

Frequently Asked Questions

UMC Bishops and the Judicial Council

As of Dec 16, 2019

What is a Bishop?

Bishops are ordained elders of the United Methodist Church nominated by the delegates of an annual conference and then elected by the delegates of the Jurisdictional Conference as needed. In the UMC, bishops serve as administrative and pastoral superintendents of the church. A Bishop presides over each Annual Conference.

What is the College of Bishops?

A College of Bishops refer to all Bishops within a specific jurisdiction.

What is the Council of Bishops?

The Council of Bishops is composed of all the elected bishops in the United Methodist Church worldwide.

What does a Bishop do in the UMC?

Once a bishop is elected, he is assigned to an annual conference, or in some cases, to more than one annual conference. Bishops are assigned to administer an area other than within which his or her membership was most recently held. Bishops preside over the Annual Conference they are assigned to, they rule on questions of church law at the Annual Conference, and generally supervise and assign pastors to the various local churches in the Annual Conference.

Who is Bethany's Bishop?

The Bishop of the Rio Texas Conference, is Bishop Rev. Robert Schnase.

What is the Judicial Council?

The Judicial Council is similar to the Supreme Court of the United States government. It is made up of 9 members of clergy and laity, and serves as the highest judicial body in the UMC. They are elected by the General Conference and normally meet twice a year to consider whether actions of the various church bodies adhere to the constitution and follow the rules outlined in the Book of Discipline. The Judicial Council has authority to determine the constitutionality of any act of the General Conference, to hear and determine any appeal from a bishop's decision on a question of law made in the annual conference, to rule on decisions of law made by bishops in annual conferences, to hear and determine the legality of any action by any General Conference, jurisdictional or central conference board or body, and to have such other duties and powers as may be conferred upon it by the General Conference.

How might I learn more about the Bishops and the Judicial Council?

The UMC website has extensive information about the structure of the church. <https://www.umc.org/>

In addition, you can find more information about our Bishops at <https://www.unitedmethodistbishops.org/>

Visit <https://www.umc.org/en/who-we-are/structure/judicial-council> to learn more about the Judicial Council.