



New Pastors Handbook

Welcome to Gateway! This handbook is intended to be a brief overview of items you may not be familiar with as a first time pastor in the FMCUSA (Free Methodist Church USA). You will be guided to other resources for more detailed information.

Always feel free to contact the conference office at gatewayfmc@sbcglobal.net or 618.664.2353. We are here to help you.

The Gateway Conference Office exists to energize and equip pastors and lay leaders to M.O.V.E.:

- Mission Assessment**
- Organize Data**
- Visioneer A New Future**
- Engage The Plan**

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Gateway Conference Items

Gateway Appointed Pastor Requirements:

The following items are those that are required for appointed Pastors:

Complete Annual Confidential Report each year (will be sent to you by e-mail and will be available on our website)

Read Gateway Impact Newsletter (sent out bi-weekly)

Read Pastors and Church Treasurers Newsletter (sent out monthly)

Attend Leadership Summit and Resourcing Days (permission to be excused needs to be requested from Gateway Conference Superintendent if you are unable to attend)

Yearly Checklist for Pastors and Treasurers:

____Is your state annual report (for incorporation) filed and up-to-date (dates for filing will vary).

To look up your church and verify your annual report has been filed and the information is correct:

In Missouri: <http://www.ilsos.gov/corporatellc/>

In Illinois: <https://bsd.sos.mo.gov/BusinessEntity/BESearch.aspx?SearchType=0>

Items to check and make sure are correct: corporation name, registration/corporation number, current standing and registered agent (who did the filing).

____Does your church have worker's compensation insurance (required in State of Illinois; required in State of Missouri if you have five or more workers but we recommend you provide coverage even if you have under five employees).

____Do you have appropriate work related posters in your church:

For Federal: <http://www.dol.gov/oasam/boc/osdbu/sbrefa/poster/matrix.htm>

For State of Illinois: <http://www.illinois.gov/idol/Employers/Pages/posters.aspx>

For State of Missouri: <http://labor.mo.gov/content/mandatory-posters>

State of Illinois Mandatory Requirements:

The State of Illinois has the following mandatory requirements: Anti-Harassment Training, Anti-Harassment Poster requirement and Employee Handbook:

Effective January 1, 2020, the State of Illinois now requires that all businesses must provide annual anti-harassment training for employees and also do the following: Include information in an employee handbook concerning employees' rights under the law, including the right to be free from unlawful discrimination and sexual harassment and the right to reasonable accommodations based on pregnancy and disability. This information should also be posted in your workplace.

What is Gateway Conference doing to help?: Gateway Conference is providing an employee handbook that has the information above along with other important items. All of our churches (regardless of what state the church is in) should have an employee handbook in place. This handbook can be modified by your church regarding your holidays, staff vacation, etc. Any legal requirements should not be taken out. Please contact the conference office if you have any questions.

The following items are available on our website:

<http://gatewayfmcusa.org/forms-and-resources/gateway-forms-resources>

A power point made by the State of Illinois that we have modified for training employees based on The Book of Discipline.

An Employee Handbook that can be modified.

Anti-Harassment training form for Employees to sign

State of Illinois poster to be displayed.

We recommend that all churches regardless of which state they are in have annual anti-harassment training and an employee handbook in place.

State of Illinois Mandatory Reporting Law

A new law went into effect January 1, 2020 in Illinois. Please forward this notice to those who lead your children's ministry departments' process. This new law expands the definition of "mandated reporter" to include all volunteers who work with children. It also changes the requirements for training those people, and expands the scope of abuse that must be reported by clergy.

Who is a mandated reporter? Any child-care worker affiliated with a church, other house of worship, or other non-profit (whether in a paid capacity or as a volunteer) is now a "mandated reporter." Gone are the days where religious organizations or social service providers may recruit random volunteers if the nursery gets too full on Sunday mornings or if more children than expected show up for programs. Such recruits are now mandated reporters and must undergo training, if not prior to their children-related service, within three months of first serving. **No exceptions exist for occasional or sporadic service.** Free online training is available through DCFS and is available on our website. The training takes about 2 hours. -Make all employees and volunteers aware of the new training requirements, and schedule training as needed. -Keep track of who has completed the training, and regularly update your records as new volunteers are recruited. -Add the training requirement to your new volunteer screening.

Website for Illinois Mandatory training:

<https://mr.dcfstraining.org/UserAuth/Login!loginPage.action>

We strongly urge all churches regardless of the State they are in, to provide training, background checks and reference checks on those working with children.

If paying for background checks will be a financial issue for your church, please contact the conference office.

Church Tithe:

Helpful information: For 2021 budget preparation purposes, the local BOA can determine what their conference tithe percentage will be according to their Total Church Income given for their annual report for 2019 (amount you listed online in 2020).

Income	Tithe percentage for 2021
<15001	2%
<35001	4%
<100001	6%
>100000	8%

Actual conference tithe will be determined monthly by using the form (which will be sent to you via e-mail in early January each year). Remember to use the tithe form.

Leadership Summit (Annual Conference):

Leadership Summit is held once a year. Here is a brief overview from Book of Discipline:

Annual conferences, after the pattern of the Methodist Episcopal Church, have been a basic organizational structure of the Free Methodist Church since its beginning. After the first annual conference was organized in Pekin, New York, in 1860, twenty-two more were born in the next twenty-five years, as, in the words of Bishop Leslie Marston, early Free Methodism "marched across the nation." Today, as then, the annual conference is the organization at the regional level that joins societies into a network. The annual conference ensures that pastors and congregations are counseled and encouraged, identifies those who are being called into the ordained ministry and promotes and oversees church planting and evangelism.

For more information, please visit the Book of Discipline, paragraphs 5000-5080:

<https://fmcusa.org/resources/2019bod>

Church Delegates to Leadership Summit (Annual Conference):

Responsibilities of Delegates: In the Free Methodist connectional system, annual conference delegates have a two-fold responsibility: to represent their societies and to act for the good of the conference. Delegates shall be considered as a liaison between the society and the conference during the interim between conference sessions. They are expected to report significant actions of the conference to the society which elected them (see ¶6250.E.2).

To read paragraph 6250 E.2.: <https://fmcusa.org/resources/2019bod>

Delegates Credentials will need to be sent to the conference office before Leadership Summit. These forms are available at:

<http://gatewayfmcusa.org/leadership-summit-at-a-glance/delegate-credentials-info-sheet>

More information on the role of delegates and a Lay Delegate handbook is available at: <http://gatewayfmcusa.org/leadership-summit-at-a-glance/role-of-conference-delegate>

Gateway Conference scholarships for children of appointed pastors in Gateway Conference and for Pastors

Pastor's Children: (Scholarships are issued at the end of September and the end of January). Scholarships to Greenville University are \$1000.00 per semester for a total of \$2000.00 per year. Scholarships to other Free Methodist Institutions are \$500 per semester for a total of \$1000.00 per year. Students must be taking a full course load. Scholarship Application is on the next page.

Appointed Pastors: Amount is \$1000.00 per year and is paid directly to institution.

Applications and reference forms are on pages 23-24 of the Pastors and Church Treasurers Handbook:

Local Church Grant Initiatives:

To further the goals of the Free Methodist Church USA and Gateway Conference, churches are invited to submit a proposal that advances the opportunity for local churches to begin new initiatives that support these goals. Specifically, **the Conference desires to support initiatives that engage the local church in the life and lives of the community in which they serve.** Grant Application and information regarding deadlines for submission are available on our website:

<http://gatewayfmcusa.org/forms-and-resources/local-church-init-grants>

Gateway Pastor and Treasurer Handbook:

The Pastors and Treasurers Handbook is designed to provide valuable information to pastors and treasurers easily. It is updated each year and available on our website:

<http://gatewayfmcusa.org/forms-and-resources/gateway-forms-resources>

The index of items that are covered in this handbook (which is updated each fall) is on the next page.

Pastors and Treasurers Handbook 2020 Index:

General Information (includes 2021 Budget information, Worker's Compensation, Social Security, Standard Mileage Rates) - pages 2-4

2021 Budget Worksheet - page 4

Parsonage Allowance - pages 5-6

Professional Expenses - page 6

W-2 & W-3 Worksheet - page 7

2021 Equal Participation Plan Church Assessments (Home Ministries) - page 8

2021 Equal Participation Plan information from FMCUSA - page 9

State of Illinois Mandatory Requirements for Anti-Harassment Training, Anti-Harassment Poster requirement and Employee Handbook-page 10

State of Illinois Mandatory Reporting Law and requirements-pages 10-11

Charitable Contributions (cash and non-cash, including car donations) - pages 11-12

Tithe/Offering Form - page 13

Gateway Conference Board of Administration Standing Rules & Recommendations- pages 14-18

Guidelines for Local Churches and Treasurers and Auditors - pages 16-17

Ministerial Education & Guidance Guidelines-Pastoral Compensation-pages 18-19

MEGA Guidelines Pastoral Benefits - page 19

MEGA Guidelines Pastoral Vacation Policy-page 19

MEGA Guidelines Pastoral Sick Leave - page 19

MEGA Guidelines Pastoral Family & Medical Leave - pages 20

MEGA Guidelines Pastoral Moving Expense Reimbursement-pages 20-21

MEGA Guidelines Pastoral Enrichment Leave (Sabbatical) - page 21-22

Gateway Conference Bookkeeping Program-page 22

Pastor (GAPS) and Pastor's Children Scholarship information - page 22

Pastor's Children Scholarship application - page 23

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Why Churches Should be Incorporated-pages 26

Overtime rules effective January 1, 2020-page 26-27

Health Insurance information - pages 27-28

FMCUSA Items

FMCUSA Annual Church Report for Yearbook:

Each year your church will need to fill out the online report for the Yearbook. The FMCUSA Yearbook is the Personnel, Organization and Statistics of The Free Methodist Church which is published yearly.

Information will be sent to you (usually in January) that you will use to fill out this report.

You will always be reporting on the previous year (i.e. 2021 will be reported online in 2022). The financial information that you give will be used by the FMCUSA World Ministries Center to determine your Equal Participation Amount (see below).

FMCUSA EPP (Equal Participation Plan):

The Equal Participation Plan (EPP) is a financial partnership among all the churches which constitute the Free Methodist denomination. It is an aspect of that "specific commitment" dictated by the doctrine of the church. The conference system of the Free Methodist Church relies upon the continual contribution of its members to accomplish its worldwide ministry. Conference contribution amounts are calculated using annual reports submitted by individual churches. These annual reports accumulate into a kind of report card and directory for the FM Church called The Yearbook. The EPP calculation begins with the total revenue reported by conference churches. Contributions for Free Methodist missionaries and certain mission projects, church planting, capital campaigns, and other specified items are deducted from total revenue before the EPP percentage is applied. Annual budgets for the various services the denomination provides are determined in part by the total of these EPP assessments, so it is important that EPP assessments be fully funded.

As a member of the Free Methodist denomination your church can accept charitable contributions which are tax-deductible by donors. Your membership also means your church is not required to pay federal and state income taxes, nor is your church required to file income tax returns. Other benefits of participation are access to ministry resources like church planting assistance, networking support, leadership development opportunities and the planned giving and lending resources of the Free Methodist Foundation. Participation in the EPP provides your church with the resources of global connection, providing direct access to missionaries and projects. It also means your church has reliable avenues to

contribute to fruitful ministry elsewhere in the world. You are invited to be a part of a community that equips and supports the church and its leaders to minister and to multiply. We are accountable to you. We commit to ask for no more funds than necessary to maximize the ministry dollars for the local church—the cutting edge of the harvest.

YOUR ROLE WITH EPP

1. Support your Annual Conference.
2. Encourage your church to have local and global impact by participating with and using the resources provided by your Conference and the Free Methodist Church.
3. See that your church submits a complete and accurate Annual Report (your church's yearly statistics) online and on time.
4. Encourage your congregation to make annual commitments to support missionaries and country ministries through the work of Free Methodist World Missions. Your commitments: - Are vital for sending and sustaining missionaries - Help determine ministry resourcing - Must be fulfilled in the same manner as made i.e. individually or through the church - If made through the church, count as missions-giving deductions in the EPP calculation

501©3 FMCUSA Blanket exemption information:

One of the benefits and blessings of being part of the FMCUSA Denomination is that you are covered the FMCUSA 501©3 Group Tax Exemption. This means that churches do not have to apply for their 501 ©3 or prepare a form 990 each year.

Upon request, churches can obtain a letter certifying that they are part of the Group Tax Exemption by contacting the World Ministries Center (FMCUSA Headquarters) at 1-800-342-5531.

FM Global Ministries and World Missions

The Gateway Conference Board of Administration standing policy is that each church send money designated for missionary support and special projects through the World Ministries Center by the local church directly to FM-World Missions in Indianapolis.

FM Global Ministries: <https://fmcusa.org/go-global/fmg>

FM World Missions: <https://fmwm.org/>

FMCUSA Pension:

Since 1969 the Free Methodist Church has provided a pension plan for pastors, superintendents, conference personnel, and World Ministries Center employees.

This plan was created for the exclusive benefit of church-related workers and their beneficiaries and is designed to help participants gradually build up a secure source of retirement income.

The denomination first administered the Defined Contribution Plan in 1969 and the plan was frozen as of 1980. The existing accounts were maintained and benefits were paid for those who had accrued a benefit. As of 9/30/2019, this plan was closed and all remaining participants have been paid out.

The current pension plan began in 1981 and is called the Defined Benefit Plan. All new eligible participants who serve in the United States are enrolled into this plan. Administration of both plans is the responsibility of the Benefits Committee, which in turn reports to the FMC-USA Board of Administration, which governs the plans. It is the goal of the Benefits Committee to keep in mind participants' best interests and to continually improve the current plan's benefits, as funds allow, for those who have served the denomination during their working years.

The day-to-day management of the plans is handled by the Human Resources office at the World Ministries Center. Mark Dowley, Chief Operating Officer of FMC-USA, along with staff members Willadean Duncan, Director of Human Resources, Debbie Jenkins, Lori Sherwood, Human Resources assistants, are available to help participants with whatever their needs may be.

The Nyhart of Indianapolis, IN, serves as the actuary for both plans. The actuary continually reviews the plans to determine funding assumptions and maintains all existing and future benefits.

The Free Methodist Foundation handles the investments for the pension plans. The Foundation's board of directors manages and supervises all investments based on the investment objectives set forth for the funds.

Also provided by the denomination, for anyone who is a participant in either pension plan, is the opportunity to receive a comprehensive Financial Profile at no cost to the participant. The Human Resources office is working along with Guidestream Financial., a subsidiary of the Free Methodist Foundation, to help develop personalized profiles. The Financial Profile addresses specific questions or concerns participants may have about their finances. This service is provided for

participants, no matter what their stage of life or financial situation, to help guide them in considering financial and retirement planning, insurance needs, education funding, investment allocation, and estate planning. More information is available at: <https://hr.fmcusa.org/pension-retirement-forms2>

FMCUSA Book of Discipline (BOD):

The Book of Discipline presents the history, theological roots, and global contemporary mission of the Free Methodist Church - USA (FMCUSA). It is the ecclesiastical and organizational manual of the church.

The online version is available at: <https://fmcusa.org/resources/2019bod>

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Checklist for Pastors and Treasurers - page 32

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Available resources - page 33

FMF Financial Services:

FMF Financial Services provides many ways to help you with financial planning, loans for churches and Planned Giving. Gateway Conference financial supports FM Financial Services Planned Giving which makes a Financial Planner available to congregations at no charge to the church.

For more information: <https://fmffinancial.org/give/>

Light + Life Magazine:

Light and Life Magazine is the official publication of the FMCUSA. This magazine and resources are completely online. Light + Life has a comprehensive digital platform with weekly e-mails featuring articles as well as complimentary studies for small groups. This will also be a mobile-friendly web experience. Subscribe today at <https://buff.ly/3bFxxvB4> and select Light + Life Digital.

Light and Life Magazine Website: <https://lightandlifemagazine.com/>

Resources available:

FREE LIBRARY OF FINANCIAL TOOLS - The Free Methodist Church - USA is excited to partner with the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability to

offer ChurchEXCEL — a community of free online resources for pastors and church administrators.

ChurchEXCEL provides practical help in critical areas like budgeting, pastors' housing allowances, fraud prevention and more. Benefits include free e-books, courses, podcasts and electronic tax guides.

Visit ChurchEXCEL.org/FreeMethodist to connect with this helpful and easy-to-understand resource website. **We recommend that pastors and church treasurers sign up for this service.**

<http://gatewayfmcusa.org/forms-and-resources>

<http://fmcusa.org/resource/>