

The Membership Roll: Policies and Procedures

DEFINITION OF MEMBERSHIP (2008 *Book of Discipline*, ¶ 215)

The membership of a local United Methodist church shall include those who have been baptized and those who have professed their faith.

1. The baptized membership of a local United Methodist church shall include all baptized people who have received Christian baptism in the local congregation or elsewhere, or whose membership has been transferred to the local United Methodist church subsequent to baptism in some other congregation.
2. The professing membership of a local United Methodist church shall include all baptized people who have come into membership by profession of faith through appropriate services of the baptismal covenant in the ritual or by transfer from other churches.
3. For statistical purposes, church membership is equated to the number of people listed on the roll of professing members.
4. All baptized or professing members of any local United Methodist church are members of the worldwide United Methodist connection and members of the church universal.

MEMBERSHIP RECORDS (2008 *Book of Discipline*, ¶ 230)

1. Each local church shall accurately maintain a membership record for each baptized or professing member including:
 - a) person's name, date of birth, address, place of birth, date of baptism, officiating pastor, and sponsors;
 - b) date of confirmation/profession of faith, officiating pastor, and sponsors;
 - c) if transferred from another church, date of reception, sending church, and receiving pastor;
 - d) if transferred to another church, date of transfer, receiving church, and address of receiving church;
 - e) date of removal or withdrawal and reason;
 - f) date of restoration of professing membership and officiating pastor;
 - g) date of death, date and place of funeral/memorial, place of burial, and officiating pastor.
2. Annually, names of professing members to be removed by charge conference action shall be reported to the charge conference (¶ 228.2.b.4).
3. Constituency Roll, containing the names and addresses of such persons as are not members of the church concerned, including unbaptized children, youth and adults whose names are not on the membership record, and other nonmembers for whom the local church has pastoral responsibility (¶ 230.3).
4. Affiliate Membership Roll (¶ 227).
5. Associate Membership Roll (¶ 227).
6. In the case of a union or federated church with another denomination, the governing body of such a church may report an equal share of the total membership to each judicatory, and such membership shall be published in the minutes of each church, with a note to the effect that the report is that of a union or federated church, and with an indication of the total actual membership (¶ 230.6).

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP REPORT AND AUDIT (2008 *Book of Discipline*, ¶ 231)

The pastor shall report to the charge conference annually the names of persons received into the membership of the church or churches of the pastoral charge and the names of persons removed since the last charge conference, indicating how each was received or removed. The church council shall appoint a committee to audit the membership record, submitting the report annually to the charge conference.

PERMANENT RECORDS (2008 *Book of Discipline*, ¶ 233)

The basic membership records in each local church shall consist of a permanent church register and a card index, a loose-leaf book, or a membership record on an electronic information system (see ¶ 245).

Removing Names from the Roll: Policy and Procedures

Removing names from the church roll is serious business. We are in the business of recruiting persons for Jesus Christ and the Church, not casting anyone aside carelessly. It is also our task to diligently seek to reclaim those who have become negligent in supporting the church with their prayers, presence, gifts and service. There are, however, procedures in the *Discipline* for removing names when all efforts have failed. Paragraph 228 of the *2008 Discipline* outlines these procedures. It would also be helpful to **read paragraphs 230-242**. For names to be removed by charge conference action, steps in **paragraph 228** must be **strictly followed**. Names presented for the **first time** at charge conference **will not be removed**. They will be referred back to those responsible for membership care in the local church until all steps in paragraph 228 have been followed. *Many of these persons could be reactivated and reclaimed through caring efforts.*

SUMMARY OF PARAGRAPH 228, *2008 Discipline*

While primary responsibility and initiative rest with each professing member to faithfully perform the vows of the baptism covenants that have been solemnly assumed, if the member should be neglectful of that responsibility, these procedures shall be followed:

1. With reference to those who have moved away and whose addresses are known, efforts are to be made to encourage transfer to a church where the member is now living. If a professing member residing in the community is negligent of the vows or is regularly absent from the worship of the church without valid reason, the pastor and the membership secretary shall report that member's name to the church council, which shall do all in its power to reenlist the member in the active fellowship of the church. It shall visit the member and make clear that, while the member's name is on the roll of a particular church, one is a member of The United Methodist Church as a whole, and that, since the member is not attending the church where enrolled, the member is requested to do one of four things:
 - a. Reaffirm the baptismal vows and return to living in the community of the baptismal covenant in the church where the member's name is recorded,
 - b. Request transfer to another United Methodist church,
 - c. Request transfer to a particular church of another denomination, or
 - d. Request withdrawal.If a member does not comply with any of the available alternatives over a period of two years, the member's name may be removed by action of charge conference.
2. With reference to those who have moved away and whose addresses are known, efforts are to be made to encourage transfer to a church where the member is now living. This is to be done for at least two years before the name can be submitted for charge conference removal. (Some prefer leaving membership in their home church while temporarily away for work, military service, college, etc. Their request should be honored.)
3. With reference to those who have moved away and whose addresses are unknown, efforts should be made to locate the missing members by listing their names in the bulletin, newsletter, on bulletin boards, and by reading the names from the pulpit, etc. If all efforts fail after two years, the names may be removed by charge conference action.
4. With reference to procedures for removing names by charge conference action, after two years of diligent effort, the member's name may be removed from the roll of members by vote of the charge conference on recommendation of the pastor and the evangelism ministry chairperson, each name being considered individually; provided that the member's name shall have been entered in the minutes of the annual charge conference for two consecutive years preceding removal. On the roll there shall be entered after the name: "Removed by order of the charge conference"; and if the action is on the basis of paragraph 3, there shall be added: "Reason: address unknown." However the record shall be retained in order that upon reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant the person may be restored as a member.