



Membership Q&A

- **How do the new membership changes enable us to do a better job of connecting people to the church?**
 - A local church can engage attendees much earlier in the relationship timeline. Attendees can have a sense of belonging around the core scriptural beliefs of The Wesleyan Church without the church putting an expectation of spiritual maturity upon them prior to belonging.
- **When should we begin to share/implement the new membership guidelines?**
 - Technically speaking, the new rules and guidelines do not go into effect until the publishing of the 2016 *Discipline*. However, we see no reason to delay the practical implementation in local churches.
- **How do changes affect the status of current members?**
 - For elected leaders, nothing changes other than the label. For all other members (including Community members), the label changes to “Member.”
- **What was accomplished by changing the membership guidelines?**
 - Changing the guidelines aligns us more closely with the biblical model of church and leadership participation. It allows people to belong to a local church much earlier in their Christian walk. It intends for membership to be much more closely linked to discipleship. [Click here to watch the membership pathway video.](#)
- **What was changed in how a person joins the church?**
 - The process will look much the same for how a person joins the church. It still involves a classroom experience. The content has changed, but the process remains similar.
- **What offices require following the leadership qualifications?**
 - The following list will be placed in the new *Discipline* and was included in the Memorial approved at General Conference:
 - Any person, lay or minister, with ministry credentials
 - Local board of administration member
 - Trustee

- Delegate to district or General Conference
 - Nominating committee member
 - Local church secretary
 - Lay leader
 - Witness and membership committee member
 - Church treasurer
 - Sunday school superintendent or spiritual formation director
- **What is the purpose of the yearly reaffirmation? How can it be implemented?**
 - It provides another piece to the discipleship strategy in a local church. This is what we want to emphasize. Rather than implementing it as a new “burden” for members to “prove themselves,” we can present yearly reaffirmation as a joyful recommitment to a relationship with a local community of faith.
 - Yearly reaffirmation provides for a less emotional and confrontational review of membership rolls by placing the burden of membership maintenance on the member rather than the LBA and pastor.
 - Yearly reaffirmation also provides a proactive annual accountability for each member and their commitments. It alleviates the reactive or suspicious nature of questioning a member’s continued level of commitment.
 - One suggestion would be for the church to send out a formal document reminding each member of their commitments and asking them to renew those commitments. After a reasonable amount of time (30 days), if a person has not returned their signed form, they are automatically removed (listed as “voluntary removal”) from the membership rolls. We will be gathering other suggestions to form a “best practices” list to assist local churches in implementing the reaffirmation.
- **When will new membership materials be available?**
 - The *Belonging* booklet, often used in membership preparation, will be revised and reprinted. Until then, a document showing the revised conditions of membership and the revised membership chapter in *The Discipline* will be prepared by the Communication Department and be available in September. District superintendents and pastors will be notified when it is ready.
 - There will also be given an opportunity for local churches to share membership and discipleship resources with one another by way of a centralized website.
- **How would you address the possibility that people’s lifestyle choices will fluctuate with their membership status? (e.g. stop leading, start drinking)**
 - It is literally true that a person, once having stepped away from elected leadership in the local church, can change personal lifestyle choices on such issues as drinking, etc. However, we ask our pastors to use grace and a discipleship mentality to call their people to a lifetime of spiritual maturity in all their choices.
- **How does the church best move people from “Believe to Belong to Become”?**
 - We hope that all local churches use an intentional discipleship strategy in leading their people to spiritual maturity.