

**A Comparison of The United Methodist Church, The Global Methodist Church, The Free Methodist Church, and an Independent Church
rev. 10/20/2022**

	United Methodist Church (UMC)	Global Methodist Church (GMC)	Free Methodist Church (FMC)
Governing Body	<p>The General Conference. from ¶16 & 509) “The General Conference shall have full legislative power over all matters distinctively connec-tional... No person, no paper, no organization, has the authority to speak officially for The United Methodist Church, this right having been reserved exclusively to the General Conference under the Constitution.”</p>	<p>The Transitional Leadership Council. from ¶702 & 703) “During the period of transition between the legal formation of the Global Methodist Church and the effective date of actions taken by the convening General Conference, the Transitional Leadership Council shall serve as the primary leadership body of the church. ...empowered to make all necessary decisions related to the forming and initial operating of the Global Methodist Church until the effective date of legislation adopted by the convening General Conference.”</p>	<p>The Free Methodist World Conference and General Conference. From ¶200 “The Free Methodist World Conference exists to co-ordinate the visions of the general conferences by facilitating communication and harmonious relationships among the leaders of the general conferences. It also facilitates the resolution of constitutional issues.”</p>
Governing Documents	<p>The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2016. from pg. v) “...the product of over two hundred years of the General Conferences of the denominations that now form The United Methodist Church. The Discipline as the instrument for setting forth the laws, plan, polity, and process by which United Methodists govern themselves remains constant.”</p>	<p>Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline, updated April 12, 2022. from the preface – “...will only be effective once the Global Methodist Church is legally formed and will provide governance until the time specified by the Global Methodist Church’s convening General Conference.”</p>	<p>Book of Discipline of the Free Methodist Church, 2019 This 2019 Book of Discipline presents the history, theological roots, and global contemporary mission of the Free Methodist Church – USA (FMCUSA). It is the ecclesiastical and organizational manual of the church. It includes the Common Constitution (chapters 1 & 2) of the global Free Methodist Church, of which the FMCUSA is a founding member.</p>
Mission	<p>from ¶120) “The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Local churches and extension ministries of the Church provide the most significant arenas through which disciple-making occurs. ...Whenever United Methodism has had a clear sense of mission, God has used our Church to save persons, heal relationships, transform social structures, and spread scriptural holiness, thereby changing the world. In order to be truly alive, we embrace Jesus’ mandate to love God and to love our neighbor and to make disciples of all peoples.”</p>	<p>from ¶301) “The mission of the Global Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly. ...As individual believers in Christ, and as those gathered together in local congregations, our calling is to connect with the communities and the world around us, extending both grace and mercy. Growing in our personal faith, and effectively discipling others, are both life-long expressions of loving the Lord with all of our hearts, all of our being, and all of our minds, as well as loving our neighbor as ourselves.”</p>	<p>Mission: “To love God, love people, and make disciples.”</p> <p>Vision: “To bring wholeness to the world through healthy biblical communities of holy people multiplying disciples, leaders, groups, and churches.”</p> <p>Free Methodist Way: Five Values that Shape our Identity. Those five values consist of Christ-Compelled Multiplication, Life- Giving Holiness, Cross- Cultural Collaboration, Love-Driven Justice, and God-Given Revelation</p>

Doctrine & Theology

<p>Are clergy and laity held accountable to the doctrinal standards?</p>	<p>Yes, both individual clergy and laity can be brought up on charges with right to trial and appeal. from ¶2702 “A bishop, clergy member of an annual conference (¶ 370), local pastor,9 clergy on honorable or administrative location, or diaconal minister may be tried when charged (subject to the statute of limitations in ¶ 2702.4) with one or more of the following offenses: ... (d) disobedience to the order and discipline of The United Methodist Church; (e) dissemination of doctrines contrary to the established standards of doctrine of The United Methodist Church... A professing member of a local church may be charged with the following offenses, and, if so, may choose a trial: ... (c) disobedience to the order and discipline of The United Methodist Church; (d) dissemination of doctrines contrary to the established standards of doctrine of The United Methodist Church; (e) relationships and/or behaviors that undermines the ministry of another pastor...”</p>	<p>Yes, both individual clergy and laity can be brought up on charges with right to trial and appeal. from ¶808 “1. A bishop or clergy member of an annual conference, including senior clergy and clergy on honorable or administrative location, may be tried when charged (subject to the statute of limitations listed below) with one or more of the following offenses:...d. Promoting or engaging in doctrines or practices, or conducting ceremonies or services, that are not in accord with those established by the Global Methodist Church; e. Disobedience to the order and discipline of the Global Methodist Church;...2. A professing member of a local church may be charged (subject to the statute of limitations listed below) with the following offenses:...d. Promoting or engaging in doctrines or practices, or conducting ceremonies or services, that are not in accord with those established by the Global Methodist Church; e. Disobedience to the order and discipline of the Global Methodist Church”</p>	<p>Yes, Both individual clergy and laity can be brought up on charges with right to review and appeal. From ¶7140 “Overseers, MEG Boards and MCCs shall process all complaints, accusations and/or admissions of sin that are not resolved by private counsel and victim advocacy, by following both the Review Board and Court of Appeals Procedure Manual and Restoration Process – A Manual for Superintendents and Ministerial Education and Guidance Boards. When an elder’s membership is suspended the suspended elder shall have the right to appeal the suspension to a regional Review Board.</p>
<p>Are congregations held accountable to the doctrinal standards?</p>	<p>No, the accountability lies with individual clergy and lay members. (See above)</p>	<p>Yes, congregations may be involuntarily removed from the denomination with right to appeal. from ¶354) Central to the integrity of both local congregations and the Global Methodist Church as a whole, the doctrines and discipline of the denomination as outlined in this Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline shall be voluntarily and joyfully embraced and practiced by all. Additionally, local congregations covenant to provide connectional funding as set forth in ¶ 349. Congregations that for reason of conscience find themselves unable to do so are accordingly encouraged to affiliate with another Christian denomination more in keeping with their beliefs or practices under the provisions of ¶ 903. Should a congregation consistently advance doctrines or engage in practices not in conformity with this Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline or fail to remit in full the connectional funding set forth in ¶ 349, ... the local church may be involuntarily disaffiliated from the Global Methodist Church by a two-thirds vote of the Transitional Leadership Council or its successor, by agreement of the bishop, and by an affirmative vote of the cabinet of the conference in which the</p>	<p>No, the accountability lies with individual clergy and lay members. There are ways for a Free Methodist Church to leave the denomination.</p>

local church is located.

Human Sexuality

<p>Can a person who self-identifies as LGBTQ join the membership of the church?</p>	<p>Yes, with qualifications. from ¶(4) "The United Methodist Church is a part of the church universal, which is one Body in Christ. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth. All persons without regard to race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition, shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection. In The United Methodist Church no conference or other organizational unit of the Church shall be structured so as to exclude any member or any constituent body of the Church because of race, color, national origin, status or economic condition.</p>	<p>Yes, with qualifications. from ¶(103.5) "We affirm the participation and leadership of those of all races, ethnicities, nationalities, sexes, and ages in the Body of Christ..." and from ¶(306) "Inclusiveness means openness, acceptance, and support that enables all persons to participate in the spiritual life of the Church ...inclusiveness denies every semblance of discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, or gender (defined throughout this Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline by a person's immutable biological traits identified by or before birth). ... inclusiveness means the freedom for the total involvement of all persons who meet the requirements of our Book of Doctrines and Discipline in the membership and leadership of the Church at any level and in every place."</p>	<p>Yes from ¶3311 With deep compassion for persons who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, and especially those who have been mistreated and marginalized in various settings, the Free Methodist Church encourages its congregations to practice welcoming hospitality and embracing loving kindness toward all who desire to worship among us. We will be a people who offer ourselves as agents of Jesus' grace and love to others – all others. We will trust the Holy Spirit to convict people of their sin, to enliven hope of transforming possibilities, and then to lead people to God's best for their lives</p>
<p>Can a person who is in a same-sex relationship get married in the church?</p>	<p>No. from ¶161.G) "We affirm that sexuality is God's good gift to all persons.... Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage.... The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching."</p>	<p>No. from ¶202.7) "We believe that human sexuality is a gift of God that is to be affirmed as it is exercised within the legal and spiritual covenant of a loving and monogamous marriage between one man and one woman."</p>	<p>No. from ¶3311 We hold that marriage can only be the union of one man and one woman who have made a public covenant and vow before God and the state (Genesis 2:20-24; Mark 10:6-9). Therefore, it would be a breach of the doctrine of our Church for ministers or members of the Free Methodist Church to conduct, officiate, or assist in officiating, the marriage or union between a same-sex or same-gender couple. In light of our beliefs, ministers and members of the Free Methodist Church shall not officiate or assist in officiating marriages or unions of same-sex or same-gender couples.</p>
<p>Can an LGBTQ person become a pastor?</p>	<p>Yes, if non-practicing. from ¶304.3) While persons set apart by the Church for ordained ministry are subject to all the frailties of the human condition and the pressures of society, they are required to maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world. The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church. "Self-avowed practicing homosexual" is understood to</p>	<p>Yes, if non-practicing. from ¶405.2) "Those to be ordained must meet the following qualifications: ...Nurture and cultivate spiritual disciplines and patterns of holiness consistent with the General Rules, including responsible self-control by exhibiting personal habits that are conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all relationships, fidelity in a Christian marriage between one man and one woman, chastity in singleness, social responsibility, and the knowledge and love of God. And from ¶808.1.g) "A bishop or clergy</p>	<p>No</p>

	mean that a person openly acknowledges to a bishop, district superintendent, district committee of ordained ministry, Board of Ordained Ministry, or clergy session that the person is a practicing homosexual; or is living in a same-sex marriage, domestic partnership or civil union, or is a person who publicly states she or he is a practicing homosexual. See Judicial Council Decisions 702, 708, 722, 725, 764, 844, 984, 1020, 1341.	member of an annual conference, including senior clergy and clergy on honorable or administrative location, may be tried when charged (subject to the statute of limitations listed below) with one or more of the following offenses:...Engaging in sexual activities outside the bonds of a loving and monogamous marriage between one man and one woman, including but not limited to sexual abuse or misconduct, the use or possession of pornography, or infidelity.”	
Clergy			
Can a local church select its own pastor(s)?	No; all clergy are appointed by the bishop in consultation with the local church. from ¶425 and ¶426 "Clergy shall be appointed by the bishop, who is empowered to make and fix all appointments in the episcopal area of which the annual conference is a part...Consultation is the process whereby the bishop and/or district superintendent confer with the pastor and committee on pastor-parish relations,... Consultation is not merely notification. Consultation is not committee selection or call of a pastor. The role of the committee on pastor-parish relations is advisory."	No; all clergy are appointed by the bishop in consultation with the local church. from ¶509 and ¶510 "...clergy shall be appointed by the bishop, who is empowered to make and fix all appointments in the episcopal area of which the annual conference is a part. ...Consultation is the process whereby the bishop and/or presiding elder (district superintendent) confers with the pastor and pastor-parish relations committee, ...Consultation is not merely notification. Consultation is not committee selection or call of a pastor. The role of the pastor-parish relations committee is advisory..."	No from ¶5220; Each annual conference shall elect a standing Ministerial Appointments Committee (MAC) composed at least of the bishop as chair, a superintendent as vice chair, and one lay Member. The committee shall appoint pastors for an indefinite tenure. The committee shall monitor progress and make changes at each annual conference when deemed necessary. In the event a change in pastoral leadership becomes necessary between annual conferences, the committee shall have authority to make appointments. Delegates of churches involved shall be consulted, but final authority rests with the Ministerial Appointments Committee.
Finances			
How much apportionments will be required from the local church?	Varies per annual conference based upon the GCF&A formula from ¶615	6.5% of annual income. from ¶505.4 "The amount remitted by the local church for connectional funding shall be calculated as follows: a. For general church connectional funding, not more than 1.5% of local church operating income (see ¶ 349.3) as set by the Transitional Leadership Council or the Convening General Conference; b. For annual conference connectional funding where a local church has affiliated with the Global Methodist Church apart from its previous annual conference assignment or was not previously part of an annual conference, 5% of local church operating income (see ¶ 349.3) as set by the Transitional Leadership Council or the respective annual conference."	Varies per annual conference. From 5110.D Annual conferences in the United States are expected to demonstrate fiscal viability by providing a workable budget, including a base remuneration for the superintendent that is appropriate for a church executive overseeing the number of direct reports and managing a budget the size the superintendent oversees. Each society shall contribute its proportion as adopted by the annual conference. The River Conference (TRC) uses a very simple formula for determining apportionment. They collect from all churches a simple 10% Tithe each month. The 10% is fair-shared - 6.8% TRC and 3.2% FMCUSA.

Property			
Does the local church own the building and other property it uses?	Yes, but it is held in trust to the UMC. from ¶2501) "...tangible and intangible property held at jurisdictional, annual, or district conference levels, or by a local church or charge, or by an agency or institution of the Church, shall be held in trust for The United Methodist Church and subject to the provisions of its Discipline. Titles are not held by The United Methodist Church (see ¶ 807.1) or by the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, but instead by the incorporated conferences..	Yes. from ¶902) "There is no trust clause for property held by local churches, annual conferences, regional conferences, connectional commissions, the Transitional Leadership Council, or any of their entities. Each local church, annual conference, regional conference, or connectional commission shall designate in its corporate records how its property shall be disposed of in the event of the entity's dissolution.	Yes, and the trust clause can be opted out of for newly affiliated churches. From ¶6400 "Churches who hold property at the time they join the Free Methodist Church may be given the option by the Board of Bishops, with legal counsel, whether or not to adopt the trust clause for their existing property."
Can the local church sell its properties without Denominational consent?	No. The sale of church property requires the consent of the District Superintendent. (see ¶2540 and ¶2541)	Yes, with approval by the pastor and charge conference. from ¶912.3) "Unless otherwise restricted by this Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline, the Board of Directors shall have the power to invest, reinvest, buy, sell, lease, transfer, and convey any and all assets that it may hold in trust, subject always to the terms of the legacy, devise, or donation. a. Before the Board of Directors (or equivalent body) of a local church conveys property, it must seek the approval of the charge conference. Approval requires a simple majority vote. Additionally, the appointed pastor must consent to the conveyance..	No, but may be waved when opting out of the trust clause. From ¶ 6410 the local Board of Administration may sell or encumber or otherwise dispose or convey church property by securing the consent of the superintendent and the Conference Administrative Committee in which the property lies and of the Board of Directors of the Free Methodist Church – USA,

Wesley Independent Methodist Church

Governing Body	Overseen by Administrative Board. Board can make all decisions except the following. Congregational vote is required for: Replacing Senior Pastor, taking on debt, amending church constitution, affiliating with a denomination.	Mission	To lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ by creating a church that the unchurched love to attend.
Governing Documents	Church constitution, articles of religion, and staff and membership covenant.		

Doctrine and Theology			
Are clergy and laity held accountable to the doctrinal standards?	Clergy and laity will be held accountable to the staff and membership covenant.	Are congregations held accountable to the doctrinal standards?	We will have to hold ourselves accountable to our own doctrinal standards
Human Sexuality			
Can a person who self-identifies as LGBTQ join the membership of the church?	Yes	Can an LGBTQ person become a pastor?	No
Can a person who is in a same-sex relationship get married in the church?	No		
Clergy			
Can a local church select its own pastor(s)?	Yes, by way of hiring team or using a hiring service.		
Finances			
How much apportionments will be required from the local church?	We would not pay apportionments. The church would designate a portion of its budget for local missions, disaster relief, and church/campus planting.		

Property			
Does the local church own the building and other property it uses?	Yes, free and clear.	Can the local church sell its properties without Denominational consent?	Yes, as we would not be tied to a denomination.