



What does the Book of Discipline say about starting new churches?

2008 The United Methodist Book of Discipline Section VII, The Method of Organizing a New Local Church ¶259

¶ 259

1. A new local church or mission congregation shall be established only with the consent of the bishop in charge and the cabinet and with due consideration of the conference entity assigned the responsibility for congregational development. The bishop shall designate the district within whose bounds the church or mission congregation shall be organized. The district superintendent of that district, or his or her designee, shall be the agent in charge of the project and shall recommend to the district board of church location and building (¶ 2518) the method of organization, and whether a specific site shall be selected or an area of organization be designated. The district superintendent shall avail him/herself of existing demographic, lifestyle and ethnographic information in the process of establishing a new congregation and its location, or shall recommend to the board of trustees of a selected local church that they share their facility with the proposed congregation. If there is a city or district missionary organization, or if funds for the project are anticipated from a conference organization, those bodies shall also be asked to approve the method of organization and location for a new congregation.
 - a) A Mission Congregation may be designated when any of the following conditions exist:
 - 1.) Membership opportunities and resources are limited and not likely to result in a chartered congregation for an extended period of time.
 - 2.) A strategic demographic, cultural or language opportunity for serving a limited population is present.
 - 3.) It is expected that long-term sustaining funding from sources outside the congregation will be necessary to enable the congregation to exist, and the assumption of full connectional support items by the congregation is unlikely.
 - 4.) It is probable that the Annual Conference will need to provide long-term administrative guidance, including attention to the distinctive property needs of the congregation.

When any of these conditions exist, the Cabinet, in consultation with the congregational development area of the Annual Conference, may designate an entity a mission congregation. The mission congregation may be organized in the same manner and have the same rights and powers as any local church.
2. The bishop may appoint a pastor to launch a new local church, or with the bishop's approval the district superintendent may authorize a local church or group of local churches to launch a new church by gathering interested people in small groups for Bible study, outreach, community building, and worship at a site in an area approved by the district board of church location and building.
3. A pastor of The United Methodist Church, while serving as the pastor of a new church prior to the convening of a constituting conference (¶ 259.7), may receive a person into the membership of The United Methodist Church under the conditions of ¶217. When a person is received as either a baptized or a professing member, the pastor shall send the name, address, and related facts to the annual conference secretary for recording on a general membership roll. These names shall be transferred as soon as possible to the roll of the new church, when constituted, or to another church upon the member's request. If the new church is being sponsored by an existing church, membership may be recorded on the roll of that church.
4. Each annual conference or its equivalent may determine the minimum number of members and other criteria required for the organization of a local United Methodist church.
5. When the number of people interested in being charter members of the new church reaches the number

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necessary as set by the conference to charter a new church, the district superintendent shall call the interested people to meet at an appointed time for the purpose of organizing them into a chartered (organized) local church, or may by written authorization designate an elder in the district to call such a meeting. The district superintendent or the designated elder shall preside and shall appoint a secretary to keep a record of the meeting. Following a time of worship, opportunity shall be given to those in attendance to present themselves for membership.

6. People desiring to become professing members by transfer or on profession of their faith in Christ shall also be given opportunity to present themselves for membership. Any who have not been baptized shall receive the sacrament of baptism, profess their faith and be received as members. Other baptized people are to be received as baptized members.
7. Those who will be members of the constituting church conference shall be those received into the professing membership.
8. The constituting church conference shall then be called to order by the district superintendent or by an elder whom the superintendent designates (See ¶246.5). A committee on nominations, elected on nominations from the floor as the conference may determine, shall nominate members of the proposed church council. The chairperson of the committee on nominations shall be the appointed pastor (See ¶ 258.1c). When the members have been chosen, the district superintendent or the designated elder shall declare the church properly constituted.
9. The district superintendent or an elder whom the superintendent designates shall then adjourn the constituting church conference and call to order the charge conference of the pastoral charge. The membership of the charge conference shall be those newly elected, and any others entitled to membership. The charge conference shall then elect such officers of the church as the Discipline requires, including trustees of church property, and shall organize its structure as provided in the Discipline. When such officers have been duly elected and such structure put in place, the church is duly organized, and from this point its work shall proceed as described in the Discipline, provided that when a newly organized church is attached to a circuit, the charge conference shall not be held until such time as representatives from all the churches of the charge can be properly assembled for that purpose.
10. The charge conference may take action, at its discretion, authorizing and directing the newly elected trustees to incorporate the newly organized church in accordance with local laws and the provisions of the Discipline.

¶1113 “In response to God’s love in Jesus Christ, the General Board of Discipleship shall... (¶1113.13) work with the General Board of Global Ministries for the extension of the Church. To this end there shall be a Joint Committee on Congregational Development (*Path One*)... which shall meet regularly for mutual learning, developing strategies for Church extension, and providing resources and assistance to conferences and districts in the field of new congregational development...”

¶1313.1 “...to facilitate the proclamation and witness to the saving grace of Jesus Christ through... the establishment of faith communities or new churches... (¶1313.1.b) ...and to establish new congregations where United Methodism and /or cooperative church relationships do not exist. (¶1313.1.f) ...to work with the General Board of Discipleship for the extension of the Church through a Joint Committee on Congregational Development (*Path One*)... to expedite cooperation... in the field of congregational development of ...new congregations...”

What does the Discipline say about starting a multi-site, satellite, or extension campus?

¶ 247.21 When authorized by the district superintendent and the district board of church location and building, the charge conference may provide for the sponsoring of satellite congregations.

The Annual Conference shall give recognition to any new churches

¶ 604.10 The Annual Conference shall give recognition to any new churches that have been organized during the year and shall, through the presiding bishop and the secretary, send to each new church a certificate of organization, which the district superintendent shall, on behalf of the conference, present to the new church in an appropriate ceremony.

Who approves the area / location for a new church to start? (¶259.1)

...the Bishop ...the cabinet ...the conference entity assigned the responsibility for congregational development ...and, the district board of church location and building. If funds for the project are anticipated from a conference organization, those bodies shall also be asked to approve the method of organization and location for a new congregation.

