

¶ 252.1. *Purpose* - The **church council** shall provide for planning and implementing a program of nurture, outreach, witness, and resources in the local church. It shall also provide for the administration of its organization and temporal life. It shall envision, plan, implement, and annually evaluate the mission and ministry of the church. The church council shall be amenable to and function as the administrative agency of the charge conference (¶ 244).

2. *Mission and Ministry* - Nurture, outreach, and witness ministries and their accompanying responsibilities include:

- a) The nurturing ministries of the congregation shall give attention to but not be limited to education, worship, Christian formation, membership care, small groups, and stewardship. Attention must be given to the needs of individuals and families of all ages.
- b) The outreach ministries of the church shall give attention to local and larger community ministries of compassion, justice, and advocacy. These ministries include church and society, global ministries, higher education and campus ministry, health and welfare, Christian unity and interreligious concerns, religion and race, and the status and role of women.
- c) The witness ministries of the church shall give attention to developing and strengthening evangelistic efforts of sharing of personal and congregational stories of Christian experience, faith, and service; communications; Lay Servant Ministries; and other means that give expressions of witness for Jesus Christ.
- d) The leadership development and resourcing ministries shall give attention to the ongoing preparation and development of lay and clergy leaders for the ministry of the church (¶ 258.1).
- e) The nurture, outreach, and witness ministries and their accompanying responsibilities shall include consideration of (i) the election of a prayer coordinator to promote prayer and mobilize the local church to pray, (ii) establishing a prayer room or designated place for prayer and prayer resources, and (iii) encouraging intentional prayer for the pastoral leadership of the local church.

3. *Meetings* - a) The council shall meet at least quarterly. The chairperson or the pastor may call special meetings.

b) In order for the council to give adequate consideration to the missional purpose of the local church, it is recommended that the first agenda item at each meeting be related to its ministries of nurture, outreach, and witness. The administrative and supportive responsibilities of the church will then be given attention. It is recommended that the council use a consensus/discernment model of decision-making.

4. *Other Responsibilities* - It will also be the responsibility of the church council to:

- a) review the membership of the local church;
- b) fill interim vacancies occurring among the lay officers of the church between sessions of the annual charge conference;
- c) establish the budget on recommendation of the committee on finance and ensure adequate provision for the financial needs of the church;
- d) recommend to the charge conference the salary and other remuneration of the pastor(s) and staff members after receiving recommendations from the committee on pastor-parish relations (staff-parish relations);
- e) review the recommendation of the committee on pastor-parish relations regarding provision of adequate housing for the pastor(s), and report the same to the charge conference for approval. Housing provisions shall comply with the annual conference housing policy and parsonage standards. Housing shall not be considered as part of compensation or remuneration except to the extent provided for in denominational pension and benefit plans.

5. *Membership* - The charge conference will determine the size of the church council. Members of the church council shall be involved in the mission and ministry of the congregation as defined in ¶ 252.2. The membership of the council may consist of as few as eleven persons or as many as the charge conference deems appropriate. The council shall include persons who represent the program ministries of the church as outlined in ¶ 243. The membership shall include but not be limited to the following:

- a) the chairperson of the church council;
- b) the lay leader;
- c) the chairperson and/or a representative of the pastor-parish relations committee;
- d) the chairperson and/or a representative of the committee on finance;
- e) the chairperson and/or a representative of the board of trustees;
- f) the church treasurer;
- g) a lay member to annual conference;
- h) the president and/or a representative of the United Methodist Men;
- i) the president and/or a representative of the United Methodist Women;
- j) a young adult representative
- k) a representative of the United Methodist Youth;
- l) the pastor(s).

6. *Quorum* - The members present and voting at any duly announced meeting shall constitute a quorum.

And from the Cokesbury booklets on leadership positions:

The Church Council chairperson facilitates initiative, coordination, and collaboration to the group that does planning, goal-setting, implementation, and evaluation of ministry for the congregation.

The church council exists to create and supervise the strategic plan for your local congregation as it fulfills its mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ. This twofold function includes both leadership and management. This Guideline is designed to help equip you and your ministry team to navigate these two functions.

The church council is the primary group responsible for the overall ministry of the local church. By establishing the vision of the congregation, the council can then help to order and implement the various ministry opportunities.