

General Conference

As the primary legislative body, General Conference is the only entity with the authority to speak on behalf of the entire United Methodist Church. General Conference meets every four years to consider the business and mission of the Church. An equal number of lay and clergy delegates are elected from United Methodist conferences around the world to decide matters of policy and procedure for the denomination.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused the postponement of General Conference three times. Starting later this month, delegates from all over the world will gather for General Conference from April 23-May 3, 2024 in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Jurisdictional Conferences

There are five geographic jurisdictions, or regions, in the United States, which are comprised of eight to 15 annual conferences each.

Central Conferences

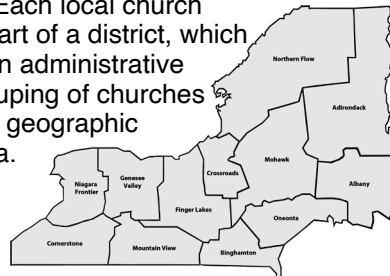
In Africa, Europe, and the Philippines, there are seven geographical regions, called Central Conferences, each of which is comprised of annual conferences and divided into several episcopal areas.

Annual Conferences

The annual conference is a geographical entity, an organizational body (made up of elected lay and clergy members), and a yearly meeting. It is the fundamental body of The United Methodist Church (*Book of Discipline* ¶ 11).

Districts

Each local church is part of a district, which is an administrative grouping of churches in a geographic area.



Meet the Upper New York delegates

Use the camera on your mobile device and scan the QR code to learn about the elected Upper New York delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences.



“At every level of the connection, church leaders and members come together in conversation, or conferencing, to discuss important issues and discover God’s will for the church.”

Read more on page 3

What’s inside

- 2 | Life after Easter
- 3 | The structure of The United Methodist Church
- 4 | Meet the Upper New York delegates

The Upper New York Conference’s vision is to live the gospel of Jesus Christ and to be God’s love with our neighbors in all places.

www.facebook.com/uppernewyork www.instagram.com/uppernewyork

The Bridge is a Conference Communications Ministry tool that delivers to local churches news and stories of ministry from around the Upper New York Conference and the world. For more news and stories visit: www.unyumc.org





Easter is more than just one day

Easter for Christians is not just one day, but rather a 50-day period. The season of Easter, or Eastertide, begins at sunset on the eve of Easter and ends on Pentecost, the day we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church (see Acts 2).

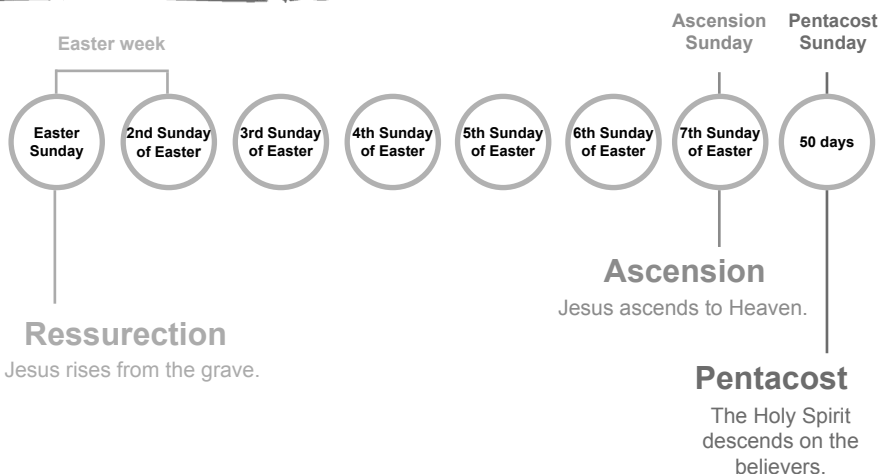
Easter is also more than just an extended celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. In the early church, Lent was a season for new converts to learn about the faith and prepare for baptism on Easter Sunday. The initial purpose of the 50-day Easter season was to

continue the faith formation of new Christians.

This extended season gives us time to rejoice and experience what it means when we say Christ is risen. It's the season when we remember our baptisms and how through this sacrament we are, according to the liturgy, "incorporated into Christ's mighty acts of salvation." As "Easter people," we also celebrate and ponder the birth of the Church and gifts of the Spirit (Pentecost), and how we are to live as faithful disciples of Christ.

WHAT IS EASTERTIDE?

Eastertide is the 50 day period from Easter Sunday to Pentecost.



The United Methodist Connection

You are a member of a church that is part of a district within the Upper New York Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, which is in the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference, which is one region of annual conferences within The United Methodist General Conference. What does this mean exactly?

It is all about "The Connection."

The United Methodist structure and organization began as a means of accomplishing the mission of spreading scriptural holiness. Methodism's founder, John Wesley, recognized the need for an organized system of communication and accountability and developed what he called the "connexion," a network of classes, societies, and annual conferences.

Today, our denomination continues to be organized in a "connectional" system, which "enables us to carry out our

mission in unity and strength" (*Book of Discipline* ¶ 701). Every local church is linked to an interconnected network of organizations that join in mission and ministry, allowing us to accomplish more than any local church or person could alone.

Within the connectional structure of The United Methodist Church, Conferences provide the primary groupings of people and churches for discernment and decision-making. Wesley described Christian conferencing as a spiritual discipline through which God's grace may be revealed. At every level of the connection, church leaders and members come together in conversation, or conferencing, to discuss important issues and discover God's will for the church. The word "conference" thus refers to both the assembly and organization of people as well as the process of discerning God's call together.

Continued on page 4