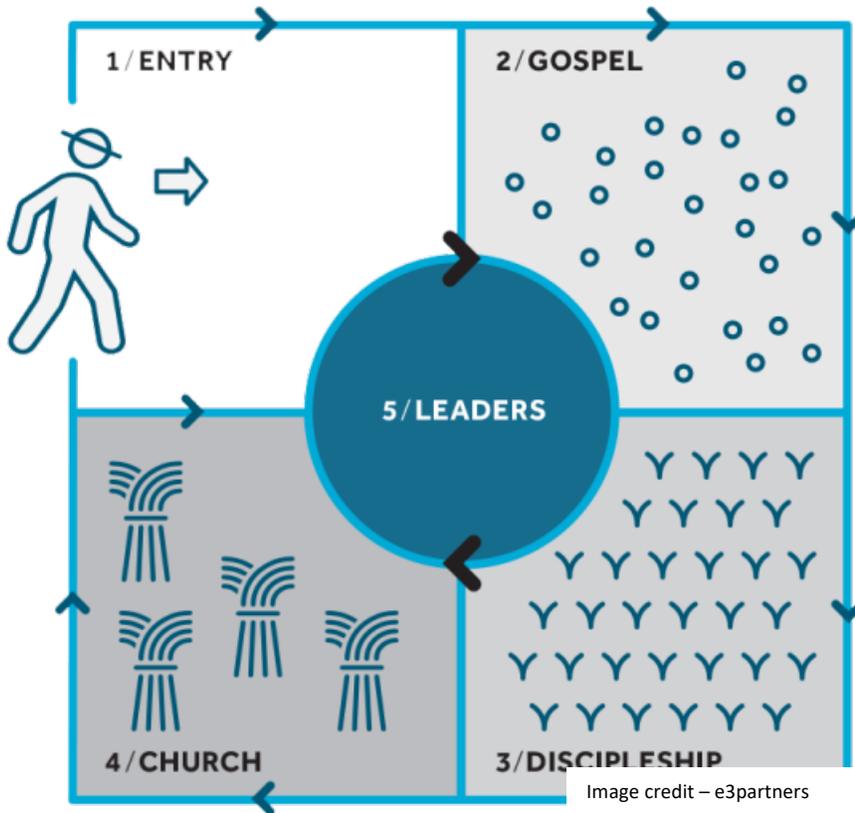


Leading People, Following Jesus

**Discerning My Calling
Developing My Capacity
Deploying to My Harvest Field**



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The Local Ministerial Candidate (LMC) Journey Overview

In Jesus-shaped churches, every follower of Jesus seeks to be a disciple of Jesus. All disciples are workers in Jesus' harvest field, and some disciples with particular leadership abilities begin to wonder, "Should I become a pastor?"

Your church is part of a network called Acts 12:24 Churches. We help disciples and their local churches discover how God is calling people to serve Jesus. We call this plan The Local Ministerial Candidate Journey.

1. **Pray** – Ask God for His guidance.
2. **Pastor** – Talk with your pastor, who might confirm your entry into the LMC journey or might re-direct you.
3. **Leadership Team** - Meet with the leadership team of your church to share your journey with Christ and sense of call to ministry. This team approves the start of the LMC journey.
4. **Church** – In many churches a new LMC is presented to the church in a worship service. Your pastor may have you stand before the entire church and ask the church to pray for you as you begin the LMC journey.
5. **Mentor** – Your pastor or someone you and your pastor agree upon will be your LMC Mentor.
6. **The Acts 12:24 Churches** – Open a file at MEGSystem.Acts1224Churches.com to let us know that you've started the journey. If you have any educational transcripts, certificates, or diplomas, you can upload them to your MEG Profile at this point. We would like to have a picture of you!
7. **Outcome-Based Formation** – You and your Mentor will design an Outcome-Based Formation Plan for you that helps you develop the character and capacity of a disciple who leads. Use the sections titled [The Outcome-Based Development Criteria](#), [The Outcome-Based Approach](#), & [The Outcome-Based Formation Plan](#) to define a formation plan that fits your formation and development journey in specific areas. Let these criteria guide your thinking.

Do not feel constrained to set goals in every area each time you update your Formation Plan

Plan to take a course entitled: [Free Methodist History & Polity](#). Find Ministry Education Centers and Denominational-Approved courses at MEGSystem.Acts1224Churches.com under the **Candidates** menu.

8. **Do Ministry in your Church** – Serve Jesus by serving in your local church. Talk with your pastor and other leaders to identify the ministry opportunities and needs in your church.
9. **Lead a Group of Disciples** – Begin your training to lead other people to faith in Jesus and to grow spiritually. Get trained in Discovery Bible Study and start a DBS group in your church or community. For more information on DBS training, talk to your pastor or go to MEGSystem.Acts1224Churches.com.
10. **Mentor Meetings** – Meet regularly with your Mentor to review the progress of the goals in your Formation Plan. In these meetings, regularly update the plan with goals intended to help you continue growing. Discuss what you are learning in the Free Methodist History & Polity course and the DBS Training.

At the end of one year in the LMC journey, share your thoughts with your Mentor about where you sense Jesus is leading you in this journey. Your Mentor might encourage you to continue as an LMC for an additional year, or you might conclude together that Jesus is not leading you toward pastoral ministry. If this is the case, you will always benefit from how you have grown and what you have learned in the LMC Journey. Your time and effort are not wasted.

It is possible that you and your Mentor will conclude that it is time for you to meet with the [Acts 12:24 Churches Board of Ministerial Education and Guidance](#) (MEG Board) for consideration as a Conference Ministerial Candidate (CMC). This process is described beginning on the next page: [The Conference Ministerial Candidate Journey Overview](#).

The Conference Ministerial Candidate Journey Overview

The Acts 12:24 Churches team has a pastoral development strategy that we call the Conference Ministerial Candidate Journey. The CMC Journey is for disciples who demonstrate leadership, character, capacity for ministry as an LMC and are exploring the call of God on their lives. The CMC Journey is a rigorous process which is guided by the MEG Board of the Acts 12:24 Churches.

1. **Pray** – Ask God for His guidance.
2. **Becoming a CMC** – During the LMC Journey, some LMCs will conclude, with their mentor, that they should be recommended for consideration to begin the CMC Journey. Your pastor or mentor will contact the Regional Leaders in Acts 12:24 Churches to start this process.

A Regional Leader may also recommend a disciple with known leadership capacity for consideration to begin the CMC Journey.
3. **Understand the CMC Journey** – Read Leading People, Following Jesus to thoroughly understand the CMC Journey. Talk with your pastor or mentor if you have questions about this process.
4. **The Acts 12:24 Churches** – Open or update your MEG Profile at MEGSystem.Acts1224Churches.com. If you have any additional educational transcripts, certificates, or diplomas, you can upload them to your MEG Profile at this point. We would like to have an up-to-date picture of you!
5. **Your First MEG Board Interview** – A representative of the Regional MEG Board will invite you to an interview. See the section titled What to Expect - The New CMC Interview to learn more & see sample questions.
6. **Mentor** – Your LMC Mentor often continues to guide you through this journey; however, you and your pastor may agree on a new mentor for the CMC Journey. Make sure to update your MEG Profile if you change mentors.
7. **Outcome-Based Formation** – You and your Mentor will design or update an Outcome-Based Formation Plan for you that helps you develop the character and capacity of a disciple who leads. The next 3 sections will help you to define a formation plan to guide your journey. You should plan to meet regularly with your Mentor.
8. **Training and Educational Opportunities** – Plan to participate in trainings through the Acts 12:24 Churches as well as taking classes through approved Ministry Education Centers. See the section called The Outcome-Based Approach for information about educational opportunities.
9. **Do Ministry in your Church** – Serve Jesus by serving in the ministry of your local church.
10. **Learn about Steward, Expand, & Multiply** – Go to Acts1224Churches.com and choose “About Us” to read about our Enduring Initiatives.
11. **Lead a Group of Disciples** – Continue to lead other people to faith in Jesus and to grow spiritually. Get trained in Discovery Bible Study and start a DBS group in your church or community. For more information on DBS training, talk to your pastor or go to MEGSystem.Acts1224Churches.com.
12. **Year by Year** – At the conclusion of a year, meet with your mentor and prepare a report to the MEG Board. Together we discern if God is leading you to continue or to conclude the CMC journey. You may have another MEG Board interview at this point.
13. **Deploy to your Harvest Field** – Jesus sends His disciples to work in His harvest field. You will meet with the MEG Board to hear together from God in order to discern how He is deploying you to serve in His church. See the section titled What to Expect - The Deployment Interview to learn more & see sample questions.
14. **Keep Growing and Plan to Multiply Disciples** – Develop a plan for ongoing development that leads to multiplication of disciples, groups, & churches.

The Outcome-Based Development Criteria

Heart - These outcomes focus on the spiritual condition and personal lifestyle of a follower of Jesus:

Characterized by spiritual maturity and a strong sense of a call to ministry

- Shaped by spiritual disciplines
- Roots identity and calling firmly in Christ
- Models a Spirit-led life of holiness

Demonstrates a high level of self-awareness

- Understands and articulates strengths and weaknesses
- Builds teams around blind-spots
- Knows how leadership/communication style impacts others both positively and negatively

Lives a well-balanced life that can sustain the demands of ministry

- Attends adequately to physical, emotional, and mental needs
- Schedules regular time for play and recreation
- Lives a simple life free of unhealthy addiction and compulsion

Lives a life shaped by love for others

- Prioritizes spouse and children (if applicable)
- Builds and maintains healthy, close relationships with people inside and outside of the church
- Cultivates relationships of confession and accountability

Models humility

- Remains teachable and accepts correction when given
- Maintains a non-defensive posture towards leaders, followers and peers
- Willingly seeks the perspective of others

Head - The “head” criteria place the focus on gaining an adequate foundation of knowledge and on developing the necessary habits of learning:

Demonstrates biblical understanding

- Knows how the parts of the Bible fit into the big story
- Follows John Wesley’s example by interpreting Scripture as having full authority to explain the world and guide our lives
- Demonstrates ability to root a Wesleyan worldview in the Bible

Demonstrates a Wesleyan theological integration

- Knows and embraces the history, polity, Articles of Religion and core values of the Free Methodist Church
- Articulates Wesleyan distinctives compellingly
- Understands and embraces Wesleyan relational theology

Has sufficient theological education

- Rigorously studies the Bible, works of theology, and how God works and reveals Himself in all of Creation
- Demonstrates understanding of how the Great Commission shapes our view of Jesus (Christology), the purposes of God for His people (Missiology) and how Jesus’s followers are to worship and work together (Ecclesiology)
- Models and promotes life-long learning

Clearly and humbly states deeply held biblical understandings, listening respectfully and pursuing shared goals whenever possible

- Actively seeks to build and maintain bridges within the Free Methodist Church and among other Christian groups
- Demonstrates an appreciation for the contribution of other Christian traditions while wholeheartedly embracing our own history, identity and diversity
- Demonstrates a growing appreciation for humanity and value for all people regardless of their belief system

Possesses the ability to practically apply learning

- Demonstrates the ability to teach truth and train others to fulfill the Great Commission
- Demonstrates an ability to find God's redemptive activity in daily life
- Demonstrates the ability to deepen faith through real-life experiences

Hands - The "hands" criteria place the focus on increasing skills and increasing the capacity to expand the Kingdom of God on earth by making disciples and reproducing Jesus-centered groups:

Demonstrates fruitfulness in ministry

- Has a track record of planting and cultivating God's word such that more people come to know Jesus, grow spiritually, and go to work in God's harvest field
- Effectively tells My Story (personal testimony), tells God's Story (plan of salvation) and discerns who is ready to respond to the Gospel (Person of Peace)
- Able to gather people into Jesus-centered groups that are healthy, diverse and can reproduce

Cultivates the expansion of God's Kingdom

- Teaches and models the transforming power of the Gospel to bring reconciliation, justice and peace into a sinful world
- Engages local and global needs of the broken and poor
- Continually focuses ministry on the margin, freely proclaiming Jesus' power to liberate the individual and defeat corrupt systems

Operates as a servant-leader

- Promotes the development of others
- Serves the local and global church, demonstrating cross-cultural competency
- Creates safe, empowering, healthy biblical communities of holy people multiplying disciples, leaders, groups and churches

Empowers others to discover and function within their God-given design

- Demonstrates wholehearted support for women and men of all languages, nations and ethnicities to have prophetically affirmed, Spirit-anointed ministry in the church that Jesus created on the Day of Pentecost
- Gives priority to personally gaining Kingdom knowledge and skills and Kingdom habits and practices that they immediately teach to others in a training environment
- Actively helps others discover and operate within their God-given design

Leads with creativity and vision

- Seeks best practices of contextual and culturally relevant ministry
- Envisions alternatives and successfully leads others toward more creative and effective outcomes
- Casts compelling vision and develops strategic plans to accomplish it

The Outcome-Based Approach

Our Process for Pastoral Development and Discernment

The Acts 12:24 Churches uses an outcome-based pastoral development approach. This approach responds to the overall expectations for pastoral development across the Free Methodist Church – USA. Yet we implement some priorities in the Acts 12:24 Churches that represent how our network (conference) is uniquely shaped by our Enduring Initiatives – Steward, Expand, & Multiply and the priorities of a Disciple-Making Movement.

We place our focus on “formation” not just “information.” We place our focus on “development” not just completing a “checklist” of classes and activities. We place our focus on “discerning” (hearing from God) not automatically “awarding a certificate.” We provide for “front-line training” not requiring “re-locating” to get an education.

The LMC|CMC journey is built around an Outcome-Based Formation Plan that is primarily focused on the Outcome-Based Criteria & Approach.

Your pastor, Regional Superintendent, and the Regional MEG Board are all available to orient the you to the LMC|CMC Journey and to answer any questions. Contact information for your regional leadership can be found at MEGSystem.Acts1224Churches.com.

The Mentor

All LMCs & CMCs should be developing under the guidance of a Mentor. You will consult with your pastor or the Regional Leaders regarding the selection of a Mentor. When a Mentor is established, you will include their information in your MEG Profile.

The Mentor and LMC|CMC will meet and talk through this document, agree to meet regularly for updates, coaching, and goal-setting that is focused on The Outcome-Based Development Criteria. This is typically a two to three-year long mentoring relationship.

Training and Educational Opportunities

All Acts 12:24 Churches Pastors are to have proficiency in these “base-level” areas of study:

- **Free Methodist History and Polity** (Required prior to the New CMC Interview)
- **Community Church Planting | Disciple Making**
- **Wesleyan Theology**

Find an approved Ministry Education Center at MEGSystem.Acts1224Churches.com under the **Candidates** menu.

The LMC|CMC and Mentor consult with the MEG Services Office to design training and educational components for the Outcome-Based Formation Plan. The pastoral development system of the Acts 12:24 Churches is grounded in very distinct history, theology, and Great Commission practices. In order to fully understand the Acts 12:24 Churches’ approach, the CMC is required to take several courses through approved Ministry Education Centers.

Additional Education and Training - At the core, we want you to establish a lifestyle of *rigorously studying the Bible, studying works of theology, and studying how God works and reveals Himself in all of Creation*. You should intentionally include training and educational courses in the Outcome-Based Formation Plan that strengthen you in needed areas of knowledge and skill. The Regional MEG Board makes the final decision on when a CMC has completed the necessary training and education.

Our classes are offered in a **college-like way** – with a teacher that has academic credentials, develops a course syllabus, requires readings from specified texts, & assigns a course project or other means of an LMC|CMC demonstrating mastery of the topic of study. Many LMCs & CMCs take classes from approved Ministry Education Centers in the Acts 12:24 Churches. The coursework from Bible Institutes, Christian Colleges, or Seminaries may also be a part of your development.

The Academic Classes include:

- Leading the Church in the 21st Century
- Communication Skills
- Old Testament Survey
- New Testament Survey
- Inductive Bible Study
- In-depth Study of a Book or Books of the Bible
- Introduction to Christian Doctrine
- Caring for the Flock
- Homiletics
- Spiritual Formation and Prayer
- Christian Family
- Biblical Hospitality and Encouragement
- Christ as King
- Leading Change

The MEG Services Office of the Acts 12:24 Churches encourages Regional Superintendents, Regional MEG Boards, Ministry Education Centers, LMC | CMC Mentors, and local church pastors to develop innovative Ministry Training & Education Programs which utilize college-like classes, Disciple Multiplication principles, and Community Church Planting Courses. Do this in consultation with leaders of the Acts 12:24 Churches so we all share best practices for interactive adult learning methods to educate and train LMCs & CMCs.

Deploying to Your Harvest Field

Each year, in March, the CMC and the CMC Mentor will prepare a summary report of the CMC's educational progress, training experience, and growth in ministry capacity. This report is to be structured according to the Heart, Head, and Hands Outcome-Based Development Criteria. This report will be submitted to the Regional MEG Chair for review by the Regional MEG Board and the Regional Superintendent.

If, in the opinion of the Mentor and the CMC's pastor, the CMC has demonstrated readiness to have a follow-up interview with the Regional MEG Board, the Mentor (and Pastor) may prepare a letter to the Regional MEG Chair to request a Deployment Interview. The CMC development journey typically requires a minimum of two to three years to complete. See What to Expect – The Deployment Interview for information about this interview.

The entire developmental journey, and all of the work on requirements and recommendations within this system ultimately yields to one and only one question, "What is the call of God for this follower of Jesus?" The Regional MEG Board meets with the CMC on at least two different occasions to listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit. The Regional MEG Board has full authority to deploy a CMC as an ordained Elder or into another God-directed path at any point during the CMC's developmental journey

When a MEG Board decides to deploy a CMC as an ordained Elder, this decision is implemented by bringing the CMC before the Annual Conference of the Acts 12:24 Churches, and, under the leadership of a senior leader in our network (a Bishop or a Superintendent) ordaining the person as an Elder in the Free Methodist Church. This happens according to biblical precedent in a public ceremony of the laying on of hands and prayer. When a Regional MEG Board decides to ordain a CMC, the leaders of the Acts 12:24 Churches will provide details of when and where the Service of Ordination will take place.

What to Expect - The New CMC Interview

The New CMC Interview determines if a person who is interested in gaining greater capacity for Christian ministry may benefit from entering the rigorous discernment, development, & deployment journey that we call the Conference Ministerial Candidate Journey. Many Interviewees will already be in a local church-based process called the Local Ministerial Candidate Journey.

In the New CMC Interview, the Regional MEG Board learns about your personal testimony, life journey, and sense of calling to ministry. Here are some questions and topics the Regional MEG Board is likely to discuss with the interviewee:

1. Tell your story of how you came to follow Jesus/how He transforms your life
2. Tell God's story - give a brief presentation of the plan of salvation
3. Describe how you look for and find new seekers – people who are open to faith in Jesus
4. Describe a time that you formed a new group among your current relationships
5. Talk about the basic series of Bible study lessons that you have ready help people get started as disciples
6. How specifically do you care for your soul? What practices keep you most connected to God?
7. How have your ministry experiences shaped your understanding of God's call on your life?
8. What ministry tasks come easily for you and which are a struggle?
9. Describe what types of team members you need to work with to capitalize on your strengths and compensate for your weaknesses.
10. What do you do for fun? How does stress affect you and how do you respond to this? How do you maintain balance in your life?
11. What is your current level of indebtedness? What is your plan for addressing this, if necessary?
12. If the enemy of your soul were to target an area/areas where you struggle, what would that look like? What structures do you have in your life to deal with temptation in this area/these areas?
13. How do you balance the needs of your family with the other demands of your life?
14. Aside from your spouse (if married), who do you have in your life with whom you can be completely honest about the struggles you face personally and in ministry?
15. Have you, or your spouse been divorced? (*In the Acts 12:24 Churches there is a respectful process of exploring the dynamics of a past divorce with a potential CMC. More information is provided about this in Attachment #6.*)
16. Tell us about three people you would consider friends.
17. Tell us about a recent time when you experienced a personal or work-related failure. What happened? What did you learn from it?
18. Who are the people that you seek out to receive counsel and guidance?

Background Checks

The Acts 12:24 Churches uses a professional screening service to conduct background checks on individuals being considered for positions of responsibility in our organization. We require a background check for persons who apply to enter our pastoral development/ministry deployment process as well as our Regional MEG Teams. The potential CMC (or prospective pastor) will be asked to complete a background check with the screening company we use. Your Regional MEG Chair will provide you with additional information about this process. Any background issues of possible concern will be discussed during the Regional MEG Board's process with an Interviewee.

What to Expect - The Deployment Interview

The Regional MEG Boards and the Office of MEG Services of the Acts 12:24 Churches is responsible to see that godly, competent pastors make a maximum impact for the Kingdom of God at the front lines of ministry. The Regional MEG Board also cares for churches in times of crisis and/or transition. The Deployment Interview provides an opportunity to discern how you may best serve Jesus in Kingdom-expanding and Kingdom-multiplying ministry. Here are some questions and topics the MEG Board is likely to discuss with the CMC:

1. Tell us something you have learned recently from Scriptures
2. What are some concepts or passages from the Bible that are a struggle for you? How do you wrestle with these?
3. How does being Wesleyan impact how we approach Scripture?
4. What are some unique core values of Free Methodism, but from our history and from the present?
5. What is your understanding of what it means to be connectional?
6. What have you done in the past year to develop your mind?
7. What are your plans for your continued learning in the next year?
8. Tell us about your experiences working with people or organizations that are not Free Methodist
9. How would you explain the Gospel message to a 10-year-old who has never been to church?
10. Describe a recent example in which you saw God at work in an everyday situation
11. What opportunities have you had to preach or teach? What have these looked like? What did you preach/teach about?
12. Tell us about a time recently when you had a faith conversation with someone who was not yet fully committed to Christ. What happened?
13. What is the demographic breakdown of your church and/or the ministry that you lead?
14. Who would you describe as the marginalized people in your community?
15. What is your understanding of why they are in the situations they are in?
16. How are you personally involved in ministries of justice and compassion?
17. In whom are you personally investing? How did you get connected with them?
18. Who have you identified and “shoulder-tapped” recently as someone with ministry and/or leadership potential?
19. How have you crossed the gender-barrier to invest in people who are different from you? How about the racial/ethnic barrier?
20. Consider the ministries of your church that you lead or are involved in. What is working well and what isn’t? What are your criteria for determining effectiveness?
21. What is the short-term and long-term vision for the ministries you lead or are involved in? What would need to happen practically in order for this vision to be fulfilled?
22. What do you think you need for healthy, effective, long-term ministry in the Free Methodist Church? What gaps do you see in yourself, whether personal, intellectual, or practical?
23. Ordained Elders are called to go wherever God sends them and serve wherever God calls them. What are your thoughts about the possibility of relocating? (If married) How do you think your spouse (and children, if applicable) would respond to this?

After the interview is completed, the MEG Board may recommend that the CMC (or prospective pastor) be received as a member of the Acts 12:24 Churches and ordained an Elder. The MEG Board may recommend that the CMC continue working on his/her Formation Plan for another year, providing specific suggestions for Outcome-Focused Development. The MEG Board may recommend that the CMC pursue non-ordained ministry and refer him/her to the local church leadership for further guidance about local church ministry. Non-ordained options are very diverse and highly necessary in the church of Jesus. Included in the non-ordained options could be certification as a non-ordained chaplain, consideration for the role of Deacon by the local church, and many other types of lay ministry.

The Special Circumstances of Divorce Clearance

Divorce is never part of God's perfect plan. That stated, some marriages, even among followers of Jesus do dissolve. Having experienced a divorce or being married to someone who has experienced divorce does not automatically disqualify you from fruitful ministry; but the brokenness experienced in divorce must be addressed by forgiveness and healing.

Forgiveness and healing can only take place when those who have sinned confess it, ask for forgiveness from those they have harmed, and commit to the hard work of walking in wholeness. The same standard applies to those who have been sinned against in a divorce situation—finding healing, and both offering and experiencing forgiveness.

In the Acts 12:24 Churches we walk through a Divorce Clearance Process with individuals who seek to enter the CMC Journey or clergy who seek to transfer into the Free Methodist Church. A leader of the Acts 12:24 Churches will contact any potential CMC or pastor who has experienced divorce and describe the purpose and process of a divorce clearance. This process is also for a potential CMC or pastor whose spouse who has experienced divorce.

Descriptions of Roles/Responsibilities

The **MEG Board** is responsible to see that godly, competent pastors make a maximum impact for the Kingdom of God at the front lines of ministry. The Regional MEG Boards also care for churches in times of crisis and/or transition. We do that by:

1. Carefully screening potential pastors,
2. Guiding the development of new pastors,
3. Matching qualified pastors to existing congregations and new church planting projects,
4. Providing care and support to these front-line leaders and local churches, and,
5. Providing guidance to churches and pastors who are in transition.

A Regional MEG Board is involved at strategic decision-making moments, giving guidance to the senior leaders (whom we refer to as Superintendents) and other staff members of the Acts 12:24 Churches.

The presiding **Bishop** is the designated Chair of a Ministerial Appointments Committee (MAC). The Bishop may choose to lead a meeting of the MAC but in customary practice, does not. The Conference Superintendent, as Vice Chair, leads meetings of the MAC, routinely communicating with the Bishop about the leadership of the Conference.

The Acts 12:24 Churches has one **elected Superintendent** and a flexible number of **appointed Regional Superintendents**, according to the needs of our system. The authority of the Superintendency resides with the Conference Superintendent who delegates authority to Regional Superintendents and an Executive Superintendent.

The Acts 12:24 Churches has created a **comprehensive system of regional leadership** with Regional Superintendents, Regional MEG Chairs, and Regional MEG Boards which serve as **Regional MACs**.

When a Regional MEG convenes as the Regional MAC, the Regional Superintendent has the delegated authority to lead the meeting, unless (s)he requests that the Regional MEG Chair lead the Regional MAC meeting.

The **Conference MEG Chair** provides oversight to all the Regional MEG Chairs and Regional MEG Boards of the conference. Under the leadership of the Conference MEG Chair, the Regional MEG Chairs and the Conference Superintendent serve as **the Executive Committee of the Conference MEG Board** – with full authority for MEG action. The Executive Committee of the Conference MEG Board may be convened as the Conference MAC.

The **Conference Board of Administration** (BoA) provides administrative oversight to the Acts 12:24 Churches. As specified in the Book of Discipline, the BoA may act on behalf of the Annual Conference between meetings of the full conference.