The global connection of The United Methodist Church is structured with checks and balances. This strengthens the denomination as a whole because any one branch is prevented from taking too much authority.

Seven entities compose our structure:

**GENERAL CONFERENCE**
The only body that speaks as The UMC, it meets every four years to define powers and duties of all UMC leadership, set the church budget, provide a fair process for judicial proceedings, and establish boards and commissions that will carry out the general work of the church.

**COUNCIL OF BISHOPS**
The council includes all active and retired UM bishops, provides oversight and vision for the church, and may call special sessions of General Conference. Each bishop is assigned to an Episcopal Area, which includes one or more Annual Conferences.

**JUDICIAL COUNCIL**
This nine-member body determines the constitutionality of General Conference actions, reviews all bishops’ decisions of law, and serves as the final court of appeal in the church’s judicial system. The members are elected by General Conference.

**ANNUAL CONFERENCES**
Each conference connects local churches, sets ministry proprieties and budget, approves ordination candidates, holds clergy membership, and votes on constitutional amendments. Conferences elect clergy and laity delegates who will represent them at General Conference. Annual conferences are made up of Districts in a geographic area.

**CENTRAL & JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCES**
Each conference elects and assigns bishops, determines boundaries of annual conferences and episcopal areas in its region, supports regional ministries and institutions, and elects members of general agencies. Both Central Conferences (outside the U.S.) and Jurisdictional Conferences (within the U.S.) are composed of Annual Conferences that are located in a specific geographic region.

**LOCAL CHURCHES**
Through ministry, worship and service, local congregations are the most significant arenas where disciple making occurs. Churches elect Annual Conference representatives. Local churches in one geographic region create a District. Each district is led by a District Superintendent.

**CONNECTIONAL TABLE & GENERAL AGENCIES**
These 14 entities equip local churches and annual conferences, as well as provide for ministry throughout the world. These bodies are created by General Conference.