

# How Are We Connected?

The United Methodist Church has evolved from what had been a tightly bound network of Methodist societies focused intently on forming accountable disciples of Jesus who were actively growing in faithfulness and “watching over one another in love.” It has grown into highly connected worldwide denomination that includes congregations, small groups for accountable discipleship, and networks of educational, health care, missionary, advocacy, and international aid organizations that express the same passion to “reform the church and spread scriptural holiness” across all the lands where we are in mission.

Connection has always been at the heart of Methodism. Today it continues to be found most notably in shared funding, the formation and deployment of clergy within annual conferences and beyond, our polity grounded in bringing people together for decisions that affect us all in a region or churchwide (conferencing), and through our shared giving toward the ministries that extend well beyond our local churches (apportionments, Special Sundays and The Advance).

Local churches are also connections themselves — connections to each other within the local body, connected by being part of districts and their annual conference, and a rich source of connections for the communities where they gather. Each United Methodist in each local church is connected to every other United Methodist in every other United Methodist local church worldwide, as well as the wider networks of institutions we have created together and new mission efforts we pioneer, in accomplishing our mission: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

