



# West Michigan Conference

The United Methodist Church

## Cooperative Ministry Policy West Michigan Conference of The United Methodist Church

*Approved at 2013 Annual Conference*

The West Michigan Conference of The United Methodist Church affirms the value of all congregations, large and small, and acknowledges that connectionalism is central to our United Methodist identity.

Therefore, the West Michigan Conference supports and encourages cooperative ministry as a way of doing ministry that is at the heart of what it means to be United Methodist. Cooperative ministry allows individual churches to share their strengths and accomplish things they could not do on their own.

Cooperative ministry exists in many forms, including, but not limited to, those identified in ¶1206 of the 2012 United Methodist Book of Discipline (BOD). While formal cooperative ministry agreements may require approval by district superintendents, this policy is permissive rather than restrictive. Clergy and lay persons are empowered to initiate conversations and to implement cooperative ministry activities.

A Cooperative Ministry Committee (CMC) shall be established to assist the conference, cabinet, and the district superintendents in fulfilling the BOD requirements and the intent of this policy. The CMC shall report to the Conference Leadership Team. The CMC shall consist of 5 to 9 members and a cabinet representative. At least one half the remaining members shall be members or pastors of a church which is: part of a cooperative parish; on a multi-point charge; or a part-time appointment. The Organizational Principles of the West Michigan Plan of Organization shall also be followed in membership selection. The CMC will develop tools, guidance and other training materials; recommend strategies to appropriate conference boards and agencies; and work in concert with the conference, cabinet, and district superintendents to integrate cooperative ministry with other initiatives and priorities. The CMC intends to make many of these resources available online.