

Structuring the North Georgia Conference for 2024 and Beyond

Introducing A New Conference Structure

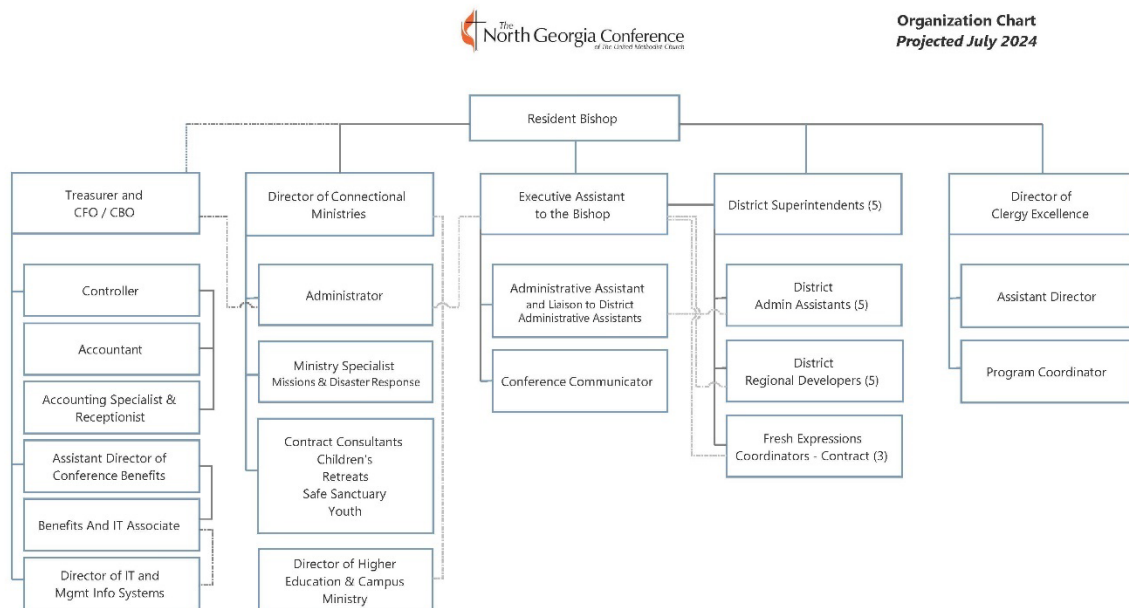
The North Georgia Conference will implement important changes in the months ahead. The changes take into consideration stewardship, mission, connection, and the work of The United Methodist Church in 2024 and beyond.

Background

Conference leadership has worked diligently and have prayerfully discerned ways to develop positive changes to our district and conference structure that will enable the current needs of the work of Christ through The United Methodist Church in North Georgia. These proposals have been endorsed by the Conference Council on Finance & Administration (CF&A).

Read about the proposed 5 districts at www.ngumc.org/structure.

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The multi-talented staff and conference-wide ministries of the North Georgia Conference will be re-structured with stewardship, mission, and connection as priorities.

The Conference structure will be organized into five ministry areas.

- Bishop's Office
- Treasurer's Office
- Connectional Ministries
- Center for Clergy Excellence
- District Offices

Conference Structure Q&A

Q How was the new structure developed?

Bishop Dease shared the foundation of this new structure in a video message this January (watch it here <https://vimeo.com/901001992>):

Conference leadership has to regularly assess our effectiveness and prayerfully discern the path forward. Over many months, we have been assessing and analyzing our ministry, celebrating our strengths, and seeking truth in our weakest areas.

There have been on-going conversations with the Conference Committee on Finance and Administration (CF&A) and other leadership in our conference. All of us have been in deep prayer and discernment asking the questions:

- *Who is it that God is calling us, as North Georgia United Methodists, to be/become?*
- *How can we be more effective disciples of Jesus missionally while using our resources more efficiently?*
- *What changes can we make to give us the best opportunity to accomplish God's mission through us?*

One of those truths we face is that the North Georgia Conference has seen a significant decline in church membership. The pandemic, church closures, and disaffiliations have all contributed to this decline. In consultation with CF&A we have concluded that restructuring is necessary.

Q What are the main takeaway findings in this new structure?

This re-structuring proposal represents a reduction in the apportionment budget and seeks to enable the Conference to be more effective and more efficient.

The changes are positive and exciting. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Conference and district staff will work together as one team.
- The bishop and conference leadership will continue to regularly assess our effectiveness and prayerfully discern next steps.
- Expect to be collaborative, connectional, and to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ in the months and years ahead.

Q Will there be staff changes?

Yes. Because of our itinerate system and changing missional priorities, staff at the United Methodist Center shift on a yearly basis. While there will be personnel changes (reflected in the projected appointment announcements), there will be no staff layoffs. The changes include the naming of a Director of Connectional Ministries and a shift in the work of congregational development to the districts. Additionally, several areas of the conference operating departments have incorporated staff reductions through attrition over the last two years by thoughtfully and creatively reengineering processes and deliverables.

Q What will be the role of Connectional Ministries?

The title Director of Connectional Ministries is familiar to the North Georgia Conference. Our Book of Discipline outlines the responsibilities (paragraph 608) of Connectional Ministries and of the director.

The Office of Connectional Ministries will oversee our Conference-wide ministry focus, including age-level ministries, Safe Sanctuaries, campus ministries, disaster response ministries, relationships with our related agencies and camping ministries, and more. In alignment with the Book of Discipline, the director will:

- steward the vision of the conference;
- serve as leader of the continuous process of transformation and renewal necessary for the conference to be faithful to our Christian identity in a changing world;
- ensure alignment of the total resources of the conference to its vision;
- ensure the connections among the local, district, conference, and general Church ministries for the purpose of networking, resourcing, and communicating shared ministry.

Q What will be the role of the Regional Developers?

Building on the legacy of excellence in church development, we will soon be deploying developers into our communities. Five district-based regional developers will come alongside congregations to help revitalize churches, rebuild, cast vision, re-purpose facilities, replant churches, and more. This work will be carried out in close collaboration with local churches, District Superintendents, District Strategic Growth Teams, and the Executive Assistant to the Bishop.

This change in strategy comes as we acknowledge that there are fewer of us, but the mission field is ever growing.

Q Do the members of the Annual Conference need to vote on conference restructuring?

No, the structure of conference and district ministry work is set by the bishop in consultation with the cabinet, CF&A, and other leaders. However, the structure will be formally presented to the members of the 2024 North Georgia Annual Conference.

Q What is the timeline?

We will implement this new structure beginning July 2024.

Q What are the financial implications?

It is estimated that these changes in structure, paired with the reduction in districts from 8 to 5, will together reduce the North Georgia conference apportionment budget by approximately \$1.85 million annually.

Q What do these changes mean for the local church?

These changes are meant to be an asset to local churches and pave the way for an even more connectional and collaborative approach to our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Your local church should expect to know and be known by district and conference leadership in life-giving ways!