction.
- G) Shall not invest reserves in accounts that are inconsistent with United Methodist investment strategies as expressed by Wespath's "Sustainable Investment" approach (see Wespath website).

4.5 - Employment, Compensation, and Benefits

With respect to employment, compensation, and benefits to employees and independent contractors, the Lead Pastor shall not fail to place value on economic justice, recognition of fruitful work, retention of gifted staff members, and transparency of process. Further, the Lead Pastor:

- A) Shall not hire for any staff position that would cause the total staff salary annual expense to exceed the budgeted amount without consent of the Board. Reasonable exceptions may be made for positions funded through grants.
- B) Shall not neglect to develop and distribute an Employment Policies and Benefits manual that describes hiring and firing practices and procedures, staff conduct expectations, and other pertinent information.
 - 1. Employment Policies and Benefits will align with United Methodist practices for just and fair employment.
 - 2. The Employment Policies and Benefits manual will be reviewed annually by a task force appointed by the Leadership Board, alongside appropriate staff representatives.
- C) Shall not establish current compensation and benefits that deviate materially from the 75th percentile of comparable positions in protestant churches nationwide. The percentile will be calculated by comparing similar job descriptions, years of service, and similarly sized congregations. Reasonable exceptions may be made, incorporating current budgetary constraints.
- D) Shall not dismiss a staff member without notifying the Board of the decision.

4.6 - Communication with the Board

The Lead Pastor shall not cause or allow the Board to be uninformed or unsupported in its work. Further, the Lead Pastor:

- A) Shall not neglect to submit monitoring data that directly address the Board's priorities (as stated in the Ends Policies) in a timely, accurate, and understandable fashion.
- B) Shall not fail to communicate periodic financial reports regarding the implementation of the approved budget.
- C) Shall not fail to report any actual or anticipated noncompliance with any policy.
- D) Shall not neglect to alert the Board to trends relevant to the stated Ends Policies.
- E) Shall not allow the Board to remain unaware of significant incidental information, such as media coverage, threatened or pending lawsuits or other legal action, and material changes to property.
- F) Shall not fail to deal with the Board as a whole when addressing official business, except when dealing with a Task Force specifically designated by the Board.

4.7 - Online Presence

The Lead Pastor shall not cause or allow the congregation's online content to contain material that is inconsistent with the mission of the church, contrary to United Methodist theology, degrading, malicious, or not Christ-like.