

The following article was requested by the Church Council at its **June 19, 2006** meeting. The purpose of the article is to show the process a church must go through to remodel/reconstruct or build new. All information below is paragraph 2543 from *The Book of Discipline* of the United Methodist Church (2004).

**Planning and Financing Requirements for Local Church Buildings** – If any local church desires to:

- a) build a new church, a new educational building, or a new parsonage;
- b) purchase a church, educational building, or parsonage: or
- c) remodel an existing church, an existing educational building, or an existing parsonage where the cost of the remodeling will exceed 10 percent of the value of the existing structure, then the local church shall first establish a study committee to:

- (1) analyze the needs of the church and community;
- (2) project the potential membership with average attendance;
- (3) write up the church's program of ministry (inserted from paragraphs 201-204)

**(Definition of a local church** – The local church provides the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs. It is a community of true believers under the Lordship of Christ. It is the redemptive fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by persons divinely called and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, the church exists for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, and the redemption of the world.

**The Function of the Local Church**-The church of Jesus Christ exists in and for the world. It is primarily at the level of the local church that the church encounters the world. The local church is a strategic base from which Christians move out to the structures of society. The function of the local church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is to help people to accept and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to live their daily lives in light of their relationship with God. Therefore, the local church is to minister to persons in the community where the church is located, to provide appropriate training and nurture to all, to cooperate in ministry with other local churches, to defend God's creation and live as an ecologically responsible community, and to participate in the worldwide mission of the church, as minimal expectations of an authentic church.

**Relation to the Wider Church**- The local church is a connectional society of persons who have been baptized, have professed their faith in Christ, and have assumed the vows of membership in The United Methodist Church. They gather in fellowship to hear the Word of God, receive the sacraments, praise and worship the triune God, and carry forward the work that Christ has committed to his church. Such a society of believers, being within The United Methodist Church and subject to its Discipline, is also an inherent part of the church universal, which is composed of all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and which in the Apostles' Creed we declare to be the holy catholic church.

**Care of members**- Each local church shall have a definite evangelistic, nurture, and witness responsibility for its members and the surrounding area and a missional outreach responsibility to the local and global community. It shall be responsible for ministering to all its members, wherever they live, and for persons who choose it as their church.); and

- (4) develop an accessibility plan including chancel areas.

--- The information and findings obtained by the study committee shall:

- (a) form the basis of a report to be presented to the charge conference;
- (b) be used by the building committee; and

(c) become a part of the report to the district board of church location and building.

1. After the study committee finishes its work, the local church shall secure the written consent of the pastor and the district superintendent to the building project, purchase proposal, or remodeling project.
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October 15, 2007 report by [Exploration Committee](#) fits here. The ideal of feasibility turns to action following this point.

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2. In the case of a building project or purchase proposal, the local church shall secure the approval of the proposed site by the district board of church location and building as provided in the Discipline. (Inserted from paragraph 2419 – **Duties and Responsibilities of the District Boards of Church Location and Building**---1. Local Church Building Sites and Plans---The board of church location and building shall investigate all proposed local church building sites, ascertaining that such sites are properly located for the community to be served and adequate in size to provide space for future expansion and parking facilities.)
3. The charge conference of the local church shall authorize the building project, purchase proposal, or remodeling project at a regular or called meeting. Notice of the meeting and the proposed action shall have been given for not less than ten days prior to the charge conference (except as local laws may otherwise provide) from the pulpit or in the weekly bulletin.
  - a) After approving a building project or a remodeling project, the charge conference shall elect a building committee of not fewer than three members of the local church to serve in the development of the project as hereinafter set forth; provided that the charge conference may commit to its board of trustees the duties of the building committee.
  - b) After approving a purchase proposal, the charge conference shall be deemed to have authorized and directed the board of trustees to proceed with the purchase. (Section on purchase of parsonage omitted here)
4. The building committee shall:
  - a) use the information and findings of the study committee and any other relevant information to estimate carefully the building facilities needed, as the case may be, to house the church's program of worship, education, and fellowship or to provide for the present and future pastors and their families;
  - b) ascertain the cost of any property to be purchased; and
  - c) develop preliminary architectural plans that:
    - (1) comply with local building, fire, and accessibility codes;
    - (2) clearly outline the location on the site of all proposed present and future construction; and
    - (3) provide adequate facilities for parking, entrance, seating, rest rooms, and accessibility for persons with disabilities, but providing for such adequate facilities shall not apply in the case of a minor remodeling project;
  - d) (omitted – deals with parsonage)
  - e) Secure an estimate of the cost of the proposed construction;
  - f) Develop a financial plan for defraying the total cost, including an estimate of the amount the membership can contribute in cash and pledges and the amount the local church and borrow if necessary.

5. The building committee shall submit to the district board of church location and building for its consideration and preliminary approval:
  - a) a statement of the need for the proposed facilities;
  - b) the preliminary architectural plans, including accessibility plans;
  - c) the preliminary cost estimate; and
  - d) the preliminary financial plan.
6. After preliminary approval by the district board of church location and building, the pastor, with the written consent of the district superintendent, shall call a church conference, giving not less than ten days' notice (except as local laws may otherwise provide) of the meeting and the proposed action from the pulpit or in the weekly bulletin. At the church conference, the building committee shall present:
  - a) the preliminary architectural plans;
  - b) the preliminary cost estimate;
  - c) the preliminary financial plan; and
  - d) the building committee's recommendation.

A majority vote of the membership present and voting at the church conference shall be required to approve the preliminary architectural plans, cost estimate, and financial plan and the building committee's recommendation.

7. After approval by the church conference, the building committee shall develop detailed plans and specifications and secure a reliable and detailed estimate of cost, which shall be presented for approval to the charge conference and to the district board of church location and building.

8. After approval by the charge conference and district board of church location and building, the building committee may begin the building project or remodeling project. Written documentation substantiating the approvals of the charge conference and the district board of church location and building shall be lodged with the district superintendent and the secretary of the charge conference.

9. In metropolitan areas, the building committee shall ensure that adequate steps are taken to obtain the services of minority (nonwhite) and female skilled persons in the construction in proportion to the racial and ethnic balance in the area. In non-metropolitan areas, the building committee shall ensure that racial and ethnic persons are employed in the construction where available and in relation to the available workforce.

10. The local church shall acquire a fee simple title to the lot or lots on which any building is to be erected. The deed or conveyance shall be executed as provided in this chapter. It is recommended that contracts on property purchased by a local church be contingent upon the securing of a guaranteed title, and the property's meeting of basic environmental requirements of lending institutions and of local and state laws.

11. If a loan is needed, the local church shall comply with the provisions of (inserted paragraph 2540

**Incorporated Local Church Property – Sale, Transfer, Lease, or Mortgage** – Any real property owned by or in which an incorporated local church has any interest may be sold, transferred, leased for a term of thirty days or more (which shall include leases for less than thirty days if such a lease is consecutive with the same lessee), or mortgaged subject to the following procedure and conditions;

1. Notice of the proposed action and the date and time of the regular or special meeting of the members of the corporate body – i.e., members of the charge conference at which it is to be considered – shall be given at least ten days prior thereto (except as local laws may otherwise provide) from the pulpit of the church or in its weekly bulletin.
2. A resolution authorizing the proposed action shall be passed by a majority vote of the members of the corporate body present and voting at any regular or special meeting thereof called to consider such action

and a majority vote of the members of the charge conference, if the corporate members are different than the charge conference members.

3. The written consent of the pastor of the local church and the district superintendent to the proposed action shall be necessary and shall be affixed to or included in the instrument of sale, conveyance, transfer, lease, or mortgage. Prior to consenting to any proposed action required under this paragraph involving any United Methodist church property, the pastor, the district superintendent, and the district board of church location and building shall ensure that – (a) a full investigation shall be made and an appropriate plan of action shall be developed for the future missional need of the community; (b) the transfer or encumbrance shall conform to the Discipline; (c) the congregation, if no longer to continue as an organized United Methodist church, does not sell but may transfer title of its facilities to another United Methodist church or agency; and (d) the congregation, in case of relocation, first offers its property to a United Methodist congregation or agency at a price not to exceed fair market value. The district strategies or other missional strategies should include the ministries of both United Methodist congregations and the community where the existing facility is located. Certification by the district superintendent shall be conclusive evidence that the transfer or encumbrance conforms to the Discipline. The requirements of investigation and the development of a plan of action shall not affect the merchantability of the title to the real estate or the legal effect of the instrument of sale or transfer.
4. The resolution authorizing such proposed action shall direct and authorize the corporation's board of directors to take all necessary steps to carry out the action and to cause to be executed, as hereinafter provided, any necessary contract, deed, bill of sale, mortgage, or other written instrument.
5. The board of directors at any regular or special meeting shall take such action and adopt such resolutions as may be necessary or required by the local laws.
6. Any required contract, deed, bill of sale, mortgage, or other written instrument necessary to carry out the action so authorized shall be executed in the name of the corporation by any two of its officers, and any written instrument so executed shall be binding and effective as the action of the corporation.)

12. The local church shall not enter into a building contract or, if using a plan for volunteer labor, incur obligations for materials until it has cash on hand, pledges payable during the construction period, and (if needed) a loan or written commitment therefore that will assure prompt payment of all contractual obligations and other accounts when due.

13. Neither the trustees nor any other members of a local church shall be required to guarantee personally any loan made to the church by any board created by or under the authority of the General Conference.

14. It is recommended that a local church not enter into a binding building contract without the contractor being properly bonded or furnishing other forms of security, such as an irrevocable letter of credit approved by the conference, district, or local church attorney.