

THE ONE BOARD MODEL

Local Church Administrative Governance

United Methodist Church

Simplified, Accountable Leadership

Planning for the future of

Grace United Methodist Church

Prepared as a print-friendly version of the original presentation

The One Board Model is an alternative governance structure authorized by the UMC Book of Discipline (§243.1). It consolidates multiple church committees into one unified governing board to simplify leadership and streamline decision-making.

Traditional Model	One Board Approach
Separate Church Council, Finance Committee, Trustees, SPRC, and other bodies meet independently.	One unified board handles governance functions and remains accountable to the Charge Conference.
Issues may move among several committees before final action.	Finance, property, personnel, and administrative matters are considered within one governing structure.

Reference	Requirement
¶243.1 - Alternate Structure	Allows a charge to establish an alternative structure that replaces all or some standard administrative bodies.
¶252.4 - Charge Conference Approval	The One Board structure must be formally approved by the Charge Conference.
¶259 - Required Functions	Finance, personnel, property/trustee, and administrative oversight functions must still be fulfilled.
¶258.4 - Financial Accountability	Financial controls, annual audit or review, and proper recordkeeping remain required.

- Administrative Chair, with an associate identified for mentoring
- Lay Member to Annual Conference, with an associate or alternate identified for mentoring
- 9-12 elected members, with leadership coverage for Finance, Trustees, SPRC, Nurture, Outreach, and Witness
- Church Treasurer, responsible for bookkeeping and check-writing functions
- Pastor serving ex officio and not voting on SPRC matters
- Youth representative, encouraged

Area	Primary Responsibilities
Finance	Budget, stewardship, apportionments, treasury oversight, and money handlers
Personnel (SPRC)	Pastor relations and staff oversight
Trustees	Property, insurance, and legal matters
Nurture	Spiritual growth, education, and fellowship of the congregation

Area	Primary Responsibilities
Nominations	Leadership development and elections
Outreach	Worship, discipleship, lay servant ministries, and proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ
Witness	Connecting the church to the community through compassion, justice, and advocacy

- The traditional model uses multiple committees and may require 30-50 or more total leadership slots.
 - The presentation describes a smaller One Board group filling the governance roles.
 - The presentation estimates a 70% reduction in volunteer leadership positions.
 - Fewer seats may make annual nominations easier.
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- Single meeting: Governance decisions can be addressed in one board meeting rather than coordinated across several committees.
 - No referrals: Finance, property, and personnel issues do not need referral to separate bodies.
 - Faster votes: One quorum and one vote can support quicker action on urgent matters.
 - Clear authority: The unified structure clarifies which body is responsible for decisions.

Step	Agenda Area	Typical Content
1	Consent Agenda	Routine items, including minutes and standard reports, approved together.
2	Financial Review	Budget versus actual, expenditures, offerings, and apportionments.
3	Property and Facilities	Maintenance, insurance, property decisions, and capital needs.
4	Ministry Planning	Mission priorities, outreach, and alignment with the church vision.
5	Personnel Items	Staff and pastor matters handled in closed session under SPRC protocols after non-voting persons are dismissed.

Meeting expectation: The presentation states that a typical One Board meeting runs 60-90 minutes and replaces four to five separate committee meetings.

- Serves ex officio on the full board.
- Has voice and vote on matters except personnel items concerning clergy.
- Recuses from discussions involving personal compensation, evaluation, or appointment.
- Provides spiritual leadership and vision input.
- Works alongside lay leadership as an equal partner in governance.

- The board fulfills the SPRC requirements identified in ¶258.2; a separate committee is not required under the model.
- Personnel matters, including salaries, evaluations, and complaints, are handled in closed session with eligible members.
- SPRC-related discussions retain the same confidentiality protections as under the traditional model.
- The board conducts the pastor annual evaluation without the pastor present, in accordance with the presentation guidance.

The following tables recreate the nomination worksheets from the presentation in a format suitable for printing and completion by hand.

Role	Responsibilities	Term	Current Class / Status	Next Class to Skip	Member After That
Administrative Chair	Lead meetings; oversight	3 years			
Lay Member to Annual Conference	Attend Annual Conference and report to congregation; associate under training	3 years			
SPRC	Pastor relations; staff oversight	3 years			
Trustees	Property, insurance, legal matters	3 years			
Finance	Budget, stewardship, apportionments, treasury oversight	3 years			
Treasurer	Keep books; write checks; financial reporting	3 years			

Role	Responsibilities	Term	Chairperson / Nominee
Nominations Chair	Leadership development and elections	Duration of appointment	Pastor
Membership Secretary	Maintains membership roll and letters for transferring membership	Duration of engagement	
Nurture	Spiritual growth, education, and fellowship of the congregation	3 years	
Outreach	Connects the church to the community through compassion, justice, and advocacy	3 years	
Witness	Proclaims the Good News of Jesus Christ through worship, discipleship, and lay servant ministries	3 years	

Step	Action	Details
1	Consult the District Superintendent	Discuss the transition, obtain guidance, and confirm required conference approvals.
2	Educate the Congregation	Hold town halls, share resources, address concerns, and build understanding before a vote.
3	Draft the Board Structure	Define membership, size, officer roles, standing rules, and management of each function.
4	Hold a Charge Conference Vote	Present the proposal at a called Charge Conference for formal approval under ¶243.1 and ¶252.4.
5	Transition and Elect the Board	Transition current committee members and elect the first board through the Nominating Committee or Charge Conference.
6	Orient and Launch	Train members on expanded responsibilities and begin operating under the new model.

- Confirm the required approval path with the District Superintendent before finalizing the structure.
- Document how each required finance, personnel, trustee, administrative, nurture, outreach, witness, and nominations function will be assigned.
- Define voting eligibility, recusals, closed-session participation, confidentiality, quorum, and recordkeeping in the standing rules.
- Provide role-specific orientation so members understand both the unified board structure and the specialized duties they carry.
- Retain appropriate internal controls even though governance is consolidated into one board.

ONE BOARD. ONE MISSION. ONE PEOPLE OF GOD.

For more information, consult the District Superintendent or the UMC Book of Discipline ¶243.1.

Grace UMC One Board FAQ

What is the One Board Model?

The One Board Model, sometimes called a Simplified Accountable Structure, brings several of the church's administrative responsibilities together into one leadership board. Instead of separate groups repeatedly meeting to discuss Finance, Trustees, Pastor-Parish Relations, and Church Council matters, one board carries those responsibilities.

The purpose is simple: **fewer meetings, less duplication, and more time for ministry.**

Why is Grace considering this structure?

Grace has faithful people who are already serving in many different ways. Under a traditional committee structure, the same people can end up serving on several committees and attending several meetings each month.

Often the same information is discussed more than once because one committee must report to another committee.

A One Board structure allows us to handle necessary church business responsibly without spending so much of our time in meetings. We want our people to have more time for worship, Bible study, outreach, missions, children and youth ministry, fellowship, caring for one another, and serving our community.

We want fewer meetings and more ministry.

Is the One Board Model allowed in The United Methodist Church?

Yes. The Book of Discipline allows congregations, with the appropriate approval, to use an alternative organizational structure that better fits their size and ministry needs.

We will remain fully United Methodist and continue to follow the Book of Discipline and the requirements of the Mississippi Annual Conference.

Are we eliminating all of our current officers?

No.

Our current elected officers will remain in their positions.

Changing our governance structure does not mean starting over or removing the people who are already faithfully serving Grace. Current officers will continue serving according to the responsibilities for which they were elected as we make the transition into the new structure.

The goal is to simplify how we work together, not to replace the people who are already doing the work.

Will everyone suddenly have a different job?

No.

The transition will be orderly. Responsibilities will be clearly explained, and current leaders will continue serving.

Some responsibilities that were previously handled through separate committees will eventually be handled through the One Board, but the work itself does not disappear.

What happens to Finance, Trustees, and Pastor-Parish Relations?

Their responsibilities remain.

We still need careful financial oversight. We still need people responsible for the building and property. We still need confidential conversations about clergy and personnel matters.

The difference is that these responsibilities will be handled through one governing board rather than requiring several separate committees to meet throughout the month.

Does this mean fewer meetings?

Yes. That is one of the primary reasons for considering the change.

Under the traditional system, someone might attend a Finance meeting, a Trustees meeting, and then a Church Council meeting where many of the same matters are discussed again.

With the One Board Model, much of that work can happen in one meeting.

Instead of asking our leaders to spend several evenings each month sitting in meetings, we can handle the necessary administrative work together and then use that time and energy for ministry.

Does fewer meetings mean less accountability?

No.

Simpler does not mean careless.

Financial safeguards, budgets, reports, audits or financial reviews, property responsibilities, confidentiality requirements, Charge Conference oversight, and United Methodist policies still apply.

The goal is not less accountability. The goal is **clearer accountability with fewer meetings.**

Will the pastor control the board?

No.

The pastor provides spiritual leadership and works closely with the board, but the church is led through shared clergy and lay leadership.

Board members are elected through the church's established leadership process. Decisions are made together, not simply by the pastor.

Will a small group of people be making every decision?

No.

The board will handle governance and administration, but it will not run every ministry of the church.

Ministry leaders and teams will continue to have responsibility for worship, missions, Christian education, children and youth, outreach, fellowship, music, hospitality, care, and other areas of church life.

The board should not be deciding every detail of every activity.

The board governs. The congregation ministers.

Will people still have opportunities to serve?

Absolutely.

In fact, we hope this structure will create more opportunities for people to serve without requiring them to join an administrative committee.

Someone can help with a community meal without attending monthly business meetings.

Someone can serve with children or youth without sitting on Finance.

Someone can help with missions, hospitality, worship, prayer, Bible study, or outreach without being elected to an administrative position.

We want people spending more time using their gifts and less time sitting in meetings.

Will the congregation still know what is happening?

Yes.

Transparency remains important. The congregation should continue receiving appropriate information about finances, ministry plans, major decisions, and the direction of the church.

Some matters, especially Pastor-Parish Relations and personnel issues, must remain confidential. Other church business should be communicated clearly.

A simpler structure should not make church leadership more secretive. It should make responsibility clearer.

What happens to the Charge Conference?

Nothing.

The Charge Conference remains an important part of United Methodist governance. It will continue to elect leaders, receive reports, and carry out the responsibilities assigned to it by the Book of Discipline.

The One Board does not replace the Charge Conference.

Are we changing what Grace believes or what Grace is called to do?

No.

We are changing an organizational structure, not our faith or our mission.

We will still worship Jesus Christ, study Scripture, celebrate Baptism and Holy Communion, care for one another, serve our neighbors, welcome people into Christian community, support the ministries of The United Methodist Church, and share the grace and love of God.

Our organizational chart may change.

Our mission does not.

What is the biggest advantage of the One Board Model?

For Grace, one of the clearest advantages is that **the same people will not have to attend several different meetings to accomplish the same work.**

Necessary church business can be handled in one place. Leaders can see the whole picture rather than only one small part of the church's ministry. Decisions can be coordinated more easily. Communication can improve.

Most importantly, our people can spend less time managing the church and more time **being the church.**

What should we remember as we make this change?

The One Board Model is simply a tool.

It is not our mission.

A church can have the best organizational structure imaginable and still miss what Jesus has called us to do.

The purpose of simplifying our structure is to help us focus our time, gifts, energy, and resources on the work God has given us.

We want fewer meetings.

We want less duplication.

We want clear accountability.

We want more people involved in ministry.

And we want everything we do to help Grace United Methodist Church faithfully share the love and grace of Jesus Christ with one another and with our community.

Fewer meetings. More ministry. Same mission.