



Special Edition Newsletter

September 12, 2024

OPEN HEARTS

OPEN MINDS

OPEN DOORS

Dear Beloved Church,

As we prepare to charter as a United Methodist Church, we will be dissolving the Leadership Team and establishing our new governing body. Most United Methodist churches are governed by a Church Council made up of mostly representatives from its administrative and ministry committees. In my experience – and perhaps yours as well – the large number of participants leads to cumbersome discussions and slow decision making. Additionally, Church Council meetings often become focused on reporting and administrative tasks, causing ministry to take a back seat. To address these challenges, the Leadership Team recommended a Board of Stewards model that better aligns with our goals as a new church. The United Methodist Book of Discipline (§247.2) allows alternative models of governance with the permission of the District Superintendent (DS).

Board of Stewards

Across from the Archives room in C-hall, you will find a picture of the first Board of Stewards for Trinity Methodist Church from 1946. I have been captivated by the name “Board of Stewards” for some time and believe it offers the best framework for Open Hearts UMC. It names the primary work of the governing body, which is to be stewards of the resources given to God through our church. And at Open Hearts, we believe that **stewardship is discipleship** because when we give God our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness, we live into the call of being disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Your Leadership Team has diligently and prayerfully developed this new governing model tailored to the unique needs of our congregation. The Board of Stewards includes the essential roles and positions required by the Book of Discipline, along with a few key discipleship lay leaders.

A Smaller, More Collaborative Body

The biggest difference between the Board and a Church Council is its limited size. The recommended size for the Board is between 12 and 15 members. Experts say a smaller governing body will help foster better cohesion, collaboration, and communication.

Groups of 12–15 are "still small enough to build trust and intimacy but large enough to offer diversity of opinion." – Priya Parker, *The Art of Gathering: How We Meet and Why It Matters*

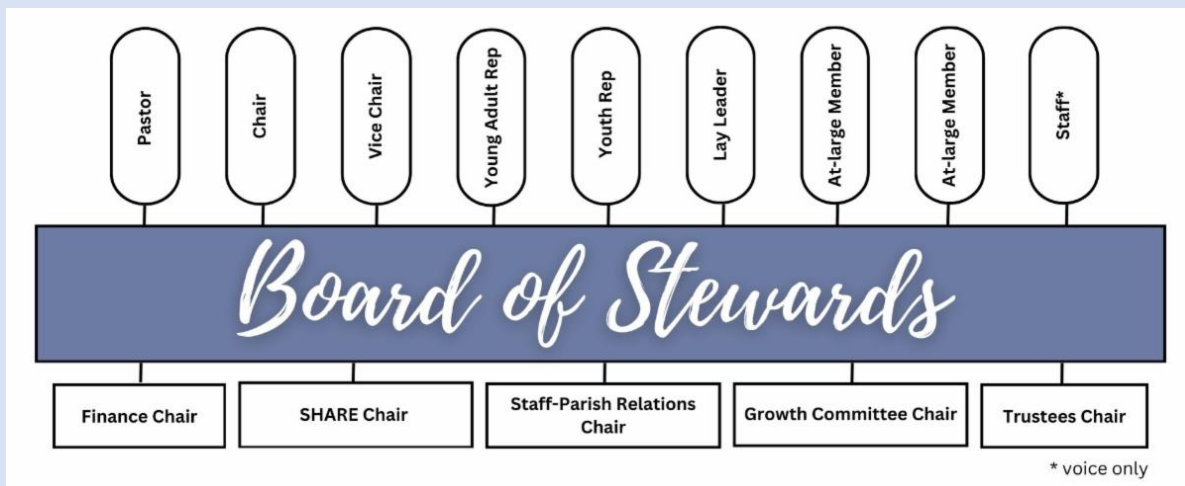
On a cohesive team, leaders are not there simply to represent the departments that they lead and manage but rather to solve problems that stand in the way of achieving success for the whole organization." – Patrick Lencioni, *The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business*

Although this model won't be official until we are chartered and hold our constituting charge conference, where we will present our recommendation to the District Superintendent to adopt the Board of Stewards model instead of the Church Council model, we will begin practicing it now. As we live into this model, if we discover that it does not best serve our congregation, we will revert to the familiar Church Council model.

In an effort to be transparent and to honor the trust you have put in me and your lay leaders, I've included many of the key points in this newsletter below as well as a link to our organizing documents. I am also happy to answer any of your questions in person or you may email me at karen.jones@openheartsumcsc.org.

Your partner in ministry,
Rev. Karen Jones

Discover more about the Board of Stewards below.



BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board of Stewards is responsible for the stewardship of resources such as people, funds, facilities, and ministries with the vision and mission of the church.

Strategic work – The board monitors trends in giving, professions of faith (membership), engagement in ministry and discipleship, and the development of new leaders, making adjustments as needed to align and optimize all of our resources.

Generative work – The board not only addresses immediate decisions but also proactively generates future-focused initiatives that advance the church toward its vision. This generative work involves discerning how to keep our ministries relevant to the world's needs and compelling to our mission field, requiring both prayerful discernment and cultural competency.

Administrative work – The board undertakes key administrative tasks, such as approving budgets and policies, to support the church's ministry. These activities are not the mission itself but are vital in serving and advancing the church's mission.

**This year there are Co-Chairs for the Board of Stewards as we practice this model. We foresee one Chair of this Board in the future.



BOARD MEMBERS

Coleman Shouse
*Co-Chair***

Lee Yarborough
*Co-Chair ***

Lynne Shackelford
Lay Leader

Pete Byford
SPRC Chair

Linda Sarratt
Finance Chair

Kathy McKinney
Trustees Chair

Pam Powell
SHARE Rep.

Tom Creech
Growth Chair

Kate Kitchens
Youth Rep.

Hunter Richardson
Young Adult Rep.

John Winn
At-large Member

Alex Burgin
At-large Member

Rev. Karen Jones
Pastor

Tish Oney
*Staff**

Jana Clack
*Staff**

*voice, no vote

KEEPING COMMITTEES CONNECTED

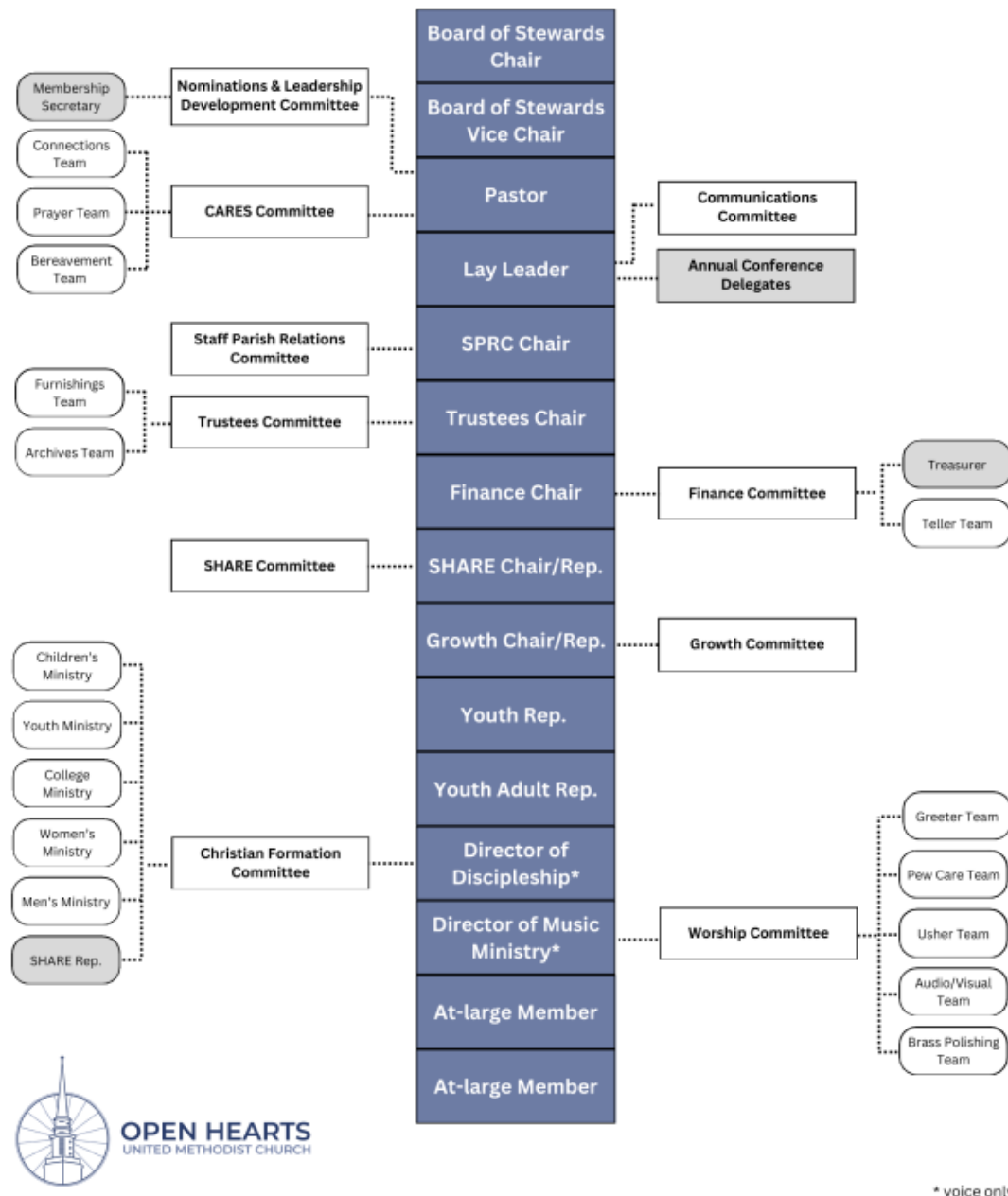
To address any concern about other voices and committees not being at the table in the Board of Stewards, there are a few structures built into this new model.

Liaison System – Every committee will have a liaison that is a Board member who attends meetings to help exchange information and resources.

Reporting System – Reports are collected from all committees before Board meetings for review.

Open Meetings – All meetings are open, and observers are welcome to attend. People can sign up in advance to have speaking time at Board Meetings

Open Hearts UMC Committee Organization and Liaison System to the Board



If you want to learn more about our Board of Stewards, you can view our organizing documents on our [website](#) under "Membership Resources" or view them [here](#).



After 16 months of dedicated service to planting this church and making sure we have strong roots from which to grow, the Leadership Team has completed its charge and is now dissolved. Please join us on Sunday, October 6th to thank them for their service and to commission all of our new leaders in the 11:00 AM worship service.

Leadership Team Members

Pete Byford
Sam Cely
Tom Creech
Matt Hawley
Matt Raven
Jenna Robinson
Linda Sarratt
Lynne Shackelford
Susan Way
Carol Wilson

Looking Ahead

Let Us Break Bread Together

We have started the meals for "Let Us Break Bread Together" ministry project and we hope that you will be our guest. Click [here](#) to learn more about it and to see updated information about the meals and hosts.

Sign up [Link](#)



Guest Preacher

Sunday, September 29th, 2024



Bishop Willimon

Retired Bishop of the North Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church, former Professor and Dean of the Chapel at Duke Divinity School, as well as a Greenville, SC Native.

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