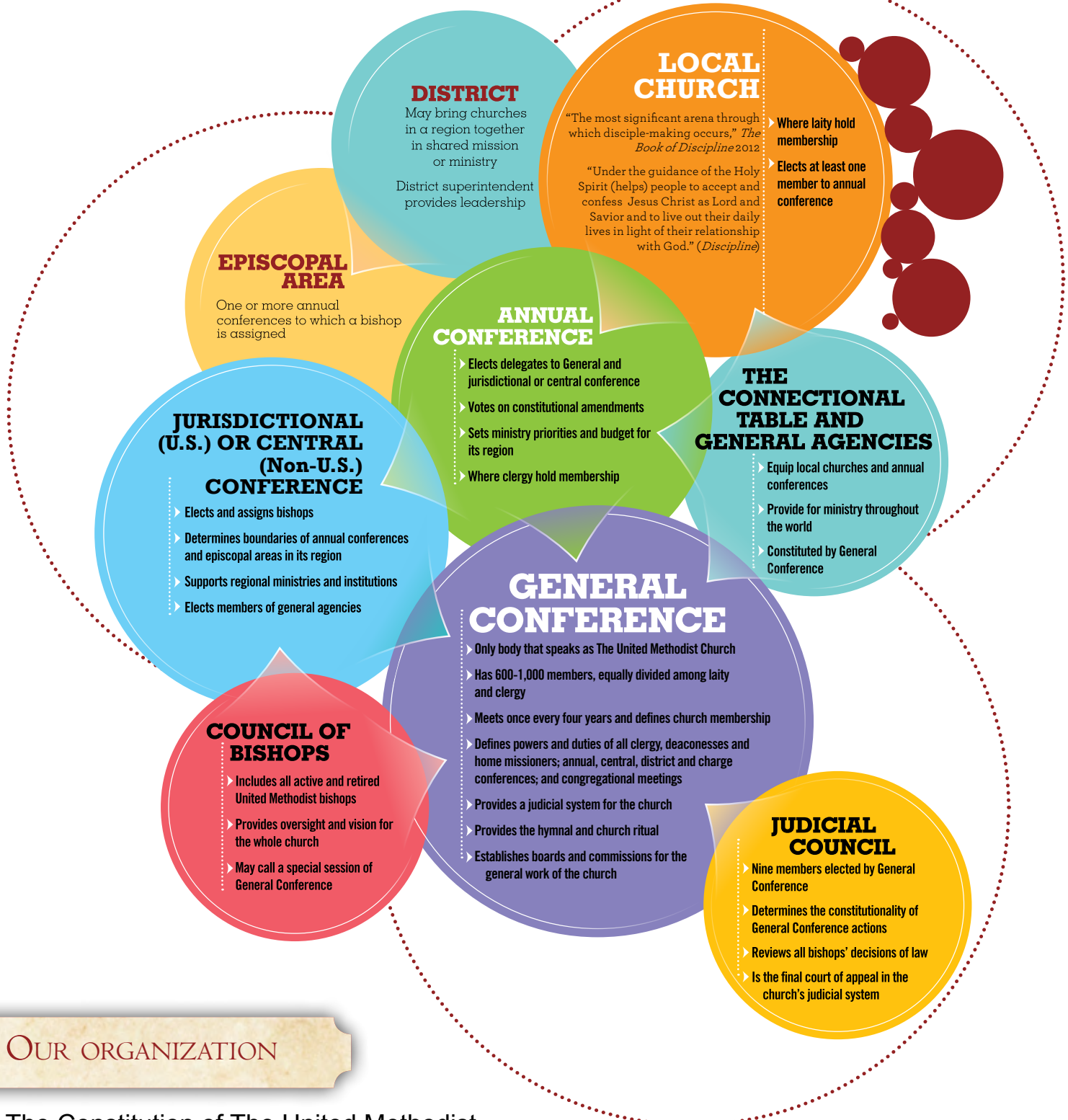


# UNITED METHODISTS: A Connected Church



## LOCAL CHURCH

"The most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs," *The Book of Discipline 2012*

"Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (helps) people to accept and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to live out their daily lives in light of their relationship with God." (*Discipline*)

Where laity hold membership

Elects at least one member to annual conference

## DISTRICT

May bring churches in a region together in shared mission or ministry

District superintendent provides leadership

## EPISCOPAL AREA

One or more annual conferences to which a bishop is assigned

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE

- ▶ Elects delegates to General and jurisdictional or central conference
- ▶ Votes on constitutional amendments
- ▶ Sets ministry priorities and budget for its region
- ▶ Where clergy hold membership

## JURISDICTIONAL (U.S.) OR CENTRAL (Non-U.S.) CONFERENCE

- ▶ Elects and assigns bishops
- ▶ Determines boundaries of annual conferences and episcopal areas in its region
- ▶ Supports regional ministries and institutions
- ▶ Elects members of general agencies

## THE CONNECTIONAL TABLE AND GENERAL AGENCIES

- ▶ Equip local churches and annual conferences
- ▶ Provide for ministry throughout the world
- ▶ Constituted by General Conference

## GENERAL CONFERENCE

- ▶ Only body that speaks as The United Methodist Church
- ▶ Has 600-1,000 members, equally divided among laity and clergy
- ▶ Meets once every four years and defines church membership
- ▶ Defines powers and duties of all clergy, deaconesses and home missionaries; annual, central, district and charge conferences; and congregational meetings
- ▶ Provides a judicial system for the church
- ▶ Provides the hymnal and church ritual
- ▶ Establishes boards and commissions for the general work of the church

## COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

- ▶ Includes all active and retired United Methodist bishops
- ▶ Provides oversight and vision for the whole church
- ▶ May call a special session of General Conference

## JUDICIAL COUNCIL

- ▶ Nine members elected by General Conference
- ▶ Determines the constitutionality of General Conference actions
- ▶ Reviews all bishops' decisions of law
- ▶ Is the final court of appeal in the church's judicial system

## OUR ORGANIZATION

The Constitution of The United Methodist Church is designed with checks and balances built into the structure to prevent any one branch from taking too much authority over the whole body.

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