

On Methodism

August 2009

The Church Council

The purpose of the church council (aka administrative council) is to plan and implement the church ministries of nurture, outreach, witness and allocation of the resources of the local church. The council determines the organizational needs of the local body and evaluates (annually) the mission and ministry of the church.

Nurture includes, but is not limited to: education, worship, Christian formation (discipleship), membership care, small groups, and stewardship for members of all ages. Outreach gives attention to the local and larger communities concerning compassion, justice, and advocacy for others in need. Witness involves developing and strengthening evangelistic efforts to share the Christian faith with others individually and as a corporate body. The council is also responsible for helping in the preparation and development of lay and clergy leaders for the ministry of the church.

The church council is encouraged to elect a prayer coordinator to promote prayer and mobilize the local church to pray, establish a prayer room or designated place of prayer with prayer resources and encourage intentional prayer for the pastoral leadership of the local church.

The council should meet at least quarterly, but the pastor or council chairperson can call special meetings. The first agenda of each meeting should be related to the church's ministries of nurture, outreach or witness. Then, they will deal with the administrative and supportive responsibilities of the church.

Other responsibilities include: review of membership; filling interim vacancies among lay officers of the church between annual charge conference sessions; establish the budget on recommendations of the finance committee; recommending to the charge conference the salary and other remunerations of the pastor and staff after receiving recommendations from the PPR committee; reviewing the pastor's housing recommendations from the PPR committee.

The charge conference defines the size of the council, but it must include the following: chairperson, lay leader, church treasurer, lay member to the annual conference, pastor, a young adult representative, a representative of the UMYF, UMW, and UMM, and the chairperson or representative from the pastor-staff-parish relations, finance, and board of trustees committees.

Essentially, the church council sets the goals for the church, determines how to implement its ministries, and allocates the monetary and physical resources of the church to those ministries. This is the governing body of the local church, and all members are encouraged to attend the meetings and give input into the decision process, though only the council members actually have a vote.

See Book of Discipline, 2008, pp. 167-169.

—Cindy Sears