

# What's all this?

If you're new to the United Methodist Church – or just new to the candidacy process - you may feel as if you've entered another culture where people speak a different language! A mini course in how your church is connected with The United Methodist Church, along with a glossary defining some of those foreign terms and acronyms follows.

## I go to a church.

### What's all this about a District and a Conference?

In the (international) United Methodist Church, almost 10 million people all over the world are members of local churches like yours. Here in the United States, churches are organized into geographic groups called **Districts**, and Districts are part of larger geographic groups called **Conferences** or **Annual Conferences**. (Those two terms are often used interchangeably.)

Your church is part of the **Texas Annual Conference**, which is one of six United Methodist conferences or areas in the state of Texas. (A Conference map is included in this packet.) There is also a Northwest Texas, North Texas, Central Texas, and Southwest Texas Conference; El Paso is part of the New Mexico Conference; and some churches are part of the non-geographic Spanish-language Rio Grande Conference.

The Texas Annual Conference includes over 700 UM churches in southeast Texas—104 large churches with average weekly worship attendance of over 250; dozens of thriving metropolitan, suburban and county seat “First” churches; hundreds of inner city, small town, and rural churches; plus The Methodist Hospital, colleges, and campus ministries. 1243 clergypersons are part of the Texas Annual Conference. 727 serve churches; 102 serve in extension ministries, leading in chaplaincy, teaching, missions, and administration in Texas and around the world; 106 are age 40 or younger; 44 are age 35 or younger; 23% are women; 14% belong to a racial or ethnic minority; and our clergypersons include 28 married clergy couples. The Texas Annual Conference is large and diverse, with lots of different opportunities for people like you--people called to licensed and ordained ministry!

Each Conference is led spiritually and administratively by a UM Bishop. The Texas Annual Conference is currently led by **Bishop Janice Riggle Huie**.

The Texas Annual Conference is divided into nine areas called **Districts**—North District (Longview and Texarkana area); Northwest District (Tyler area); East District (Lufkin area); Southeast District (Beaumont area); West District (Bryan/College Station area); Central North District (Conroe area); Southwest District (Sugar Land area); Central South District (Houston area); and South District (southeast Houston and Galveston area).

Each District is led spiritually and administratively by a **District Superintendent**.

The nine District Superintendents and the Bishop meet together as a **Cabinet** to appoint pastors to churches and oversee the ministry of the Conference.

The **Extended Cabinet** also includes five other Conference leaders: the Assistant to the Bishop, and the Directors of the four Conference Centers of Excellence—Centers for Clergy, Congregational, and Missional Excellence; and a Center for Connectional Resources.

The Bishop, Center Directors, and other Conference staff work out of offices in the Texas Annual Conference **United Methodist Service Center**,

**So...**

*The (international) United Methodist Church  
(represented by a “General Conference,” which meets once every four years)  
is connected to the  
**Texas Annual Conference**  
is connected to nine  
**Districts**  
which are connected to over 700  
Local Churches, including yours!*

*(Ok, to be completely accurate here, there is actually a Jurisdictional Conference between the General and Annual, but we’ll save that for the advanced course. Moving on...)*

Your District Superintendent is your pastor’s supervisor; and, if you choose to enter “candidacy,” **your District Superintendent will be your supervisor in that process**. However, others will also be available to help you through this process, including:

your **Pastor(s)**, who will be available to you throughout the process;

your church’s **Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee** (sort of a “personnel” or “HR” committee for your church), which will eventually be asked to support your decision, should you choose to pursue ministry;

your church’s **Charge Conference** (every voting member of your church’s council or voting body), which will eventually be asked to support your decision, should you choose to pursue ministry;

your **District Administrative Assistant**, who can answer most of your questions about forms and processes, and connect you with your District Superintendent;

the **Center for Clergy Excellence**, which can answer your questions about the Candidacy Summit (an event which begins the “exploring phase” of candidacy) or direct you to someone who can answer your questions;

your **District Committee on Ordained Ministry** (dCOM), with which you will interview if you choose to pursue ministry;

clergy **Mentors** assigned to help you navigate various phases of the journey; and

the Conference **Board of Ordained Ministry** (BOM), with which you will interview as you complete your seminary education, if you choose to enter ordained ministry.

**In a nutshell, help is available!**