

SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS GUIDE

August 2006 revision

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF WESTFORD

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Lay Leaders of the Congregation

The lay leaders of the congregation are the primary representatives of laity in the church. The leadership roles of these persons include:

- Acting as primary advocates for the laity
- Meeting regularly with the pastor to discuss issues that directly impact the congregation
- Recognizing, fostering awareness of and celebrating the ministries of all laity in daily life
- Taking advantage of training opportunities (e.g., lay speaker training) and extending these opportunities to all laity
- Serving as members of the following organizations:
 - ◆ Church Council
 - ◆ Charge Conference
 - ◆ Finance Committee
 - ◆ Pastor-Parish Relations Committee
 - ◆ Lay Leadership Committee (formerly the Nominations Committee)

United Methodist Women

United Methodist Women's mission is to develop a creative, supportive fellowship for all women; know God and experience freedoms as whole persons through Jesus Christ; and provide ongoing support to people in need within our own church, throughout our local area, and globally.

Responsibilities include:

- Encouraging the extension of the goals of the congregation through adult ministry
- Helping plan and carry out a varied and wide-ranging program with women, including worship, study, fellowship and service opportunities. Some examples of past activities have included the Agape Meal, progressive dinners and movie nights.

United Methodist Men

United Methodist Men supports fellowship among men to strengthen their spiritual life. This group addresses the concerns and conditions of the men in our community so that they may grow in their understanding of themselves and the Christian faith and that their quality of life may be improved.

Responsibilities include:

- Encouraging the extension the goals of the congregation through adult ministry
- Helping plan and carry out a varied and wide-ranging program with men, including worship, study, fellowship and service opportunities

In the past, the United Methodist Men have met once a week on Saturday mornings for fellowship. Meetings have often included guest speakers. The United Methodist Men chairperson is elected by the men of the congregation. Please let Pastor Kendall know if you are interested in this position.

Dear Friends,

Our church has many wonderful groups and committees that provide opportunities for service and fellowship. If you have not yet become a part of one of them, we hope that you will. In the past many have come forward and found the experience rewarding as they give of themselves for the benefit of our Christian family and the glory of God.

Your service is one very tangible way to make this church your Christian home. As with any home, God's church needs people to maintain its physical and spiritual structures. No special talents are required for you to be of real service. Cleaning, cooking and common household repairs; working with a budget; singing or playing music; buying flowers; greeting your friends; caring for and teaching children and others; sharing your faith through prayer and Bible studies - each of these essential tasks is required for our church to fully serve God and God's people. If you are willing and able to help, the committees in this handbook will be very happy to have you! The committee chairs and their contact information are included and most committee meetings are open to members of the congregation. Much of this information is also on the UMC of Westford's web site at:

www.umcw.org/umcw/index.htm

Please let us know if you would like to join one or more of the groups listed or to help in some other way. If you have questions about a committee or group, you can find out about it by contacting the committee chairperson or a member of the Committee on Lay Leadership. Contact information is included in this handbook.

It is possible that the need in a particular area may not be immediate and that some time may go by before you are contacted by the Committee on Lay Leadership. It is still very helpful for the committee to know if you have a particular interest, or a talent you are willing to share. We try very hard to

match the needs of the church with the talents of those who volunteer. It is also possible that although you would like to help, this may not be a time in your life when that is possible. If you are unable to serve now, but would like to in the future, remember that your help will be appreciated then, as well. Please consider letting the Committee on Lay Leadership know what area of our church's life you would like to participate in when the time is right for you.

We look forward to hearing from you and to serving with you!

The Committee on Lay Leadership

*Just as the Son of Man did not come
to be served, but to serve...*

MATTHEW 20:28

*Each one should use whatever gift he
has received to serve others,
faithfully administering God's grace
in its various forms.*

1 PETER 4:10

*May the God of Peace...equip you
with everything good for doing his
will, and may he work in us what is
pleasing to him, through Jesus
Christ, to whom be glory for ever
and ever. Amen.*

HEBREWS 13:20-21

Youth Groups

The Junior and Senior High Youth Groups support fellowship among our youth as they build relationships through Christ. The primary task of the Youth Groups leaders is to address the concerns and conditions of youth in our community so that they may grow in their understanding of themselves and the Christian faith so that their quality of life may be improved.

Responsibilities of the leaders include:

- Understanding the hopes, concerns and needs of the youth in our community to determine how they might serve one another as Christian disciples and good neighbors
- Helping plan and carry out a varied and wide-ranging program with youth—including settings for worship, study, fellowship and service

Adult Fellowship

The Adult Fellowship Committee plans 5 or 6 adult/family activities per year. It is our goal to bring members of our diverse church community together in Christian fellowship through a variety of group activities. We invite all adults to participate (and families for family events).

Communications

The Communications Committee works with the church staff and committees to ensure that the congregation and the community are informed of regular and special events in the life of the church.

Responsibilities include:

- Overseeing the communications from the congregation to its members and to the community (newsletters, bulletin boards, displays, etc.)
- Coordinating contacts between the congregations and the media in the community (newspapers, radio/TV, signs, etc.)
- Producing printed and video resources for the ministry and outreach of the congregation
- Communicating with people responsible for the district and conference newspapers
- Overseeing the administration of the church Web site
- Periodically updating this UMCW Service Organization Handbook

The communications committee meets on an “as needed” basis throughout the year.

Memorials

The Memorials Committee acknowledges memorial gifts and contributions and coordinates them with the needs of the church.

The Memorials Committee meets on an as needed basis.

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**Please refer to the Church Telephone Directory
for Contact Information on Committee Chairs, etc.**

Membership Care

The Membership Care Committee comforts and assists fellow Christians whenever they have spiritual, emotional, or physical needs. We bring God's grace to each person to whom we minister and celebrate the blessings God has given. We reach out to others through our words, actions and continuing care.

Responsibilities include:

- Providing visits to homes, hospitals and nursing homes
- Making phone contacts to those in need
- Praying about concerns and celebrations
- Making others aware of prayer concerns through email or phone calls
- Knitting Prayer Shawls (only basic knitting needed) for those who are seriously ill or suffered the loss of a loved one
- Audio taping or videotaping services
- Helping make phone calls to determine birthdays and anniversaries
- Helping with a resource library
- Delivering tapes of services to members without transportation
- Providing meals to those in need
- Providing transportation to those in need

The Membership Care Committee meets monthly. Subcommittees (centered around the topics mentioned above) meet as needed.

Additionally, the Trustees are responsible for several annual activities to benefit the church and always welcome assistance:

- Spring / Fall Cleanup
- Special Function Cleanup
- Snow / Ice Removal / Sanding (Sundays)

The Trustees generally select their own replacement members who are nominated to and elected by the Church Conference. Members serve for a three-year term.

Sub-Committees of Trustees

Kitchen Committee

The Kitchen Committee is a subcommittee of the Trustees. People on this committee coordinate meals for the annual suppers and special events in Fellowship Hall. All members of this committee have passed a certification exam given by the National Restaurant Association. All are welcome to take this eight-hour course. The Kitchen committee can specifically use volunteers to:

- Serve coffee after worship service
- Provide a store bought or homemade goodie for coffee hour
- Help prepare and serve food, setup and cleanup for dinners (e.g. Harvest Supper, Hanging of the Greens, Spaghetti Supper)

The kitchen committee meets about 4 times a year in preparation for activities.

Information Technology

The IT Subcommittee was chartered in 2003. It was established to oversee the church's entire IT infrastructure in order to eliminate duplication of effort, reduce expenditures and maintain a current level of technical capability. Management of the subcommittee is with the Trustees. They will oversee any recommended changes, purchases, capability upgrades, etc to any of the church's IT systems and/or components, e.g. TV, VCR, Sound Systems, Computers, Software Printers Phones, Intercoms, cameras.

The Church Council

The Church Council serves as the administrative agency for the Charge Conference by providing for the planning and implementing of programs of nurture, outreach, witness and resources for the entire church.

The Church Council is composed of the chairs of the various standing committees and the trustees of the church, the lay leaders, UMYF and adult fellowship leaders, members at large representing the youth, young adults and senior adults, the treasurer and the pastor. Membership is set by the annual Charge Conference. There are currently 27 positions represented on the Church Council.

The Church Council meets monthly on the third Monday of each month at 7:30 PM in the overflow room at the back of the Sanctuary. Any member of the church may attend, although only members of the Church Council may vote on motions brought before the Council.

Lay Leadership/Nominations

The Committee on Lay Leadership (often referred to as the "Nominations Committee") is elected each year by the Charge Conference, and members serve three-year terms. The Committee encourages lay members to put their faith into action through service. The Committee seeks out members of the congregation who are willing to fulfill the responsibilities of either serving on committees or of leading those committees. The Committee on Lay Leadership is led by the pastor (the chairperson), a vice-chairperson, and up to nine elected members. The Lay Leaders of the congregation are also members of this committee. Those who serve on this committee must be nominated from the floor of the Charge Conference, and members may not succeed themselves.

Pastor Parish Relations

The Pastor Parish Relations Committee cares for both the paid church staff and the congregation by ensuring that the needs of each are communicated to the other with compassion and respect.

The responsibilities of the committee include:

- Understanding the feelings and desires of the congregation about the pastor's leadership and appointment
- Working with the district superintendent and/or the bishop in an advisory capacity in matters pertaining to clergy leadership
- Recommending staff positions
- Discussing with the pastor and staff the personnel conditions that affect the congregation's total ministry
- Counseling with the pastor and staff about priorities for the use of the gifts, skills and time
- Identifying continuing education needs and supporting and encouraging continuing education and spiritual renewal for the pastor and staff
- Maintaining job descriptions for the paid church staff

The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee meets quarterly.

Trustees

The Board of Trustees manages the church's property, equipment and investments to support the vision of the United Methodist Church of Westford.

The responsibilities of the trustees include:

- Overseeing and supervising the purchase, use and maintenance of all church real property, equipment and supplies
- Acting as the church's representative in all matters pertaining to leasing church facilities and negotiating rental agreements
- Receiving and administering all gifts that are made to the church
- Ensuring all church property and activities are adequately insured
- Ensuring that the Articles of Incorporation are kept current
- Ensuring that the trust funds received by the church are invested properly
- Reporting annually to the Charge Conference
- Submitting to the Finance Committee annual budget requests for real property maintenance, improvements, upgrades and new property purchases

The Trustees frequently accomplish much of the required facility maintenance themselves or oversee the assistance by members of the congregation. They are always looking for volunteers to help out and welcome assistance in any of the following areas:

- Electrical / Plumbing
- Painting / Carpentry (general construction and/or finish work)
- Heating / Air Conditioning
- Landscape Maintenance / Planting
- Bricklaying / Tile work
- Capital Equipment Maintenance
- Real Estate / Lease Agreements
- Information Technology

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- Bell Choir—The Bell Choir plays our three-octave set of handbells at Sunday worship services about once a month, September to mid-June. Rehearsals are held in the sanctuary Thursday evenings from 7:30-8:30 PM. With no prior ringing experience necessary, all adults are welcome to join in our handbell ministry. The group enjoys Christian fellowship while striving to enhance worship with the musical dimension of ensemble ringing.
- Special Music—During the summer months when the choirs are on hiatus, the church looks to members of its congregation to provide the music for the service. If you or anyone you know has a musical talent you would like to share, please consider providing music for a worship service.

Finance

The Finance Committee provides general oversight and guidance concerning the finances of the church. Specifically, the Finance Committee is responsible for developing, implementing and maintaining programs for receiving, counting, accounting for and disbursing funds of this congregation and its committees.

The members of the Finance Committee include the Pastor, the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, the Church Council Chair, the Representative of the Trustees, Lay Member to Annual Conference, Lay Leaders, the Finance Committee Chair and the Representative of the PPR Committee.

The Financial Secretary collects the offering, records the information by account and individual, makes the deposit in the bank and transfers the information to the Treasurer. Confidential records are maintained of all individual contributions and quarterly and annual statements are distributed.

The Treasurer keeps all financial records in accordance with good accounting principles. Formal monthly financial reports are assembled and reviewed at the monthly Finance meetings and Church Council meetings. The Treasurer works continuously with the various committees to assist them with any disbursements that are needed.

Each year the Finance Committee prepares and submits an annual budget to the Church Council and to the congregation. This is accomplished by seeking input from all Committee Chairs to determine their anticipated expenses required to accomplish their missions. An annual Pledge Drive is conducted and a budget is finalized after carefully matching revenue to expenses.

Making Connections

The Evangelism Committee shares the Good News by reaching out and welcoming people into our church. The group ensures that the congregation reaches out to prospective members in the community with the good news of Jesus Christ and integrates them into our church so that they may develop a relationship with God and live as Christian disciples.

The primary responsibilities of this committee include:

- Working with the pastor and the church council to make evangelism a vital part of the congregation's ministry
- Welcoming visitors to the church on Sundays, explaining the current church organization and programs and making them feel welcome so that they will want to return
- Establishing programs that will encourage prospective members to visit and eventually join our church family
- Working with the congregation to keep an updated prospect file

- Hanging of the Greens—Coordinate this yearly decorating of the church at Christmastime or just help out
- Ushers—Welcome parishioners to the worship service, help them to their seats, coordinate offering collection
- Greeters—Welcome people as they arrive, distribute the bulletin, may assist the ushers with Communion and collections.
- Acolytes—Light the altar candles at the beginning of each church service
- Liturgists—Lead responsive readings, prayers and scripture lessons during worship; help the pastor with communion (first Sunday of each month)

Our church is also blessed with an inspiring musical ministry. If your interest lies in one of these areas, please contact the appropriate choir director.

- Adult Choir—The Adult Choir sings at each church service from September to mid-June, except for those services when the Youth or Bell Choirs perform. The Adult Choir rehearses from 8:45 to 9:15 AM before the service. The regular weekly choir practice is 11:00 to 12:15 after the Sunday service. Each year the Adult Choir performs a major choral piece at a special worship service. Recent works have included Faure's *Requiem*, Vivaldi's *Gloria* and Schubert's *Mass in G*.
- Youth Choir—The Youth Choir welcomes youth in first grade and up. The Youth Choir sings at Sunday worship services about six or seven times a year. Rehearsals are held after worship service on Sundays from 11:00-11:30 AM. Singers in grade six and up have the option of staying an additional fifteen minutes to work on special music. The Youth Choir provides youth with the opportunity to learn music that can encourage their faith in a loving and fun environment. It also gives youth the opportunity to minister to others through their music.

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Worship

The Worship Committee creates opportunities to respond to God and collaborates with the minister and music leaders in planning worship. The committee works with the pastor and music leaders to provide worship services that will help the congregation experience its relationship with God and will help it live more faithfully as a Christian community.

We provide a forum to coordinate and share ideas among the various components that plan worship—music, communion, flowers, altar care, etc—and oversee the purchase of any needs related to worship (e.g. hymnals).

Responsibilities include:

- Coordinating and sharing ideas among the various components that plan worship (e.g. music, flowers, communion, altar care, etc.)
- Overseeing the purchase of any needs related to worship (e.g. hymnals)
- Ensuring that there are floral decorations weekly, recognizing memorials and special events and assisting with seasonal decorations in the sanctuary and church
- Coordinating the performances of the choirs, special services like Christmas Eve services and events like Hanging of the Greens

Some of the ways you can serve include:

- Altar Care—Ensure that the altar is prepared before worship service (e.g. adjust the cross height, check to make sure the candles are set, lay out the appropriate cloth, etc.)
- Coordination of Acolytes, Liturgists and Greeters
- Flower Committee—Coordinate the giving of flowers each week
- Communion Steward—Make sure that the bread and wine/ juice are appropriately prepared before communion service and cleaned up afterwards

Missions

In the spirit of Christian fellowship, the UMCW Missions Committee provides support, nourishment, and help to those in need. Specifically, the committee is responsible for several ongoing programs including:

- Eliot Church (Soup Kitchen)—Once a month, the UMCW is responsible for procuring food, preparing meals and serving them at the Eliot Church soup kitchen in Lowell. Assistance is needed in purchasing, preparing and serving food.
- Birthday Party for Jesus—Social service entities serving families in Lowell and local families-in-need benefit from donations of gift certificates, new clothing and toys made possible by the generosity of our congregants during Advent. Past recipients include residents at Pawtucket House shelter, Merrimack House shelter, Alternative House (serving women and children who are victims of domestic violence) and My Father's House (serving needs of young mothers). Volunteers are responsible for choosing the organizations, coordinating with them on their gift requests, preparing ornaments for the Christmas tree with the gift requests attached, gathering the gifts and then disbursing them to the organizations.
- Food Collection for Area Food Pantries—The congregation is encouraged to bring food to church each Sunday and place it in the missions basket near the main entrance. This food is distributed weekly to the Westford and Lowell Food Pantries.
- Heifer Project International—Traditionally a program designed to involve UMC Youth, this global ministries project is dedicated to bringing livestock and teaching animal husbandry to poor communities.
- Lowell Cluster Representative—Generating and sponsoring activities and programs jointly offered by area United Methodist churches.

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- Other—The Missions Committee also supports many other missions projects including the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), Community Teamwork (Merrimack & Pawtucket Houses), Life Savers Ministries, the Protestant Campus Ministry at UMass Lowell, Habitat for Humanity and a preschool in Quillota, Chile. We welcome your ideas and support on new programs.

Christian Education Committee

The Christian Education Committee's (CEC) vision is to create an environment that facilitates the congregation's spiritual growth and relationship with Jesus Christ. The CEC's mission is to make disciples.

The CEC plans educational ministries for persons of all ages so they will have opportunities to seek to know God and discover ways to live as Christian disciples. Through Christian Education we invite people and communities of faith to be transformed as they are inspired and challenged to:

- Know and experience God through Jesus Christ,
- Claim and live God's promises and
- Grow and serve as Christian disciples.

The CEC team sets a 3-year vision to plan the educational ministries to help children, youth and adults grow in:

- Knowledge of the Scripture and tradition,
- Skills in practicing the means of grace and
- Abilities to live as accountable disciples.

Opportunities for you to be involved in Christian Education:

- Sunday School Teacher
- Babies Nest Teacher
- Small Group Leader
- Adult Education Teacher
- Committee Member
- Participate in small group Bible Studies
- Participate in Sunday School
- Church Library
- Participate in Vacation Bible School