



2024 SIMPLIFIED CHURCH STRUCTURE BY-LAWS VANCOUVER HEIGHTS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

VHUMC Mission Statement:

As a fellowship of United Methodists we work to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World. We take the Bible seriously and appreciate that it is best interpreted in the context of tradition, experience and reason. We have an intentional emphasis to those who are often marginalized and have been intentionally reconciling to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and plus individuals since 1996. Each Sunday we affirm that we are each, "A beloved child of God and a beauty to behold".

VHUMC Reconciling Statement

Vancouver Heights United Methodist Church publicly affirms its ministry with the whole family of God and intentionally welcomes every person, regardless of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, family situation, national origin, ethnic background, handicapping condition, or economic status.

A. CHURCH COUNCIL

1. The members of our Church Council are nominated (per Book of Discipline) by the Nominations & Leadership Development committee which is chaired by the church's pastor. The slate of nominees is presented and elected at the church's annual Charge Conference. Other nominations can be made from the floor at that time.
2. The Church Council will consist of 9-13 members which includes: 2-3 representatives from Trustees Ministry, 2-3 representatives from Staff Parish Relations Ministry, 2-3 representatives from Finance Ministry, 3 at large members from the congregation, the chairperson and the lead Pastor.
3. No two members may be of the same immediate family, nor may they be staff members (other than the lead pastor), unless it cannot be avoided. Any member serving will recuse themselves on issues, votes or concerns related to family members.
4. For the purpose of voting, members of the Church Council will also serve as voting representatives of the Trustee, Staff-Parish Relation, the Finance ministries and the At-Large Members.
5. When Church Council members meet, they can conduct business pertinent to any of the above committees. The agenda is set ahead of time by the Council chair and pastor, in consultation with the members.

6. The chair of the council will also chair the agenda of the other administrative ministries listed, in part A section 4. Each administrative ministry may choose to have a separate representative to the church council that handles the business related to that particular area.

7. The Council secretary will indicate in the meeting minutes when the group is moving from one committee's agenda to another committee's agenda.

a. Church Council minutes should be completed and sent to chairperson, pastor, and all council members within 7 days.

8. The meetings and minutes are open to the public, with the exception of the Staff- Parish Relations Ministry, which are kept confidential.

a. Church Council By-Laws as well as all meeting minutes will be published on the VHUMC website and made available to the congregation.

B. NOMINATIONS & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

9. The Nomination & Leadership Development Committee members are nominated and elected using the same process as the Church Council. They must be committed to the wellbeing and best interest of the church, and all persons will be interviewed by the Pastor or their designee, and one should be a young adult or youth member at large.

C. MEMBERSHIP TERMS & QUORUM

10. Members of all the administrative ministries, including Nominations & Leadership Development, are elected for three-year terms and are placed in three different classes so that only a third are leaving the committee in any given year, unless needed or asked to serve additional years. This will then be on a year-by-year basis.

a. Nominations & Leadership Committee will be tracking terms of all persons on Church Council, Finance & Stewardship, Trustee Ministry, Staff Parish Relations, and our Congregational Representatives. They will ensure that these persons represent all demographics of the congregation considering diversity, equity and inclusion. These persons must be committed to the well-being and best interest of the church.

11. The Church Council will meet at least once quarterly or as needed.

12. A quorum for the unified Council is members present and voting, except for Trustees matters¹.

a. A quorum of 2/3 is required with a minimum of one representative from each ministry to be present.

b. A quorum for trustee matters will require 2/3 of their ministry to be present.

c. For both Church Council and Trustee Ministry matters committee members must be present to vote, there is no voting in absentia.

D. INDIVIDUAL ADMINISTRATIVE MINISTRIES

13. The Board of Trustees must meet a minimum of once per quarter and as often as determined by their ministry Coordinator to Church Council or leader. Its members may serve for a three-year term, and they may serve more than three years if the church permits and if approved by and/or requested by the Nominations & Leadership Development Committee. The Coordinator to Church Council must be a church member and two-thirds of the remaining ministry must be church members.

a. Under the leadership of the Coordinator to Church Council the Trustee Ministry has the authority to purchase supplies for building maintenance and improvement up to \$5,000 without additional approval. The Trustee Ministry leader can authorize purchases for building maintenance and improvement up to \$5,000. Any purchases over \$5,000 need to be approved unless the expenditure is already approved in a capital expenditure line item in the approved budget (see section B).

b. Any single purchase or expenditure over \$5,000 must have the approval of the church council, the church treasurer will be notified for consultation. The treasurer does not approve or deny purchases but rather verifies that any purchases of the church will not create cash flow issues within the budget appropriation. If an emergency arises, the Trustee coordinator or their designee, has authority to make purchases for the safety and betterment of the church.

14. The Staff Parish-Relations Ministry must meet every 3 months. Its members may serve a three-year term. They may serve additional three-year terms years, if the church permits, and if approved by and/or requested by the Nominations & Leadership Development Committee. Members must be church members. No staff (other than the lead pastors) or immediate family members of staff may serve, nor

may more than one person from a family residing in the same household, unless it cannot be avoided. Any member serving will recuse themselves on issues, votes or concerns related to family members.

15. The Finance Committee will meet quarterly simultaneously with the Church Council. Financial reports and updates will be generated and sent out monthly to all Church Council members. Members include the church council chairperson, pastor and/or lay leader, financial secretary, treasurer, auditor, and all members serving on church council. There is no term limit. If the above positions are filled with staff members, they have voice but no vote. The financial secretary and treasurer may not be the same person, nor may they be of the same immediate family.

E. FISCAL YEAR

16. The church's fiscal year will be denoted as the calendar year.

F. CHURCH MINISTRIES

17. The pastor and/or Church Council may establish church ministries, work areas, teams, or task forces to help accomplish the church's mission as deemed necessary.

18. The leader of these ministry groups, in consultation with the pastor, will be responsible for determining their groups' members and their tenures. It could be short-term or with no term limit.

19. The lead pastor is responsible for managing the church's ministries, making sure that their efforts are aligned with the church's mission and vision. Therefore, they are responsible for supervising all ministry group coordinators as well as paid and unpaid staff. The Church Council is responsible for holding the lead pastor accountable to this task.

G. CHARGE CONFERENCE

20. A Charge Conference is convened by the Conference Superintendent annually where the church's officers are elected, and the pastor's salary is approved. It is also where candidates for ministry are recommended. It approves the removal of people from the membership rolls after they have been listed as inactive members for over a period of two or more consecutive years. The church will attempt to reach out to said members via letter prior to consideration of removal. Membership consists of Church Council members and active and retired clergy.

H. ALL-CHURCH MEETING

21. An All-Church Meeting is convened by the lead pastor for church issues or for informational purposes that are deemed necessary to be brought to the congregation. If voting is required at an All-Church Meeting membership will be notified prior to the church meeting.

I. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

22. The pastor is responsible for determining when a person is ready for church membership. A member can be removed for chargeable offenses as listed in The Book of Discipline, following the process it provides.

1. QUORUM DEFINED: THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS THAT IS REQUIRED TO BE PRESENT AT A GIVEN MEETING TO VOTE ON NEEDED BUSINESS. A QUORUM OF 2/3 IS REQUIRED WITH A MINIMUM OF ONE REPRESENTATIVE FROM EACH MINISTRY TO BE PRESENT. A QUORUM FOR TRUSTEE MATTERS WILL REQUIRE 2/3 OF THEIR MINISTRY TO BE PRESENT (DURING MEETING SEPARATE FROM CHURCH COUNCIL). THERE IS NO VOTING ABSENTIA.

DATE APPROVED AND PRESENTED:

PASTOR SIGNATURE:

CHURCH COUNCIL CHAIR SIGNATURE:

Resources:

Meriam-Webster Dictionary (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/quorum>)

The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2016