



Nominations & Leadership Development

Leaders Are the Key to Church Vitality



G U I D E L I N E S

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Leaders Are the Key to Church Vitality

David C. Teel and Chris Wilterdink
with thanks to author Betsey Heavner

Discipleship Ministries

NOMINATIONS AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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“A Wreath for Your Excellent Leadership”

Thank you for assuming the important and awesome work of providing spiritual leadership to your congregation. The work of church leadership is shared and synergistic. Pastoral and laity leadership combine to provide the widest possible set of gifts, knowledge, abilities, skills, experience, and passions to fulfill our United Methodist mission to “make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” (*The Book of Discipline*, ¶120). What you do as a gifted, spiritual leader is of vital importance.

Spiritual leadership differs from other forms of leadership in the foundational ways it allows us to live out the vows and promises we make when joining the church: to uphold The United Methodist Church through our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness.

The first work of all church leaders is to pray for the ministry of the church: local, denominational, and global. Our work is always worshipful work. Our ministry of presence strengthens our church’s ministry and mission. By combining our gifts, knowledge, experience, and passion we can achieve wonderful things together through the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Together, we strengthen our congregation for service to those within the community of faith and beyond. Accepting the mantle of leadership provides a powerful witness to the world of what it means to be a faithful disciple.

Together, we fulfill our mission of making disciples and transforming the world by reaching out and receiving people in the name of Jesus the Christ, relating people to God in covenant community, nurturing and strengthening people in their faith, and equipping and supporting people to live their faith in the world.

The *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation* draw upon a wealth of experience and expertise to provide you with the basic resources you need to do effective, impactful ministry. Each Guideline focuses on a key area of ministry and church leadership, providing information and processes to help your working group—committee, council, board, or other configuration—excel and support all other working groups. See the accompanying Guide to the Guidelines for useful information on how the *Guidelines* and ministry areas work together.

We recommend that each group member read this Guideline and noted paragraphs from the *Discipline*. Take time at meetings to discuss ways to implement identified tasks and responsibilities, plan for the future, and assess and evaluate your work.

The apocryphal book of Sirach reminds leaders to be humble servant leaders, make sure the needs of others are cared for, and then receive “a wreath for your excellent leadership” (Sirach 32:2 NRSVue). We invite you to lead with humility, compassion, patience, and grace, that The United Methodist Church might be a witness to the light and love of Christ for all the world.

Intentional Discipleship Systems

As we look out across our churches, the problem is not a lack of people, the problem is the church's inability to see and reach them. As leaders in the church our role is to find clarity in the who & what of discipleship, the how of discipleship formation, but most importantly, the why for being disciples and making disciples. This describes the work of intentional discipleship systems or pathways.

John Wesley said it best in *The Scripture Way of Salvation*: “There is a real, as well as relative, change. We are inwardly renewed by the power of God. We feel ‘the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us’ producing love to all humankind.”

This love for all humankind is what drives discipleship. A basic desire to love God, love neighbor, love self, and repeat. To go deeper and deeper into the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, and to offer what we have found to those that we meet.

How do we get back to a movement of a deep love for people that drives everything we do? How do we get back to seeing all the people that God calls us to reach?

The world, now more than ever, needs disciples of Jesus, growing in faith, growing closer to Christ, with a clear vision of the world and people as God sees them. Disciples who seek to use their God-given gifts to transform their communities and the world.

Early Methodists started a movement that was focused on growing as disciples, inviting others into a life following Jesus, and helping those in their communities that were hurting the most. At Discipleship Ministries, we believe that we need to get back to these basic understandings of church and discipleship, and back to a concern for improving systems that work for all God's children, moving us toward what God intends for all.

We invite you to explore the SeeAllThePeople suite of resources (www.seeallthepeople.org) designed to equip you and your church for intentional discipleship and community engagement. Although the forms and strategies change, the main goal of the church remains: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. It will always be about discipleship!

Called to Love and Serve

[A]ll Christians are called to minister wherever Christ would have them serve and witness in deeds and words that heal and free. (*The Book of Discipline*, ¶128)

Thank you for accepting the call to be on the Nominations and Leadership Development Team for your congregation! God has called you, through your church's charge conference, to serve the church in an important way.

John Wesley described the goal of spiritual growth together (discipleship) this way: "I want you to be *all love*. This is the perfection [holiness/wholeness] I believe and teach." Here "all love" means "all love all." You have embraced the role of a servant leader who amplifies God's call to life and helps others—especially "the people called methodists"—also become all-love disciples of Jesus Christ. You are literally invited to love others into leadership. With your pastor and the help of countless others (including those whose love and grace have made you who you are today), your team will be responsible for "vocational imagination" (Randy Litchfield) in your church, helping every layperson see themselves called and gifted to join God's work of grace, in every zip code, neighborhood, and workplace where love is needed most.

"I want you to be *all love*. This is the perfection I believe and teach."

(John Wesley, Letter to Dorothy Furly, September 15, 1762,.
Ted A. Campbell, ed., *The Works of John Wesley, Volume 27: Letters III, 1756-1765* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2015], 301–02.)

The Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development

The contexts of faith and ministry are changing. We live in a time of rapid cultural shifts, reflected in and driven by changes in communications technology, crowd-sourced information sharing, connectedness via social networks, shifting, changing demographic realities, and greater environmental awareness.

Today's vibrant, healthy churches are very different from those that our parents and grandparents attended. It makes sense that the way we *do church* must change as well. This includes the way we select, nurture, and support leaders.

Our most vital churches remain committed to the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world while focusing on specific forms of ministry that serve their community and its people, and in the process, create beloved community. Local churches are most effective when the congregation develops intentional steps and strategies to form disciples who are Christian leaders in the world.

The quality and effectiveness of lay and clergy leadership is key to congregational vitality.

Remember the church exists (the mission) “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” (*The Book of Discipline*, ¶120). Paragraph 122 offers a helpful outline of one way congregations can keep focus on this mission:

We make disciples as we:

- proclaim the gospel, seek, welcome, and gather persons into the body of Christ;
- lead persons to commit their lives to God through baptism by water and the spirit and profession of faith in Jesus Christ;
- nurture persons in Christian living through worship, the sacraments, spiritual disciplines, and other means of grace, such as Wesley's Christian conferencing;
- send persons into the world to live lovingly and justly as servants of Christ by healing the sick, feeding the hungry, caring for the stranger, freeing the oppressed, being and becoming a compassionate, caring presence, and working to develop social structures that are consistent with the gospel; and
- continue the mission of gathering persons into the community of the body of Christ.

Through spiritual growth processes that nurture discipleship, new disciples are formed in community and sent out to share God's love with others as all "serve and witness in deeds and words that heal and free" (§128).

Your job as part of the leadership development team is to find a diverse collection of people who will work together for a healthy ministry in your congregation. In Ephesians 4:12, we read that the skills, knowledge, and spiritual gifts each person has are to "equip God's people for the work of serving and building up the body of Christ." Your job is so much more than finding people for the nominations report at charge conference!

Leaders must also keep in mind three big ideas: First, leaders in every position must be guided by their relationship with God—worship, regular Scripture reading, and prayer are important for you and for those you identify for leadership positions. Second, our congregations are connected with United Methodists around the world through our Wesleyan heritage. As you prayerfully nominate people, you will also want to offer and lead training about our shared Wesleyan beliefs and practices, leaning into our shared identity as United Methodists. Third, remember that all are called to lead others to follow Jesus Christ – even if they are not called to and gifted for a specific ministry in the church.

Be aware of the continuing trend across the connection for congregations to simplify leadership structure so that people spend less time in meetings and more time on ministry. Your congregation may already be exploring and implementing a simplified structure, sometimes called "single board governance" or a "one board model." In these congregations, the ministry of this committee is even more important as you identify and nurture leaders. If your church explores new forms of leadership structure, remember that the goal of any structure is for the congregation to bear fruit so people are growing as disciples and the world is being transformed. See the Resources section on simple accountability structures for decision-making and mission-focused ministry.

Expectations of an Effective Committee

The Book of Discipline (§258.1) uses five action verbs to name the responsibility of this committee. The charge conference elects annually a Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development to "identify, develop, deploy, evaluate, and monitor Christian spiritual leadership for the local congregation. Members of the committee shall engage in and be attentive to developing and enhancing their own Christian spiritual life in light of the mission of the Church."

Together, the members of the committee take the lead in creating a culture of leadership development in the congregation. This Guideline will discuss the important role you have in building effective, fruitful Christian spiritual leaders. It will also suggest tools and tips for accomplishing each one of the five actions for which the *Discipline* gives you responsibility. When a congregation is healthy and full of vitality, people expect that God will be present and that everyone will grow as Christian disciples. While you take the lead, others have important roles. The leaders you nominate help direct the work of God in your community, with each individual living as the hands and feet of Christ. You have a big role in God's plans!

Your responsibility on the nominations committee is year-round, although you have special responsibilities at charge conference time. A congregation that continues the same organizational structure with the same people year after year is assuming that yesterday's purposes and ministries are adequate for tomorrow. When, however, a congregation has a system of leadership development that begins with a vision for ministry and knowledge of people's spiritual gifts, then people remain open to that new something God might be doing in their midst. Help your congregation understand that leadership is a living out of their special gifts from God and a calling to be faithful Christian disciples in the world.

Keep the Big Picture in Mind

Here are several factors that connect leadership and vital ministry.

- Vital churches focus on increasing the effectiveness of laity in leadership.
- Vital churches have leaders who are actively growing in faith as demonstrated by their participation as faithful disciples.
- Vital churches emphasize rotating leadership to give more people a chance to develop leadership.
- Vital churches call, equip, use, and support a higher percentage of laity in leadership than do non-vital churches. In highly vital churches, about 20 percent of people describe themselves as leaders.
- The pastors of vital churches give attention to developing, coaching, and mentoring laity as leaders.

The Nominations and Leadership Development Committee oversees the whole system of identifying, developing, deploying, supporting, and evaluating leadership. The committee does not work in isolation. Collaboration with others is important, and there are suggestions on the following pages. Leader development is both formal (specific classes, nomination to specific leadership, etc.) and informal (mentoring, coaching, observation, and encouragement).

Who Serves on the Committee?

This committee comprises not more than nine members in addition to the pastor and the lay leader. All members must be professing members of the local church. One or more members may be youth, and at least one member should be a young adult. Including youth and young adults may require you to change the times of your meetings or to provide child-care, but these are important considerations as you strive for a well-rounded view and representation on the committee. The committee should reflect diversity and inclusivity in its membership.

In order to secure experience and stability, the membership shall be divided into three classes, one of which shall be elected each year to a three-year term. Only one person from an immediate family residing in the same household shall serve on the committee. (the *Discipline*, ¶258.1d)

The pastor chairs the committee, and a layperson serves as vice chair. The pastor and vice chairperson work closely together to guide the work of the committee. As chair of this committee, the pastor has the opportunity for influencing the culture of the congregation to effect change toward healthy and—perhaps new—leadership. A teamwork approach and delegation of tasks models the full effectiveness of participating in the body of Christ for the congregation.

What Leaders Are Needed?

The Book of Discipline suggests more than forty positions of leadership for congregations. Do not let that quantity intimidate you. Your responsibility on the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development is to align your work with the goals set by your charge conference to determine which leaders your congregation needs. You recommend leaders to the Church Council for election by the charge conference. It is unlikely that you will nominate people for all the suggested positions; and in fact, you may need leaders for specific ministries that are not mentioned. However, the *Discipline* defines some leadership positions that every church must have. These relate to the functions of handling money, managing the property, developing leaders, and overseeing the total ministry of the congregation.

Paragraph 249 directs the charge conference to annually elect:

- a chairperson of the Church Council,
- a Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development,
- a Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and its chair,
- a chairperson of the Finance Committee,
- a financial secretary,
- a church treasurer,
- members of the Board of Trustees,
- a lay member of annual conference,
- a lay leader,
- a membership secretary/recording secretary.

The Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development is responsible for nominating people to carry out these functions. One person may hold multiple responsibilities, but there are some restrictions when it comes to handling money (see *Guidelines 2025–2028: Finance*).

Many congregations of all sizes are streamlining their leadership teams for greater ministry effectiveness. Think of these required responsibilities as functions that need to be attended to. These are the essentials for every congregation, and each role has specific responsibilities. You can find position descriptions on the Discipleship Ministries website (<http://www.umcdiscipleship.org>) and in *The Book of Discipline*. The committee may propose a plan for leadership structure to the Church Council. For a major review of church organization, the council may appoint a task force.

God Works Through You

In one congregation, the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee met in January to begin a Bible study about leadership. Committee members met frequently, looking at Old and New Testament passages. They looked at the people who led the Israelites and people who led the fledgling Christian Way. They paid attention to the way God called people and the response people had. After several weeks, one person exclaimed, “This committee has the wrong name! It should be the Call Committee. We don’t nominate people as much as God uses us to call people God has already chosen!”

This congregation was reminded that the church is one of God’s instruments for ministry in the world. Christian disciples are called to use their gifts, strengths, talents, and abilities in ways that fulfill God’s purposes. The Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development has the opportunity and privilege of helping people hear and respond to the call of God.

Reflect on how God might guide your congregation as you consider the gifts and leadership of these biblical characters:

- Noah (Gen 6:5–7:16)
- Abraham (Gen 11:27–12:9)
- Esther (Esth 2:5-18)
- Isaiah (Isa 1:1)
- Mary (Luke 1:26-56; 2:19-20)
- Barnabas (Acts 4:36; 9:27; 11:22-30; 13:2, 14)

For each person, consider these questions:

- What is the person’s age? Occupation? Character traits?
- Who supported, mentored, encouraged this person?
- What does this person’s community have in common with yours?
- Who has these same qualities in your community?

See the sample chart, “Nominations and Leadership Development Committee Bible Study,” available at www.UMOfficialResources.com/Guidelines.

Leader Development in Your Congregation

The Nominations and Leadership Development Committee oversees the whole system of identifying, developing, deploying, supporting, and evaluating the leadership of your congregation. Every congregation will do this differently depending on the size of the congregation and other demographics, traditions, ministry goals, and the diversity of skills and experience among the people. Ideally, the committee will encourage every individual in the congregation to grow in faith and self-understanding so that each person follows God's path for him or her. In a one-board model, these responsibilities remain.

Who's Responsible for Leader Development?

Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development:

- identifies, develops, deploys, supports, and evaluates the leadership of laity who work with appointed and employed leaders;
- shines a spotlight on leadership development and builds a congregational culture of mentoring, support, and challenge for one another.

Church Council (Church Leadership Team):

- clarifies ministry goals, sets priorities, coordinates the work of leaders, and directs the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development concerning leadership needs;
- oversees leader development as one component of disciple formation.

Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee:

- identifies and supports candidates for church vocations;
- builds relations of appointed and employed staff with the congregation.

Teachers, Small-Group Leaders, and Youth Sponsors:

- help people grow in faith and make connections between secular life and ministry;
- provide leadership opportunities to participants and recommend emerging leaders to the nominations committee.

Existing, Experienced Leaders:

- build teams and recruit co-leaders;
- mentor others into leadership.

Whole congregation:

- fulfills baptismal vow to “so order our lives after the example of Christ that (the baptized one), surrounded by steadfast love, may be established in the faith” (UMH, 44).

Can you imagine a place where individuals are welcomed just as they are, given the tools and opportunities to discover who they are in God’s eyes, encouraged to use the unique abilities and experiences they have, and strengthened to live fully with others to make the world a better place? Can you imagine a place that helps people of all ages discover and live out vocations that God intends for them? This is the vision of a leader-development system!

Getting Started

Remember that the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development is to *identify* leaders, *develop* leaders, *deploy* leaders, *evaluate* leadership needs, and *monitor* the whole system of leadership development. *The Book of Discipline* says that this committee shall serve throughout the year to guide the Church Council on matters regarding leadership. The committee and the congregation must shift their thinking from “recruitment” to development.

Each of the five actions you are responsible for is detailed with suggestions on the following pages. Prayerfully consider the focus that will be most beneficial for your congregation. You will emphasize certain actions over others. However, all five of these actions need to happen through the year. Here is a suggestion for planning your meetings:

January–March

- Provide orientation for the new committee (three newly elected people and six continuing members).
- Deploy and orient new and returning congregational leaders.
- Set goals for increasing your congregation’s understanding of leadership development.

April–June

- Develop congregational leaders.
- Monitor leaders and the leadership needs of the congregation.
- Identify new leaders continuously.

July–September

- Evaluate congregational leadership needs.
- Prepare nominations for charge conference.
- Monitor leaders and emerging congregational leadership needs; recognize completed ministries.

October–December

- Prepare orientation for new leaders.
- Review and evaluate the committee's work, including recommendations for the next committee.

How well your committee accomplishes its task depends in part on how well the members work together. You are coworkers with one another and with God, seeking to identify, guide, and nurture the leadership of your church. As committee members, you have assumed a commitment and a responsibility to one another. Your task of overseeing the leadership of your church is crucial to strengthening the body of Christ.

Identify Christian Spiritual Leaders

The Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development has the privilege of and responsibility for linking people who have gifts to share with opportunities to meet specific needs within your congregation and community. This task requires diligence and a strong commitment on your part, and it can be a joyous and rewarding experience.

Qualities of Leadership

To identify leaders, begin with a discussion about the qualities you seek. There are general qualities for all who would lead in the church as well as specific knowledge or skills for specific responsibilities.

A good place to start identifying leaders is to look at the Bible to see whom God uses. Refer to the Bible study suggestion on page 11. We need to remember that God works through all kinds of people, even the least likely. Remember the story of Samuel going to Jesse to identify the next king among Jesse's sons? It turned out to be the youngest—David, the shepherd boy who was still out in the field.

- God works with those who deny God—like Jonah.
- God works with those who persecute God's people—like Paul.
- God works with young people—like Joshua, Esther, and Timothy.
- God works with secular leaders—like the centurion whose daughter was ill.

There are many other examples in the Bible. All of them remind us to be open to whatever God might do and to people God will raise up.

Start each meeting by studying the characteristics of a biblical leader. Ask yourselves who in your congregation has those qualities.

People Who Can Lead

Next, identify people who have leadership potential. Develop a method for keeping track of information about the spiritual gifts, interests, life experiences, and skills of your members. You probably already know about the current leaders; remember that developing new leaders includes getting to know all the people. You might have an electronic or a paper file to identify people who might help with long- and short-term projects, behind-the-scenes tasks, and leadership in the district or conference. Be sure to update this information frequently.

Some congregations invite people to indicate their interests with a “Time and Talent” survey. A survey invites people to reflect on their stewardship of the membership vow to participate in ministry through “prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness” (<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/time-and-talents-survey-sample-documents>). If you ask people to volunteer information, it is important to follow up!

People who are not part of your committee can be very helpful in identifying leaders. Amazing things happen in congregations that expect God to work through them. Some congregations have formal classes to help people identify spiritual gifts; there are resources for self-assessment, for learning about personal strengths, and for personal development. Even congregations that are informal in structure can become more intentional about identifying spiritual gifts and recognizing skills and experience.

A small congregation in the panhandle of Texas produced 23 pastors, church musicians, and Christian educators over a 15-year period because a youth worker helped young people understand that God has a plan for their lives.

Review and Update Leadership Positions

Look again at the list of *required* leaders on page 11. Add other leadership positions for your congregation, both the long-term and short-term commitments that need leadership. Leadership development is a fluid, ongoing process. Many congregations today identify ministry leaders who then recruit their own work groups. Ideally, the work groups include a changing and evolving group of people. This is the opportunity for people to follow a passion, to try a new responsibility, or to develop an interest. This contemporary characteristic of leadership flow gives you an opportunity to help people grow in discipleship.

Written Job Descriptions

Each position to which persons may be elected, appointed, or assigned for ministry should have a written job description. Descriptions make it easier to invite and match people with positions, and they give individuals clear expectations for a position and the potential impact. You can find job descriptions for positions suggested in the *Discipline* on the Discipleship Ministries website (<http://www.umcdiscipleship.org>). Read more about written job descriptions in the section below “Deploy Christian Spiritual Leaders.”

Leadership Rotation

Remember that vital congregations rotate leaders to bring fresh perspective and new ideas to a position. Encourage current leaders to identify another person to mentor to take their place. Some congregations regularly identify a co-leader or vice chair who will become the next leader of a ministry. Arrangements like this provide mentoring and take advantage of experience, while ensuring that more people will grow as leaders and disciples. In the Bible, Paul developed several leaders by working with them and then having them take over ministry responsibilities. Leadership rotation will be covered in detail in the section “Monitor Christian Spiritual Leaders.”

Invite People to Lead

It is important to think about the way to invite people to a position of leadership. Everyone has spiritual gifts, skills, and life experience. Most people want to “do something,” but they may not know what is available; or they simply have not thought about living daily life as discipleship. One mark of vitality is identifying new leaders who can bring a fresh word from God. You have the opportunity through the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development to help people in your congregation grow as Christian disciples.

Here is a checklist for inviting a person to serve in a specific church leadership role.

You have the opportunity through the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development to help people in your congregation grow as Christian disciples.

- Make an appointment to talk with the person. Prepare for the visit with prayer.
- Take a copy of the job description to use as you talk together.
- Be prepared to answer questions about the position, including the length of service.
- Be on time and pray together for God’s presence in the conversation.
- Explain the position in detail. Explain how the position contributes to the mission of your congregation. Be sure the person understands that this church position is voted on at the charge or church conference. Answer questions.
- Give the person time to think and pray. Express appreciation to the individual for giving the position serious consideration. Arrange to be back in touch and be sure to contact the prospective leader again as arranged.

This checklist can be adapted for conversation with individuals about their leadership in any situation. The Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development takes the lead in the congregation to have conversations with people about leadership as a way of serving in the church and in daily life.

Develop Christian Spiritual Leaders

The functions of the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development include more than filling empty slots and passing those names to the charge conference. Developing leaders means that you have a role in helping the people of your congregation recognize their value in God's sight, and you can help them become what God intends for them to be. As United Methodists, we believe that God expects us to grow and learn through our whole lives. Growing and learning come through study and experience. The Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development should work with others in the congregation, such as teachers and the staff, to encourage people to grow in self-understanding, love of God, and love of neighbor.

The primary purpose of this committee is to develop leaders.

The nominations committee should take a long view into the future and remember that leading in the church prepares people to be leaders in the world. The committee's role is to encourage people in the congregation to nurture and develop one another. Many musicians got their start by singing or playing their instruments as an offering during worship. Future educators are nurtured as nursery helpers and teacher assistants. Some leaders might be long-time members who have come to a time of transition in their lives and are hearing a call from God for the first time.

As your committee develops leaders within the congregation, emphasize the importance of servant leadership. Although the idea of servant leadership goes back at least 2,000 years as Jesus washed the feet of the disciples, Robert K. Greenleaf launched the modern servant-leadership movement in 1970 with the publication of his classic essay, "The Servant as Leader." He coined the terms "servant leader" and "servant leadership." Greenleaf wrote, "The great leader is seen as servant first" (*Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*, 25th Anniversary edition [Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2002], 21). He meant that the desire to serve is the fundamental characteristic of a servant leader. This is not about being servile; it is about helping others.

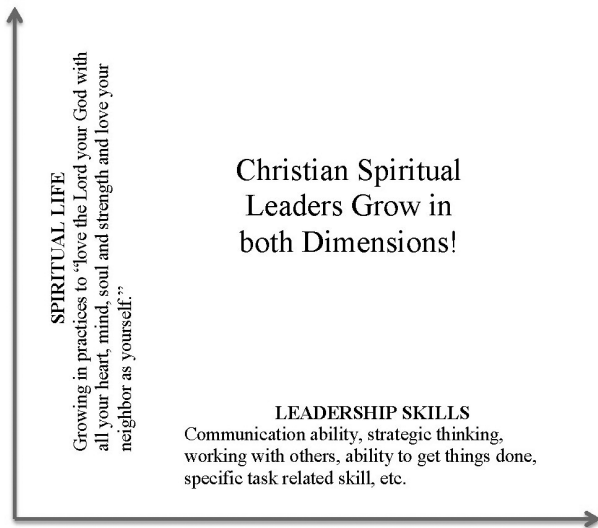
When approaching someone regarding a leadership position, committee members need to frame it as a ministry of service to God's mission and not simply as an elected position. If it is simply an elected position, either change the position into a vital ministry role or eliminate it!

Two Aspects of Christian Spiritual Leadership

Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and to love others as ourselves (see Matt 22:37-39). Christian discipleship means growing in love of God and love of neighbor. .

The vertical dimension of the chart below is about growing in our love of God and neighbor through prayer, Scripture study, worship, and other practices. Some of us are drawn naturally to these practices, and all of us can learn and grow as we practice.

The horizontal dimension of the chart is a skill set for leaders—listening, leading a meeting, delegating, organizing, setting priorities, and others for specific jobs. This is the natural strength of some people; again, we can all grow and learn in this dimension.



Develop All Leaders

Effective leaders share several traits. Strong, effective leaders attend to their own spiritual growth and discipleship. They listen actively to ideas, concerns, and suggestions. They express God’s love by showing compassion for others through word and deed. They are servant leaders who can both share in the work and delegate responsibility. Good leaders are aware of their own gifts and abilities; they know the story of grace in their own life. At the same time, they can recognize the gifts of others and their storied experience of grace and are willing to step aside so that others can step up. In leading meetings, they engage in Christian conferencing and develop agendas that include time for biblical reflection, prayer, singing, and attentiveness to God’s presence and nudges.

Walking alongside others to help them find and fulfill their call to ministry goes by several names: mentoring, Christian coaching, encouraging. We find examples of this behavior in the Bible, as people were encouraged, held accountable, and guided by other people.

- Eli coached Samuel on listening for God's voice (1 Sam 3).
- Nathan confronted King David by helping him become aware of his behavior (2 Sam 12).
- Elijah encouraged Elisha to use his prophetic gifts (2 Kgs 2).
- Priscilla and Aquila guided Apollos in proclaiming the good news and supported Paul in his ministry (Acts 18).
- Barnabas encouraged Paul and others by joining their journeys and sharing their ministries. Paul, in turn, encouraged Timothy (Acts 15–16).

The Committee on Nominations can provide information about training events available through the district or annual conference. Some workshops offered by nonprofit groups may also be useful for people in your church. Encourage people to attend lay academies and, perhaps, become lay servants. Lay Servant Ministry courses emphasize leading, caring, and communicating. Most of the Lay Servant courses can be taught as short-term studies, small-group studies, or even as Sunday school classes. They are now labeled “Learning & Leading” for that reason. Find more information about Lay Servant Ministries on the Discipleship Ministries website, www.umcdiscipleship.org

Develop Newly Elected Leaders

As new leaders are elected to serve, let them know that the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development will support them as they lead. They can ask for help. Commit to praying for each new leader throughout the year. Consider assigning a prayer partner for each new leader. If you do this, let the new leaders know about it.

Develop an orientation plan for new leaders. There is little that is more frustrating than to assume a new position and not receive adequate information about the requirements or expectations. Written job descriptions are a good start. This *Guidelines* series is another useful tool. Other resources are listed at the end of this Guideline. You might plan a workshop for all new leaders to learn about your church's mission-focused understanding of leadership and its specific positions.

Create a check-in and follow-up system to remain in regular contact with leaders; continue to challenge and support them in their roles. This will help you understand the dynamics at play in the culture of discipleship and leadership development within your church.

Deploy Christian Spiritual Leaders

When you have matched the gifts and passions of people with the mission and ministry needs of the church and community, and when you have obtained the consent of potential leaders, you are ready to present these people to the charge conference. Once they are elected, you have the responsibility to deploy them.

Working closely with the pastor and Church Council, plan a time of prayer and commissioning for servant leaders. This could be during a worship service or a part of the charge conference or Church Council meeting. You can find a service for installation and recognition of leaders in *The United Methodist Book of Worship*, page 599. This public recognition is an opportunity to remind the congregation of their role in leadership development.

An Orientation Packet

Prepare an orientation packet for new and continuing leaders. The packet might include:

- the mission of the church and the statement of ministry goals for the year;
- the policies and procedures of the church and of the specific position;
- a description of the ministry responsibilities;
- a calendar of church events for the year;
- the times and dates of meetings and events—including training events;
- resource materials and appropriate Guideline;
- budget information for the church and for that area of ministry;
- the process used to report the work of the committee to others.

Written Job Descriptions

Developing job descriptions and reviewing them annually has several benefits. First, a description helps you think about what the congregation hopes the ministry will accomplish. You might talk with people in the congregation about these expectations. Think about the qualifications and responsibilities for the job; this is an opportunity to nurture those qualities in current and future leaders. Review how the position connects with the current goals of your congregation and consider whether the position needs to continue. You might add new positions. Finally, as you look at

Job descriptions are a guide for the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. They are not permanent rules.

the job descriptions, think about what information, support, and training you might need to provide to the newly deployed leaders.

Elements of a Job Description

- **Position Title.** Adapt the title to reflect the unique ministry of your congregation. For example, the Church Council might be called the leadership team or the board of stewards.
- **Result Expected.** This describes the ministry contributions this position will make to the congregation and the mission of making disciples. An example for a coordinator of older adult ministry is “an effective coordinator will work with church and community leaders of all ages to address the needs and opportunities for older adults to grow as Christian disciples.”
- **Spiritual Gifts and Helpful Qualifications.** This lists the knowledge, skills, and spiritual gifts needed and desired for the position.
- **Responsibilities.** State the specific tasks of this leader or committee. This is a list of tasks assigned by the *Book of Discipline* or by your congregation to this position. Include specific information on reporting and accountability. (To whom does this person report?)
- **Getting Started.** Help a new leader launch the ministry. This might include some things the congregation has done in the past and wants to continue or evaluate. Include the names and contact information of individuals who can help. List resources for this ministry and their location.

The congregation, the committee on nominations, and the individual leaders must be willing to modify plans as they listen to God’s direction through prayer and through the voices of other people, through reading and through observing the needs of the neighborhood and community.

As you deploy leaders, remind them that Christian leadership is a position of influence, and they need to be aware of their public roles. To be a positive influence, leaders treat questions and disagreements with respect and discretion while publicly supporting the essential work of the pastor, the local church, and the denomination. Paul wrote to the Colossians: “Whatever you do, whether in speech or action, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus and give thanks to God the Father through him” (Col 3:17).

Evaluate Christian Spiritual Leaders

Remember that evaluation is about how your congregation is moving toward the goal of making disciples. Your responsibility is to evaluate your work as a Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development as well as to evaluate leaders whom you have nominated.

Evaluate Leaders

First, a word about evaluating the leaders you have nominated. If you were clear about the expectations when leaders were deployed, then evaluation is an opportunity to ask how the work is coming. Imagine that you identified someone to be a trustee; evaluation might ask how the trustees have improved building access to reach new people or how trustees have helped the congregation be better stewards of the property. In addition, listen for reports that trustees are maintaining the property and soundly managing endowments and bequests. Try to discern what skills and gifts are needed as you nominate future trustees.

An important part of evaluation is providing feedback. Remember always that you are working with volunteers. Nevertheless, feedback needs to be honest. Part of your role is helping people find a way to offer their experience and skills for the glory of God in the most effective ways possible.

The Church Council or specific ministry groups are responsible for developing an intentional and agreed-upon strategy to achieve your church's ministry goals. Evaluation should then center on whether and how well the leader and committee members have followed the agreed-upon strategies. If you have faithfully followed the plan, but you do not get the results you want, encourage people to *change the plan*. The best laid plans always adapt to the changing reality on the ground and in your ministry context. Acknowledge (even reward) sincere efforts to do what was expected, rather than blame people for the poor results of a faulty plan.

Evaluate Your Ministry Efforts

Another important way to measure your progress in ministry is to evaluate the effectiveness of resource components, leaders, the number of people being served, and how Christian disciples are being developed. Disciple Dashboard is a congregational data dashboard that provides an opportunity to set goals, collect essential data and reflect on ministry: <http://umcdiscipleship.org/disciple-dashboard>.

Evaluate the Committee's Work

As in any process, evaluation is the key to continued success. Develop a self-evaluation plan to assess the status and effectiveness of your committee's work and processes. An approach called *appreciative inquiry* is helpful when evaluating or considering changes. Here are the basic steps of that approach:

- What is going well? Appreciate and value the work that has been done.
- What might be? Envision how it could be even better.
- What should be? Talk about what is important, essentials.
- What will be? Discuss innovative ideas about ways to work in the future and changes that you need to make.

Learn more about appreciative inquiry online through a simple search for “appreciative inquiry.”

Here are some other evaluative questions you might ask. Your responses will help you plan future committee efforts to identify, develop, deploy, evaluate, and monitor leaders.

- Are those recruited for leadership positions practicing servant leadership principles?
- Are the missions or ministries they are leading effective? (How do we define *effective*?)
- Has the committee followed through with support and training?
- Are the resources used appropriate? If not, what changes are needed?
- What challenges have you experienced?
- How can your committee function be improved? Are there processes that need to be redesigned or improved?
- Are the committee members following their commitments to spiritual disciplines and confidentiality? If not, how can they improve?

Ongoing Assessment for Improvement

Check the progress of your work regularly and avoid making it a once-a-year assessment. Increasingly, congregations and work groups end every meeting with three questions:

- What has gone well?
- What have we learned?
- What can we do better next time?

Ongoing assessment is an opportunity to celebrate those who are doing good work and to provide help to those who may be struggling. Don't wait until things are going badly to make changes. Be proactive in the work and assessment of progress of both your committee and the various ministries and leadership over which you have responsibility. Consider scheduling time for formal evaluation of your committee's progress toward goals at least quarterly.

Monitor Christian Spiritual Leaders

The final verb listed in the *Discipline* for this committee is *monitor*. Monitoring, which is closely related to evaluating, means that while you are on the Committee on Nominations, you keep your eyes and ears open to encourage current leaders, to provide support when it is needed, and to be watching for new leaders God might be developing in your midst. You are alert to what people are talking about and the needs in your community. For example, if two or three people are recycling, encourage them to teach others and lead the congregation in better stewardship of God's creation with a congregational recycling effort. As you pay attention and encourage people, you will see spontaneous ministry emerge. Paying attention will also help you know when a ministry is no longer effective and no longer needs a leader.

Monitoring requires a *balcony* view of the ministry.

Monitor both ongoing and emerging ministry needs and opportunities of the church and community; this is critical because they are ever-changing. If your congregation includes a spiritual-gifts assessment in a new-member class or confirmation, watch for new gifts, abilities, and passions that may lead to new opportunities for service in the world.

As you scan the horizon of leadership development, you may see opportunities for mentoring new leaders or offering a workshop. Review the biblical examples of mentoring on page 21. Train current leaders to become mentors or, at the very least, to help identify potential leaders.

Monitoring and evaluation include appreciation. *The United Methodist Book of Worship* has a service for installation and recognition of church leaders and another service of commissioning people for ministry (see pp. 599–605). Work closely with your pastor to remind the congregation of their role in leadership development. Many churches celebrate a Laity Sunday, a homecoming, or a youth Sunday to present and recognize leaders. You may commission small-group leaders and teachers for their ministry. Some congregations recognize community leaders with a Back-to-School Sunday. They dedicate backpacks and invite teachers from a nearby school to worship. Members who are teachers and school administrators are also recognized. You might give thanks for other community leaders such as firefighters or police.

NOTE: Recognizing leaders needs to affirm discipleship and community contributions, but remember that worship should always point people to God. Give thanks to God

for the leaders among us. Point out how leaders are using the gifts God has given them and how God's grace is at work in their lives.

Encourage the Rotation of Leaders

Leadership in the church should be shared. Those who are experienced and have served faithfully should be recognized and commended, and encouraged to *pass the baton* to new leaders. As you review the broad picture of leadership for your congregation, be especially aware of situations where the incumbent has served several terms of office. Ask whether a change should be made, for the sake of either the person or the task. *The Book of Discipline* forbids some committee members from succeeding themselves, so be sure you are aware of which officers can hold successive terms and which cannot.

In the past, congregations may have rewarded long membership with an elected office or an honorary position. The church today needs rotating leadership of people who have skills and gifts for the leading ministry. The rotation often brings fresh insight to the ministry task as well as training up multiple people who understand a variety of leadership roles. Everyone will benefit from sharing “the keys to the kingdom.”

In cases where change seems wise, the committee will need to plan carefully how this move can be interpreted diplomatically to people not being re-nominated. One congregation spoke with a person who had been the church membership secretary for many years and pointed out that her careful recordkeeping was so valuable that the church needed her to train someone else in her process. If a person is ending long-term service in an area of ministry, it is appropriate to celebrate that ministry, especially if the person is not pursuing another area of ministry.

Everyone in leadership should be looking for people who might be the next leader of the ministry, people who exhibit the gifts and qualities that can be nurtured to develop future leaders. Encourage the leaders in your congregation to look for the *shining eyes* of those who are ready to be mentored into a leadership role. It facilitates the work of the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development when others identify future leaders.

Engage the Congregation

Engage the congregation in expectation and awareness of God's active presence in the community, calling people into ministry. One congregation expanded an exercise in the *DISCIPLE I* Bible study, and they use it quarterly in Sunday school classes and other groups that meet regularly. The group members quietly reflect on the gifts and abilities they observe in one another, and then share the observations. This is extremely affirming for participants and provides an opportunity to explore new ministry opportunities. As a committee, ask *DISCIPLE I* Bible study leaders to share the report of the gifts identified during the closing session (with the permission of the study participants).

Leadership Recognition

Congregational support, appreciation, and recognition are affirming and help the committee celebrate servant leaders. Ongoing support encourages those who serve.

Leadership recognition is an important way for your committee to build the congregational culture of expectation that Christian discipleship includes growing and serving. Occasional recognition reminds people to support and encourage one another. Work closely with the Church Council and pastor to make sure scheduled events and communications acknowledge and recognize leaders and people in service.

Here are some ideas for supporting and recognizing leaders:

- Keep in touch with people who serve through informal and planned conversation, support meetings, and times of evaluation.
- Begin the church year with a commissioning service for people who will begin and continue their service.
- Hold an annual service or day of recognition and appreciation.
- Provide orientation and ongoing training programs.
- Provide the necessary resources.
- Acknowledge the progress of each person's work and express appreciation.
- At the end of the term, thank the outgoing leaders and workers personally and publicly for their ministry in your church and community.
- Highlight ministry in daily life with website and newsletter articles and pictures.

NOTE: Be sure to welcome new people into the life of the community by recognizing their willingness to serve and lead.

Ministry in Daily Life as Leadership

Take every opportunity to recognize the many ways that people are in mission and ministry every day in the work or activities they perform—in personal interactions with friends, family, coworkers, and strangers. For many people, *ministry* means doing things *at church*, such as serving on a committee, singing in the choir, or helping to serve a church dinner. These certainly are valid ministries, but people live their faith *outside the church* every day. God nears, grace works, and disciples see grace at work. This witness is also ministry.

Whether people work away from home, attend school, or work from home, daily life is a form of ministry. John Wesley encouraged followers to be accountable to one another for continually growing in Christian faith. Today, Christians can consider how they relate to coworkers, fellow students, friends, neighbors, and families as a witness to God's love for the world. The way people show care and respect and honesty to one another through the day shows faithfulness to doing their best—whatever they are doing.

Invite people to share how their work is their witness. You may be able to organize a time during worship that provides a witness to ministry in everyday life. Perhaps a bulletin insert, website feature, or newsletter column could be written that describes ways that people in your congregation live their faith at school, work, or other social or community contexts. Be sure to include highlights of all ages and situations.

The Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development works collaboratively with the pastor and other leaders to recognize discipleship in daily life. Remember that this includes servant leadership in secular lives, in district and annual conference ministry, as well as elected congregational leadership. Doing this helps the congregation gain an understanding that ministry is not just what happens within *this* local church. It will provide a view of the connectional church at work in the world.

The Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development can help people understand ministry in daily life by including skills for daily living each time you offer a workshop or participating in a study like “Disciples in the Marketplace” or a book study of Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection’s *The Practice of the Presence of God*. For example, a communications workshop might include topics of active listening, effective written communication, using social media, or public speaking tips. These topics will benefit church leaders, and, at the same time, people using these skills in daily life can relate them to the life of faith.

Additional Tools for Your Leadership Ministry

Model Christian Community

Committee Meetings as Christian Community

This is one way that your leadership is a witness to the congregation. Here are some ideas:

- Develop and state a vision for your committee's work. Ask, "How will our congregation look a year from now if our committee is effective?"
- Spend time at each meeting reflecting on leadership and your vision and to share your personal lives and prayer. Consider the suggestions offered in this Guideline for biblical reflection on leadership.
- Discuss how you will be community together. Identify statements (ground rules) you all agree to honor as you work together. Ask, "How will we encourage equal participation? How will we be accountable to one another? How will we manage time to care for our responsibilities and focus on what is most important for our congregation?" (See "Develop a Leadership Covenant" below.)

Commit to Building Christian Community

As a committee, assume responsibility for increasing spiritual leadership in your congregation. Work closely with the pastor and Church Council chair to help all leaders pay attention to their life with God. If your congregation has a prayer group, send them specific prayer requests for leaders. Provide an opportunity for a spiritual life retreat for leaders. Discuss the implications of the church membership and baptismal vows with individuals, in meetings, and in newsletters and social media.

The Body of Christ Is Diverse

Think broadly about including the full spectrum of the church membership in the leadership of your congregation. Look first at leadership qualities required for a position and at the gifts and skills of individuals. Be aware of the skills and abilities and life experiences of people of all ages and backgrounds. Beware of any temptation to simply fill a diversity quota. Ask these questions:

- What is the economic, social, theological, racial/ethnic, and demographic diversity of our congregation? Does our leadership reflect the congregation?
- Have we remembered people with both invisible and visible disabilities?
- Do the people we are considering for leadership show evidence of growing in faith?
- If we are serious about our role of voicing God's call to individuals, what do we need to say to each person?

Develop a Leadership Covenant

Many congregations express their expectations by asking leaders to be accountable in particular ways. People who are elected to leadership positions become visible role models in the congregation and in the community. The standards set in a leadership covenant begin with church membership vows.

Here are some suggestions for honoring membership vows. Leaders will be growing toward fulfillment of these vows. You may add other items to a leadership covenant.

Prayers

- Set aside some time each day to talk with God.
- Learn and try new ways to pray.
- Increase the time you talk with God each day. The apostle Paul urges us to “pray continually” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Presence

- Attend worship weekly wherever you are.
- Build deeper relationships through participation in a small group, fellowship, and service.
- Pay full attention to your location and to the people you are with.

Gifts

- Discover and develop your natural and spiritual gifts and expand your experience. The Bible calls this growing in wisdom.
- Practice recycling and wise stewardship of all you have received from God.
- Manage material assets wisely.

Service

- When you recognize an unmet need, work with others to try to meet the need.
- Volunteer regularly to serve the church.
- Volunteer regularly for community service.

Witness

- Live with integrity so that your words and actions honor God, honor yourself, and honor others.

- Greet and speak warmly to others: visitors to your church, coworkers and people with whom you live, and people with whom you do business and interact every day.
- Learn how to share your faith naturally and comfortably; invite people to attend church events with you and to share their stories of faith.
- Expand your understanding of witness to include being with others in their life zones and testifying to the prevenient grace of God already at work in their stories of hurt, hope, and healing.

Report to the Charge Conference

An elder, often the district superintendent, will chair the annual charge conference. Work closely with your pastor and the Church Council chair to understand how to present your report. Often, you need to submit a written or electronic form for the minutes of the charge conference, and you may be asked to make a verbal report. The district superintendent provides the report form, which may be adapted from an official form for your district and annual conference.

Be as accurate as possible in completing the form. The contact information will be used by the district and annual conference to send information to your leaders. Generally, the person leading the charge conference conducts the election of church leaders, including the three new members of the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development.

A Culture of Calling, Care, and Place

Remember that people, led by God, are the most valuable resource in the life of a church. With them and with careful leadership and guidance, the church can effectively proclaim Christ's good news to the world.

Bishop Kenneth L. Carder reminds us that perhaps the deepest dimension of discipleship is giving and receiving care in community (*Ministry with the Forgotten: Dementia Through a Spiritual Lens* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2019]; see also *Discipleship as Care* [Nashville: Discipleship Ministries, 2023]). Creating a culture of calling where “near-and-here-to-help” disciples give and receive care, means lay and clergy cooperation in constantly lifting up the big ideas of lay leadership: “the priesthood of all believers, Christian vocation, and the ministry of the laity in daily life” (*BOD* ¶1116).

The Nominations and Leadership Development Team under the pastor's leadership brings vocational imagination and collective attention to the church's mission and context. While asking “what do we do?” and “Who can we get to do it?” are important questions, more mission-focused answers are found when you ask a better question—“Who's here to help?”—in the sense of both those available to serve and those who need grace. And knowing the answer to this question helps your church uncover a shared vision for how your faith community's story is part of God's bigger grace story in this place.

This is so much more than matching skills, strengths, and gifts with needs, or just filling committee vacancies. It means knowing your *places* (community contexts of grace) and the faces and backstories of the people who live, love, and labor there. This is reflected in the 2025–2028 quadrennial Laity Sunday theme, “Together By Grace,” where laity and clergy

are challenged to “be there, see there, and gather others to care there” (see the Laity Address at the recent General Conference, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFVkJ2SEA>). This is what it means to be the social life of Jesus, Christ’s hands and feet helping mend the world’s shattered wholeness.

The people in your church aren’t résumés—they’re flesh and blood call stories and scenes of grace. For every face in every place in your zip code, thoughtful leaders ask “What happened here?” and “What was and is the shape of grace in this place?” And as you lift up better stories that resonate with and amplify good news of God’s love in Jesus, your church will hone its own narrative skill/competency, something everyone has access to and can improve with listening and practice (see Murray Nossel’s *Powered by Storytelling* in the Resources section below).

The ministry of your local church moves forward, falters, or grinds to a halt based, in large part, on the work done by your committee. Your task is crucial to the ongoing ministry of your congregation and to the whole church. You will be blessed as you work together cooperatively, trust one another, and remain open to discerning God’s guidance at every step of your work.

Resources

General Resources

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2020/2024 (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2024).

The United Methodist Book of Worship (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1992), ISBN: 9780687035724.

The United Methodist Hymnal (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989), ISBN: 9780687330447 (pew edition blue).

Leadership Resources

Lay Leadership

Lay Servant Ministries Courses can be used in many venues (small groups, Sunday school classes, etc.) to equip laity as they grow in their discipleship and ministry. Go to <http://bookstore.upperroom.org> to purchase course materials. Download the free LSM catalog at <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/lay-servant-ministries-catalog>.

The Lay Ministry Equipping Resources Catalog can be downloaded for free (or hardcopies ordered) at <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/lay-servant-ministries-catalog>. Items below marked with LL are in the Learning and Leading series and can be found in the *Lay Ministry Equipping Resources Catalog*.

Annual Conference Intentional Discipleship Resources Free PDF download (zip file includes the Methodist Identity resources in the *Belong* series: *Our Membership Vows*, *The Meaning of Baptism*, *The Meaning of Holy Communion*, *Fresh Expressions UM Basics*, and more).

Discipleship Begins with Relationship: Free video-based, small-group learning series on intentional discipleship as engaged leadership, evangelism, and attention training: <https://discipleship-ministries.teachable.com/p/satp-teaching-series>.

Impact: Reclaiming the Call of Lay Ministry by Kay Kotan and Blake Bradford (Knoxville, TN: Market Square Publishing, 2018), ISBN: 9780998754697.

Living Our Beliefs: The United Methodist Way by Kenneth L. Carder (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2009), ISBN: 9780881775716.

Local Church Officer Job Descriptions for lay leadership. See <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/local-church-officer-job-descriptions>.

Mainline or Methodist? Rediscovering Our Evangelistic Mission by Scott Kisker (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2008), ISBN: 9780881775419.

Missional: Joining God in the Neighborhood by Alan J. Roxburgh (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), ISBN: 9780801072314.

Re-Jesus: A Wild Messiah for a Missional Church by Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch (Peabody: Hendrikson Publishers, 2009), ISBN: 9781921202919.

Other Leadership Resources

Concepts in Leadership I and Concepts in Leadership II by Brian Jackson and Sandy Zeigler, are available for download from www.upperroom.org/bookstore.

Do What Matters Most: Lead with a Vision, Manage with a Plan, Prioritize Your Time by Rob Shallenberger and Steve Shallenberger (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2021), ISBN: 9781523092574. Using the insight and power of pre-weekly planning, Steve and his son, Rob, bring insights from decades of work with high impact leaders to bear on prioritizing what matters most through thoughtful planning. While focused on individuals, the insights are transferrable to lay leaders who want to keep the main thing (discipleship) the main thing.

Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation 2025–2028 (Nashville: Cokesbury, 2024). This committee should have guidelines for all positions they nominate.

Job Descriptions and Leadership Training for Local Church Leader, 2025–2028 (Nashville: Discipleship Resources). A set of job descriptions for local church offices.

Online Local Church Officer Job Descriptions for lay leadership. See <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/local-church-officer-job-descriptions>.

Lay Servant Ministries Catalog. Available free from <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org>.

Leading a Life with God: The Practice of Spiritual Leadership by Daniel Wolpert (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2006), ISBN: 9780835810036.

Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness by Robert K. Greenleaf (Paulist Press, 2002), ISBN 9780809105540.

What Every Leader Needs to Know about Leading Meetings by Betsey Heavner (Discipleship Resources). This publication examines the purpose of meetings, planning meetings, and dealing with change and conflict. Available from www.upperroom.org/bookstore.

What Every Leader Needs to Know about Mission and Vision by Carol F. Krau (Discipleship Resources). This publication connects congregational mission and vision with the gifts needed to accomplish such a purpose. Available from www.upperroom.org/bookstore.

What Every Leader Needs to Know about Spiritual Leadership by Michael A. Bealla (Discipleship Resources). This publication offers practical, basic help to enable leaders to create environments for faith formation, model Christian spiritual development grounded in the means of grace, and equip all people to be in ministry in their daily lives. Available from www.upperroom.org/bookstore.

Missional Leadership Structure/Decision-Making

The Church Guide for Making Decisions Together by Terence Corkin and Julia Kuhn Wallace (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2017), ISBN: 978-1501838071. This resource focuses on consensus decision-making rooted in faithful discipleship and life together, rather than meeting management for the sake of efficiency alone.

Mission Possible 3+: A Simple Structure for Missional Effectiveness by Kay Kotan and Blake Bradford (Knoxville, TN: Market Square Publishing, 2021), ISBN: 9781950899289.

Mission Possible for the Small Church: Simplifying Leadership, Structure, and Ministries in the Small Church by Kay Kotan and Blake Bradford (Knoxville, TN: Market Square Publishing, 2023), ISBN: 978-1950899739.

Scripture Study

There may be no more powerful vocational discernment tool and means of grace than Scripture study with others in a small-group setting. There are many excellent studies, but the following promise a covenant learning experience focused on discipleship as life together and witness to God's work of world-repairing love. Studies show that churches offering in-depth Bible study identify and connect lay leaders to ministry with greater confidence, commitment, and staying power.

- *Disciple Bible Study*, available at Cokesbury.com (new mobile app available).
- *Covenant Bible Study*, available at Cokesbury.com.
- *The Common English Study Bible* and *The CEB Wesley Study Bible* at Cokesbury.com.

Creating a Culture of Calling, Care, and Renewal

Attend to Stories: How to Flourish in Ministry by Karen D. Scheib (Nashville: Wesley's Foundry Books, 2018), ISBN: 9781945935145.

Calling All Years Good: Christian Vocation Throughout Life's Seasons, Kathleen A. Cahalan and Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, eds. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2017), ISBN: 9780802874245.

The Caring Congregation: Implementation Guide by Karen Lampe and Melissa Gepford (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2021), ISBN 9781791013387. Available in Spanish: *El ministerio del cuidado congregacional: Guía para la implementación* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2024).

Chaplaincy Everywhere and Chaplaincy Essentials. Laity can learn to lead and share grace beyond the church. <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/chaplaincy/chaplaincy-everywhere/>; <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/chaplaincy/chaplaincy-learning-and-development/chaplaincy-essentials-course/>.

Disciples in the Marketplace by David C. Teel (Nashville: Discipleship Ministries, 2024). Free video-based, small-group series: <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/disciples-in-the-marketplace>.

Discipleship as Care, M. Scott Hughes, Kenneth L. Carder, David C. Teel, Karen Lampe, Daphne Johnston, Janet Jamieson (Nashville: Discipleship Ministries, 2023), COM2308. Free download: <https://store.umcdiscipleship.org/product/discipleship-as-care/>.

Dream Like Jesus by Rebekah Simon-Peter (Knoxville, TN: Market Square Publishing, 2019), ISBN: 978-1950899043.

For the Common Good: Discovering and Using Your Spiritual Gifts by Christine Harman (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2021), ISBN: 978-0881779585.

Roots and Routes: Calling, Ministry, and the Power of Place by Randy G. Litchfield (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2019), ISBN: 9781501868153.

Spiritual Gifts Inventory (English and Spanish): <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/spiritual-gifts-inventory/en>.

The Theology of Work Project: <https://www.theologyofwork.org/>.

Vital Congregations: Setting Goals, available at <https://www.umc.org/en/content/vital-congregations-setting-vital-congregation-goals>.

Powered by Storytelling: Excavate, Craft, and Present Stories to Transform Business Communication by Dr. Murray Nossel (New York: McGraw Hill, 2018), ISBN: 9781260011906.

Spiritual Formation

The Academy for Spiritual Formation is an experience of disciplined Christian community for laity and clergy that emphasizes holistic spirituality. See <http://academy.upperroom.org>.

Accountable Discipleship: Living in God's Household by Steven W. Manskar (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2000), ISBN: 9780881773392; LL.

Class Leaders: Recovering a Tradition by David Lowes Watson (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2002), ISBN: 9781579109547; LL.

Devotional Life in the Wesleyan Tradition by Steve Harper (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1995), ISBN: 9780835807401; LL.

Disciples Making Disciples by Stephen W. Manskar (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2016), ISBN: 9780881777741.

Eight Life-Enriching Practices of United Methodists by Henry H. Knight III (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), ISBN: 9780687087341.

Equipped for Every Good Work by Dan Dick and Barbara Dick (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2011), ISBN: 9781610972406. Website: <http://www.equippedforeverygoodwork.org>.

Opening Ourselves to Grace: Basic Christian Practices (DVD), produced by Mark Purushotham (available from Discipleship Resources, 2007), ISBN: 978088175082.

The Practice of the Presence of God by Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection, translated with an Introduction by John J. Delaney, Foreword by Henri J. Nouwen (New York: Image Books, 1977), ISBN: 9780385128612.

Restoring the Wesleyan Class Meeting by Dr. James B. Scott and Dr. Molly Davis Scott (Dallas: Provident Publishing, 2008), ISBN: 9780977867325.

This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion by Gayle Carlton Felton (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2005), ISBN: 9780881774573.

Christian Conferencing, Change/Conflict

Concepts in Leadership I and Concepts in Leadership II by Brian Jackson and Sandy Zeigler, available as download from <http://bookstore.upperroom.org>.

Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory, Tod Bolsinger (IVP, 2015), ISBN: 978-0830841264.

How to Have a Courageous Conversation by M. Scott Hughes (Nashville: Discipleship Ministries, 2019), pdf download and hard-copy booklet available in the Discipleship Ministries bookstore. For articles, webinars, and more on Courageous Conversations, see <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/equipping-leaders/courageous-conversations>.

Leading in Prayer by Mary O. Benedict (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2007), ISBN: 9780881774924; LL.

Respectful Communication Guidelines by Eric Law, available at www.kscopeinstitute.org/respectful-communication-guidelines.

Appreciative Inquiry Handbook: For Leaders of Change by David Cooperrider (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2008), ISBN: 9781576754931.

Asset Based Community Development PDF available at <https://www.neighborhoodtransformation.net/classes/>.

The Spirit and Art of Conflict Transformation: Creating a Culture of Justpeace by Thomas Porter (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2010), ISBN: 978-0835810265.

Inclusion: Making Room for Grace by Eric H. F. Law (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), ISBN: 9780827216204.

Sacred Acts, Holy Change: Faithful Diversity and Practical Transformation by Eric H. F. Law (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2002), ISBN: 9780827234529.

Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard by Chip Heath and Dan Heath (New York: Broadway Books, 2010), ISBN: 9780385528757.

Additional Online Resources

Local Church Officer Job Descriptions. For Nominations and Leadership Development, see <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/nominations-and-leader-development>.

Appreciative Inquiry tools and process information (<https://appreciativeinquiry.champlain.edu>).

Discipleship Ministries (<http://www.umcdiscipleship.org>) has training resources for the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development and for the leadership development of administrative leaders (trustees, finance, Church Council, lay leader, staff/pastor-parish committee, etc.). There are also sample job descriptions, devotional materials for church committees, and practical tools for church leaders at <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/local-church-officer-job-descriptions>

Ministry Matters™ is a community of resources for church leaders in congregations of all sizes. New articles and resources are added weekly. You can sign up for a weekly email. <http://www.ministrymatters.com>.

The Lewis Center for Church Leadership offers free and low-cost resources for church leaders (<http://www.churchleadership.com>).

The Faith and Leadership site has resources for church leaders. Resources of the former Alban Institute are incorporated in this site developed by the Leadership Institute at Duke Divinity School. Explore the “topics” tab at <http://www.faithandleadership.com>.

UMC Agencies & Helpful Links

The United Methodist Church, www.umc.org

General Commission on Archives and History, www.gcuh.org, Madison, NJ, 973-408-3189

General Board of Church and Society, www.umcjustice.org, Washington, DC, 202-488-5600

United Methodist Communications, www.resourceumc.org/communications, www.umns.org, Nashville, TN, 615-742-5400; InfoServ 1-800-251-8140

General Board of Discipleship, www.umcdiscipleship.org, Nashville, TN, 877-899-2780; Discipleship Resources, <http://bookstore.upperroom.org>; The Upper Room, <http://www.upperroom.org>.

General Board of Finance and Administration, www.gcfa.org, Nashville, TN

General Board of Global Ministries, www.umcmmission.org, Atlanta, GA, 800-862-4246

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, www.gbhem.org, Nashville, TN, 615-340-7413

General Commission on Religion and Race, www.gcorr.org, Washington, DC, 202-495-2949

General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, www.gcsrw.org, Chicago, IL, 1-800-523-8390

General Commission on United Methodist Men, www.gcumm.org, Nashville, TN, 615-340-7145

The United Methodist Publishing House, www.umph.org, www.abingdonpress.com, www.cokesbury.com, www.ministrymatters.com, Nashville, TN, 615-749-6000

United Women in Faith, www.uwfaith.org, New York, NY, 212-682-3633

Wespath (retirement/benefits), www.wespath.org, Glenview, IL, 800-851-2201

For additional resources, contact your annual conference office.