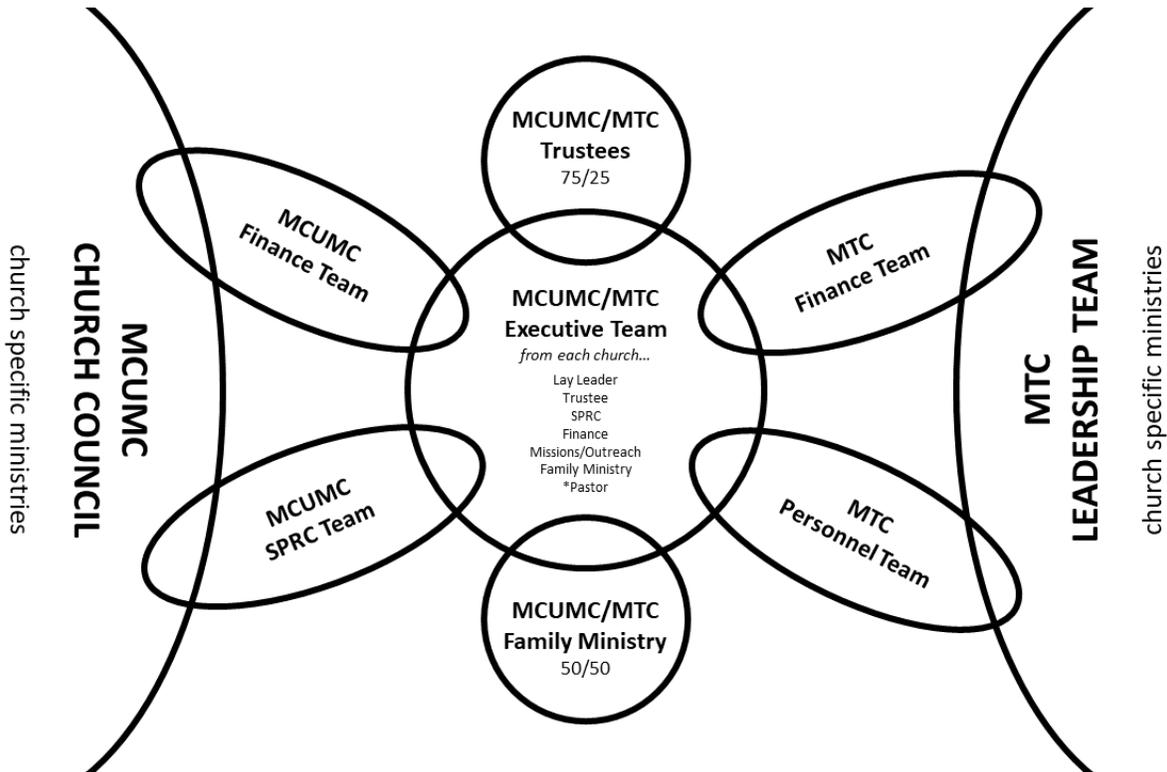


# Cooperative Ministry Leadership Structure

*Mt. Comfort UMC & The Movie Theater Church*



*\* The Executive Team is clergy-facilitated*

## What is it?

- Cooperative Ministry (Cooperative Parish, ¶206) as a Multiple Charge Parish is an “intentionally organized group of two or more pastoral charges in which each church continues to relate to its charge conference on the organizational level and also participates in a parish-wide council.”

## Why this?

- By partnering in ministry Mt. Comfort UMC and The Movie Theater Church will more effectively make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. It has become painfully clear, both through past experiences and present circumstance, that neither congregation is able to sustain its current condition in the long term; both from a financial and ministry perspective. By intentionally pulling together specific strengths

and resources of each congregation the collective ministry effectiveness will increase and a Kingdom-building legacy will be insured. This is not a merger, this is a structural shift that allows cooperative ministry to take place while also maintaining each congregation's autonomy and identity.

### **Why now?**

- Although this structural shift may seem sudden, the timing is in relation to Pastor Alex's health. At this point there is no secret that he requires a liver transplant. Although otherwise healthy, this is a significant surgery with a significant recuperation time. Pastor Alex will soon go on the transplant list and, although all indication is a 4-6 month waiting period, could receive a call at any moment. The district and conference believe it is important to be as prepared as possible, so implementing this cooperative ministry structure prior to Pastor Alex's surgery will insure continuity in leadership, progression in ministry, and partnership between churches. The hope is that this structure will be in place prior to, during, and upon return of Pastor Alex. When Pastor Alex's status while on leave gets defined Mt. Comfort UMC's pastoral needs will be better identified and the necessary support put in place.

### **MCUMC/MTC Executive Team**

- This clergy-facilitated team is comprised of leaders nominated and approved from both congregations and focuses on the ministry elements that directly effect both congregations; including, but not limited to, facility, family ministry, community outreach, and vision. When it comes to these cooperative areas of ministry the Executive Team maintains authority. Why these four areas initially?
  - *Facility* – There are continual needs around the maintenance, upkeep, and use of the building and grounds that directly effect both congregations. Working together with financial resources, volunteers, systems, and more will allow this ministry partnership to be more effective.
  - *Family Ministry* – The opportunity for partnership in this area is too large to overlook as both churches have significant ministries to families (Joyful Days, youth, Sonshine Kids, Sunday morning kids ministry, etc). Bringing these ministries together decreases confusion and increases effectiveness by pulling together experience, innovation, and energy.
  - *Community Outreach* – Both congregations care deeply about their community partnerships and outreach into the world. As such, combining forces will accomplish more for God's Kingdom than either could on their own. New doors and opportunities will open because a greater amount of resources will be sent out.
  - *Vision* – It is critical that both congregations continue to think and pray about the future. This Executive Team brings those leaders together to dream about God's

next step for these faith communities. How can those congregations be even more effective in the next 3, 5, 10 years in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world? It will be crucial to begin making cooperative decisions as these congregations walk that path together.

### **MCUMC/MTC Executive Team Members**

- This 14-member team will meet monthly and as needed. These leaders will also discern and discuss the best steps forward concerning a covenant between MCUMC & MTC as well as handle any conflicts that might arise that the pastors feel rest outside their scope. Each congregation will be equally represented (i.e. MCUMC Lay Leader & MTC Lay Leader, MCUMC Finance Rep & MTC Finance Rep, etc.) through the following positions. This team will be tasked with asking important questions and making decisions both on behalf of their congregations as well as the cooperative ministry...
  - *Lay Leader* – How are we honoring the identity and legacy of each congregation?
  - *Trustee* – How are we maintaining, upgrading, and using the facility to support the ministry of each congregation and partner with the community?
  - *SPRC* – How are we maintaining a positive relationship and open communication between congregations and staff/employees?
  - *Finance* – How are we being good stewards with the finances we've been entrusted with to fulfill our mission?
  - *Missions/Outreach* – How are we identifying and meeting the needs in our community and beyond?
  - *Family Ministry* – How are we helping families in our congregations and the community connect with the church and grow in faith?
  - *Pastor* – How are we making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation for the world?

### **Cooperative Trustees (¶ 2528.2)**

- These Trustees report to the Executive Team and have all the responsibilities and requirements entrusted to them by Discipline specific to facility. The 8-member cooperative Trustee Team will meet monthly. This team is chaired by MCUMC, but it's members are made up of 75% from MCUMC and 25% from MTC; percentages based on the financial support for monthly facility expenses. This insures that both congregations are invested in the building and grounds, working together to make sure it remains in the best condition possible for ministry.

### **Cooperative Family Ministry**

- The Family Ministry Team is a sub-committee of the Executive Team and will meet monthly to plan and organize all ministries and events geared toward children, youth, and their families. This team will also serve as the initial advisory board and support

system for Joyful Days Preschool & Childcare. The Family Ministry Team is comprised of 8 members; equal representation from both congregations, including respective staff members.

**Church Autonomy** – This is not a merger, so each congregation remains independent for all purposes outside the cooperative ministry and are responsible to their respective charge conferences.

- *Finance Teams* – Each congregation maintains individual finance teams and budgets that support both their congregational ministries as well as the cooperative ministries. As such the Finance Teams serve as an important bridge between the Executive Team and their respective congregations.
- *SPRCs* – Each congregation continues with their respective personnel teams, responsible for maintaining a healthy relationship between their congregation and pastor as well as other staff/employees. This is also an important bridge because each church's pastor, as well as appropriate staff/employees, serve in conjunction with the Executive Team.
- *Trustees* – Because each congregation remains independent each congregation will also have their own Trustees. However, these congregation-specific Trustees will not handle anything related to facility, instead they will perform the other functions of the Trustees as outlined in the Discipline.
- *Leadership Teams* – Each congregation is required to maintain their respective church council/leadership team to oversee church-specific ministries. Although they are not responsible for the areas that directly effect both congregations, they maintain authority over and responsibility for their individual church functions.

### **A Final Note...**

- Inevitably there are a number of questions, it would be impossible to identify every single “But what about...” The Executive Team, with support from the Conference Superintendent and the Conference Church Development Team, will navigate these uncharted waters and deal with issues and disagreements as they arise. The desire of this structural shift is not about taking away anything from either congregation, instead it is about adding to the Kingdom of God in the most effective way possible. Without a doubt this is a leap of faith for both congregations, but the reality of present circumstances is scarier than the hope this cooperative ministry structure brings for tomorrow. The mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world cannot be lost in this process.