

A COMPARISON OF METHODIST DENOMINATIONS

**United Methodist Church
Global Methodist Church
Congregational Methodist
Free Methodist
Wesleyan
Nazarene
Independent**

NUMBER AND LOCATION OF CONGREGATIONS?

United Methodist Church (UMC):

Fifty-60 in the San Antonio area and 30,500 in the US. *These numbers will change due to the disaffiliation. The international presence of the UMC will be diminishing as some of the international churches move away from the UMC.

Global Methodist Church (GMC):

16 churches in the San Antonio district are in the discernment process. We currently don't know how many will disaffiliate and choose GMC. The number grows each week but they anticipate having 1,000 operational churches when they reach the 1 year anniversary on May 1, 2023. Presently active on four different continents: North America, Africa, Asia, and Europe. Already the Transitional Leadership Council is a diverse group of global traditionalists including Americans, Russians, Africans, Filipinos, and Koreans. Some of the most effective and orthodox leaders come from Africa, Korea, Russia, and the Philippines. Missions have not been finalized or rolled out yet.

Congregational Methodist Church (CMC):

There are none in San Antonio. There are three conferences in Texas. Thirty UMC's are considering moving to CMC in Texas. The CMC has 153 churches in the US and 20 in Mexico. Thirty UMC churches have moved and 100 more in the discernment process are looking at CMC. One of our 3 divisions is the Missions Division. It is supported through a percentage of the General Conference funding, along with designated funding directly from some churches. It is headed up by a Director and has several CMC missionaries in the fields around the world. Some are in Belize, Haiti, the Navajo regions. We also support partnerships in Japan, Iraq, and Ukraine along with several other regions through these partnerships. The CMC churches in Mexico started as a partnership.

Free Methodist Church:

There are none in San Antonio and 856 in the U.S.

The Wesleyan Church:

There are none in San Antonio and 1,600* in the U.S. (*2017 data)

The Nazarene Church:

There are 3 in San Antonio and 5,100 in the U.S./Canada

Independent: N/A

We have an international missionary presence from the local church. How much more effective would we be with a denomination? UMCOR is still a viable option for us to use for disaster relief efforts as well as other organizations like Red Cross.

ORTHODOX THEOLOGY THAT STANDS ON SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY?

United Methodist Church:

The Book of Discipline presents orthodox doctrine as our heritage, but it is not enforced as our standard today. There are pastors, bishops, and congregations that reject or reinterpret every major doctrine.

Global Methodist Church:

Orthodox doctrine in the Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline. Enforcement mechanisms are in place.

Congregational Methodist Church:

Orthodox doctrine.

Free Methodist Church:

Orthodox doctrine. Advocate abstaining from alcohol, drugs, smoking, pornography.

The Wesleyan Church:

Orthodox doctrine.

The Nazarene Church:

Orthodox official doctrine. In some areas they are starting to see pastors diverging from it, similar to how the UMC drift started.

Independent:

We would set the direction in a church covenant (our version of the Book of Discipline). This needs to include what we believe is true.

BAPTISM

United Methodist Church:

Yes, infant and adult convert

Global Methodist Church:

Yes, infant and adult convert

Congregational Methodist Church:

Yes, infant and adult convert

Free Methodist Church:

Yes, infant and adult convert

The Wesleyan Church:

Yes, infant and adult convert

The Nazarene Church:

Yes, infant and adult convert

Independent:

We need to decide.

CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO HOMOSEXUALITY/SIN?

United Methodist Church:

Evolving towards a more open to practicing homosexuals including in leadership, as pastors and bishops and same sex marriage. This is currently being done in violation of the Book of Discipline, but a number of leaders have spoken publicly of plans to change the Book of Discipline. The Bible is not the only authority to determine church direction. Experience, tradition and reason are also necessary and with no particular order. This too goes against the Discipline but is common practice and there are no enforcement mechanisms to stop the practices.

Global Methodist Church:

Welcoming homosexuals to participation in the local church, as to all sinners. Marriage is defined as a covenant between one man and one woman. Pastors must be celibate in singleness and/or faithful in marriage. The Transitional Book of Doctrine and Discipline has no negative statements regarding homosexual sex, but does offer positive statements that would prohibit homosexual sex. We don't highlight one sin over another and you won't find exclusionary language towards any group in the discipline. You will find affirmative statements of our beliefs.

Congregational Methodist Church:

The Congregational Methodist Church embraces the Biblical mandate concerning the homosexual lifestyle as sinful, and is a violation of the natural order of mankind. We would hope all CMC churches would welcome, love, and embrace any individual dealing with any sin and encourage them toward a personal relationship with Christ and a walk with God. In doing so, we believe the Holy Spirit would convict them of their sin (again - any sin) and they would turn toward God, thus leaving that life behind.

Free Methodist Church:

Value all people as made in the image of God. But FMC does not allow a Gay pastor or perform Gay marriages in their church.

Wesleyan Church:

The Bible only describes human gender in binary terms (Genesis 1:27). Gender assignment is a divine prerogative. There is no "third gender" or multiple gender construct in the Bible. God's plan for human sexuality is that it is to be expressed only in a monogamous lifelong relationship between one man and one woman within the framework of marriage.

The Nazarene Church:

We consider a Christian marriage to be only between one man and one woman. Sexual practice outside of Christian marriage is sinful and violates God's plan. Nazarene church apparently has at least one gay pastor. May be moving in the same direction as the UMC.

Independent:

What will our church stance be? It will need to be outlined in our church charter/covenant.

GREATER AUTONOMY FOR LOCAL CHURCHES?

United Methodist Church:

UMC is appointing pastors without much local church consultation. The bishop has the authority to appoint as they see fit. In the history of Northwest Hills, the UMC has had little or no influence in our local decisions about how to run the church. Changing pastors for the first time in a very long time will be different.

Global Methodist Church:

GMC provides a hybrid call-appointment system, with local churches having much more say in pastoral selection. Local churches will be able to structure themselves in a way that best enhances their mission. The bishop will still have the final say on appointing clergy, guaranteeing that female clergy and clergy of color will not be discriminated against.

Congregational Methodist Church:

As a denomination, we do not get directly involved in any church decisions unless we are asked to do so. We truly respect the autonomy of the local church to determine what is best for their local ministry, along with worship styles, church structure, sacraments... just about anything one could look to - as long as the Wesleyan-based CMC doctrine is not violated. The local church chooses the pastor by a "call" system with help from the CMC.

Free Methodist Church:

We value our denominational connection, but recognize that our ultimate loyalty and devotion is to the Kingdom of God. Encourage opportunities to partner with and learn from denominations and ministries outside the FMC. Work collaboratively with local churches to appoint pastors with a preference for longer appointments. Generally, moves are only initiated with the agreement of the pastor, church, or both.

The Wesleyan Church:

The local church is the strategic center of evangelism and discipleship. The District level is more to help with reaching outside the church for these functions.

The Nazarene Church:

The local church, is the foundation for everything else including the district, the general church, and all ministry. There is accountability through the district regarding doctrinal alignment, purchase/lease/sell of property, incurring debt, licensing of ministers, and calling of a pastor.

Independent:

No restrictions on how we run our own church. We would need to build controls to ensure we stay true to our covenant. Pastors would be identified and hired solely by Northwest Hills.

A LEAN AND SIMPLE CHURCH BUREAUCRACY WITH LESS OVERHEAD & AN EMPHASIS ON THE LOCAL CHURCH AS THE FRONT-LINE MINISTRY?

United Methodist Church:

Top heavy bureaucracy with multiple boards and agencies with large staffs in offices in various locations. The boards and agencies have little interaction with or accountability to the local church, doing their specialized ministries on their own.

UMC apportionments to fund the bureaucracy range from 8 to 15% of the local church's budget, depending on the Annual Conference. Northwest Hills currently pays about 10%, or \$100,000 each year.

Global Methodist Church:

Minimized bureaucracy with minimal paid staff and volunteers working out of home offices and often meeting by Zoom, the primary aim being to empower the local church.

Because of the cost of disaffiliation, GMC will only ask for 2% of the first year. The Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline sets a cap of 6.5% and can only be raised by vote of a super majority at General Conference.

Congregational Methodist Church:

Our structure is focused on the local churches, with little need to expand overhead/headquarters staffing even as we add multiple UMC churches to our fellowship. Most positions within the CMC are voluntary, so adding functions and/or individuals to new responsibilities and/or programs are not always adding direct costs. Denominational work focuses on facilitating the work of the local church. Each congregation decides apportionment payments.

Free Methodist Church:

Very lean organization. We have three US bishops, 24 superintendents and very few boards and agencies. Without question, a lack of abundant resources is a factor contributing to this reality. However, the bent of the FMC is toward a relatively lean organization, regardless of the available resources. It is not our aim to become a top-heavy, multilayered, boards/agency-driven denomination, but one that is committed to the local church as the primary means through which our mission is accomplished. Apportionments are 10-13% depending on annual conference.

Wesleyan Church:

Same general organization as the UMC. General Conference has 325 members. About 17 districts in the USA. Very lengthy Book of Discipline. Apportionments are 11%.

The Nazarene Church:

Each district, (78 in the USA/Canada Region) determines the start and sanctioning of new functions/congregations. The district provides organization for connection regarding: Global and District Mission efforts... Children's Ministry summer camps, Youth Ministry summer camps, Men's and Women's Ministry events and resources, Educational structure and resources for those called into vocational/pastoral ministry, assistance (sometimes financial) with churches in crisis, ongoing pastor training and continuing education. Apportionments are 15%.

Independent:

No bureaucracy beyond Northwest Hills. Zero apportionments, but other costs are added like retirement funding, health insurance.

ORDINATION AND DEPLOYMENT OF PASTORS?

United Methodist Church:

Ordination can take 10 yrs or more, including formal education, interviews, psychiatric evaluations, supervision and more. Appointment is by the bishop annually after a little consultation with the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee.

Global Methodist Church:

Appointed by the bishop, multi-year preferred. More emphasis on the local church training and developing pastors. Hybrid appointment/call system allowing much more congregational involvement in pastoral selection. A shorter ordination process, offering different routes, some with less formal educational requirements, all requiring more vetting by the local church they come from.

Congregational Methodist Church:

Call system with no time limit.

Free Methodist Church:

Appointed by Ministerial Appointments Committee. The Ministerial Education and Guidance Board shall examine potential conference ministerial candidates and determined readiness based on the 15 areas measured in the Outcomes Based Ordination assessment.

Wesleyan Church:

Call system, church and district for 4 years.

The Nazarene Church:

That would be done according to the outlined protocol in the Manual. In short, the District Superintendent works with the local church board to present a candidate to the local church members for the calling of the pastor. The DS is engaged in vetting and presenting potential candidates to the board in the search process.

Independent:

Develop our own minimum requirements for hiring a pastor and/or ordaining a pastor. A call system, with no outside support.

GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY FOR BISHOPS, CLERGY AND CHURCHES?

United Methodist Church:

Bishops are elected for life with little accountability except by other bishops in the jurisdiction.

Global Methodist Church:

Bishops term limited. An on-going method for accountability to be determined by the first General Conference. Accountability will not be to other bishops.

Congregational Methodist Church:

No bishops. President

Free Methodist Church:

Bishops have 4 yr terms and can serve 3 terms.

Wesleyan Church:

General Superintendent - 4 yr term/multiple terms possible

The Nazarene Church:

No Bishops. Board of General Superintendents, 4 yrs.

Independent:

Pastor accountability would be within Northwest Hills alone. Local church accountability – none.

FINANCIALS: TRUST CLAUSE?

United Methodist Church:

Trust clause used. The UMC uses the trust clause as an institutional method of survival to make it difficult, if not impossible, for a congregation to leave the UMC. A trust clause means Northwest Hills owns its property "in trust" for the annual conference and the general church. In other words, it doesn't really belong to Northwest Hills.

Global Methodist Church:

No trust clause used.

Congregational Methodist Church:

No trust clause used.

Free Methodist Church:

No trust clause used. If property owned prior to joining FMC, church can decide to retain the property.

Wesleyan Church:

Trust clause used.

The Nazarene Church:

Trust clause used

Independent:

Trust clause not used. We own our own assets without any trust.

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

United Methodist Church:

The UMC publishing house, Cokesbury, creates new books and curricula which the UMC strongly urges congregations to use.

Global Methodist Church:

Rather than creating and/or mandating GMC resources, the GMC encourages local churches to partner with ministries that already exist and that they choose because they fit the local church's process for making disciples. GMC will offer recommendations.

Congregational Methodist Church:

The CMC Division of Church Ministries will offer to congregations and leaders training, seminars, retreats, literature, and much more. The local church chooses whether to participate.

Free Methodist Church:

No information at this time.

Wesleyan Church:

No information at this time.

The Nazarene Church:

No information at this time.

Independent:

We would need to form our own partnerships in ministry.