

Overview of the Lone Oak United Methodist Church Council

I. Description

The LOUMC Church Council uses the Simplified Accountable Structure Book of Discipline P. 247.2 as its model (Mission Possible: Expanded Third Edition). The Church Council combines the Council, SPRC, Finance and Trustees all into one committee. The Church Council is to be composed of nine members (by 2027) that are nominated and trained by the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Training. Council members serve for 3 years. The responsibility of the Council is accountability/governance not the day to day running of the church. It is a streamlined model of leadership that seeks to increase mission and accountability as congregation strives to make disciples for Jesus Christ.

II. Church Council's Role in Accountable Leadership

A. Accountable to Jesus Christ for the Great Commission.

B. Fiduciary responsibilities

C. The generative work of the Church Council is the creative, adaptive and innovative work of discerning God's future dreams for the congregation and discerning the faithful next steps in leading the congregation.

D. The strategic work of the Church Council ensures the assets are aligned and leveraged in the best way possible so that the mission, vision and goals are accomplished within the boundaries of the core values. The Church Council is monitoring the progress of the goals and the strategic data (vital signs) and adjusts as required.

E. Church Governance- not management.

F. Hold Pastor Accountable to the vision and goals.

G. Create and update policies, procedures, and Guiding Principles.

H. Align resources to the mission, vision, goals, and strategies.

I. Examples of mature spiritual leaders.

J. Adhere to the Leadership Covenant (Page 8).

K. Annual Strategic Planning.

L. Understand the shift in role and responsibilities from being a congregant to becoming a leader.

M. Bless the vision cast with the pastor.

N. Work with the District Superintendent to hold the pastor accountable.

O. Communicate with the Congregation.

P. To satisfy elemental organizational and leadership requirements of the Book of Discipline (latest edition).

III. Pastor's Role in Accountable Leadership

A. Spiritual Leader/Shepard.

B. Keeper of the Mission (Page 9).

C. Caster of the Congregationally Discerned Vision.

D. Example of Evangelist.

E. Main Recruiter.

F. Supervise and assess paid staff as outlined in the Guiding Principles.

G. Hold staff, paid and unpaid, accountable for leading their ministry areas and fulfilling the mission and vision of the church through goals and strategies.

H. Monitor the accomplishment of the church goals. Make adjustments in associated strategies and staff as required to ensure achievement of those goals.

IV. Staff/Ministry Teams' Role in Accountable Leadership

A. In coordination with the pastor, create strategies to fulfill the Leadership Team's Goals.

B. Connect congregation to the church's discipleship pathway through all ministries and help them take their next step.

C. Identify, recruit, equip, and deploy ministry team members.

D. Coordinate ministry.

E. Create and update ministry team members job descriptions.

F. Follow Guiding Principles.

G. Hold ministry team members accountable.

H. Help ministry team members connect their ministry to the strategies, goals, vision, mission, and core values.

I. Evaluate all ministries (i.e., purpose, outcome, missional effectiveness and alignment, resource consumption).

V. Accountable Leadership

A. The Church Council is accountable to the Church/Charge Conference (Governance and Connection to the Annual Conference.)

B. The Church Council must hold themselves accountable. Questions for accountability review:

1. Is the Council faithfully representing the Lord Jesus in word and deed?
2. Is the Council properly executing its responsibility for the Guiding Principles?
3. Is the Council following its Covenant as a group and individually?
4. Is the Church Council properly supporting the pastor?
5. Is the Council meeting all the elemental United Methodist organizational and leadership requirements?

C. The Church Council must execute its responsibilities to prepare, maintain and review performance to the Guiding Principles. This is to ensure that our Mission and Vision of the church is being accomplished.

VI. Planning the work of the Church Council

A. January

1. Orientation and formational time for new Church Council members.
2. Review expectations of leadership and practices of the Council for new members. Finalize and have members sign the covenant.
3. Set calendar of meetings, town hall meetings and annual strategic ministry planning (possible retreat).
4. Elect “chair of Trustees” (per BOD).
5. Elect recording secretary.
6. Pastor/Ministry Teams update vision/values/goals/strategies.
7. Board Accountability Review.
8. Council members assigned a month to communicate to the congregation through newsletters, social media, and/or worship.

9. Assign Council members responsibility for spiritual and leadership development.

10. Commissioning service for the Church Council in congregational worship.

11. Consent Items.

12. New Business.

13. Communication to Congregation.

B. February

1. Trustees review/update.

2. Easter plans.

3. Building and grounds review and update.

4. Consent items.

5. New Business

6. Communication to Congregation.

C. March

1. Town Hall meeting. (Possibly connected to Lenten theme. Celebrate wins. Report progress on church goals. Pray together for the church's neighborhood mission field. Get feedback from congregation.)

2. Consent Items.

3. New Business.

4. Communication to Congregation..

D. April

1. Review the Church's finances.

2. Decide what the stewardship/generosity campaign will be in the fall. Who will lead it? What preparations are needed? Work Team with pastor?

3. Possible community project for the Church Council.

4. Consent Items.

5. New Business.
6. Communication to Congregation.

E. May

1. Review Guiding Principles, policies, and procedures. Do any need updated or revised?
2. Are job descriptions complete? Any need updated or revised? Employee Handbook.
3. Review building usage/safety/wedding/key policies and procedures. Do any need updated or revised?
4. Any missing policies or procedures that would make the day-to-day church life more efficient or effective?
5. Consent items.
6. New Business.
7. Communication to Congregation.

F. June

1. Review Goals. Are we on track to meet goals? Where are the gaps? What shifts are needed? Are resources needed? How can Council encourage and support?
2. Financial Review.
3. Consent items.
4. New Business.
5. Communication to Congregation.

G. July

1. If applicable prepare welcome for a new pastor and family.
2. If welcoming a new minister share with the wider community and local media as an evangelism opportunity.
3. Organize a process of intentional relationship building and orientation through cottage meetings or listening sessions with congregation members for July, August, and September.

4. Work with the current and incoming pastor to share information, congregational metrics, and community demographics.

5. Share with the Nominations Committee what gifts would be helpful for the Church Council members to have in the next season of the church's life?

6. Notify the Nominations Committee any requests the Church Council might have. What would a potential new Council member need to know about the commitment and expectations of being a Church Council member before accepting the nomination?

7. Great time to ask accountability questions of the pastor about plans to reach new people during the Back-to-School and Advent seasons.

8. Possible Town Hall Meeting to engage deeply with members and leaders.

9. Use this time to gather information, such as community opportunities to reach new people, ideas to launch or grow ministries, and gauge what areas might bring excitement or passion.

10. If applicable help the new minister understand how your church is using simplified, accountable leadership structure.

H. August

1. Make final preparations for strategic ministry planning. If a retreat it should be the end of August first of September.

2. Staff evaluations should be completed. Any compensation change requests received from the pastor for budgetary consideration?

3. If new pastor, how can Council help. What has the new pastor learned from the congregation? How has Church Council helped the pastor connect to the congregation, to community leaders and to the larger mission field?

I. September

1. Strategic ministry planning (retreat).

2. Work on charge conference documents. Work teams deployed to work on various aspects of the report.

3. Church Council will need to coordinate with the independent Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development on preparing the slate of new Church Council members for approval at the charge conference.

J. October

1. Pastor's evaluation.
2. Staff retreat possible.
3. Staff Budget requests.

4. Pastor appreciation, how will the Church Council acknowledge and celebrate the pastor? How are the staff, ministry leaders and other servant leaders celebrated?

K. November

1. Finalize Budget.
2. Charge Conference.
3. New leader training.

L. December

1. State of the church town hall. Review the year and share goals for the upcoming year. Celebrate the fruitful ministries and accomplishments of the year.

2. Complete consultation documents for the bishop and cabinet in consideration of the pastor's appointment. (SPRC members).

Covenant of the Lone Oak United Methodist Church Council

We, as spiritual leaders, and the governing body of the Lone Oak United Methodist Church, are committed to the congregation, ourselves, one another, and our Mission. In all things we must strive to discern God’s will for LOUMC, to follow Jesus’ example by leading through being servants and to build up one another toward spiritual maturity.

Therefore, we commit ourselves to the following sacred covenant with God and one another.

1. We will pray daily for members of the Church Council, the pastor, the staff, the congregation, and the ministry of our church.
2. We will strive to uphold our vows to support the church through our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. This should include: (a) Having an active prayer life; (b) Being present in worship on a consistent basis; (c) Tithing or moving toward a tithe; (d) Serving on a ministry team, ministry project, and/or faith development group; (e) Sharing our faith with others both within the church and in the secular world.
3. We will develop congregational trust in the Council’s leadership and direction. At a minimum, trust will be fostered in the following areas of focus: (a) Achieving Results – Fulfillment of results promised to others; (b) Acting with Integrity – Following a known set of values, beliefs, and practices with consistency and coherence between words and actions (i.e., walk the talk). Council actions will be communicated openly and honestly; (c) Demonstrating Concern – Caring for the concerns, well-being, and success of people at all levels of the congregation: and understanding and considering the consequences of Council actions on others.
4. We will encourage and support the pastor and other Council members.
5. We will hold ourselves, the pastor, and each other accountable for our roles and responsibilities. This includes allowing others to hold us accountable.
6. We will be present and on time for Council meetings and notify the chair or pastor in advance if unable to attend. We commit as a Council to a minimum attendance level of 75%.
7. We will review the meeting packet prior to the Council meetings and arrive fully prepared and ready to participate.
8. We will engage in and contribute to Council discussions and decisions with open minds, respect for one another, and passion.
9. We will speak with a unified voice by supporting Council decisions openly and publicly regardless of personal agreement with the decision.

2024 Church Council Signatures (9 members by 2027):

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 10. _____ |

11. _____

Mission Principles

These principles define the purpose (why we do it), the responsibility of the Council and pastor, and the results to be achieved. The Mission and the four key objectives are (updated 2023):

The mission of LOUMC is building bridges to show everyone is worthy of God’s love. We will strive to live out this mission in 2024:

- a. We will remember our baptism and respond to the grace extended to us by extending that grace to everyone.*
- b. We will identify communities that need assistance.*
- c. We will recognize the children of God- identified in scripture as the widow, the orphan, and the foreigner-as those who live and work and shop alongside us in the margins.*
- d. We will aid the Ministry Planning Team in “building bridges” (i.e. making connections, learning about, and extending service) to the children of God.*

The Mission Principles are updated annually and project the vision, strategy, goals, and action plans.