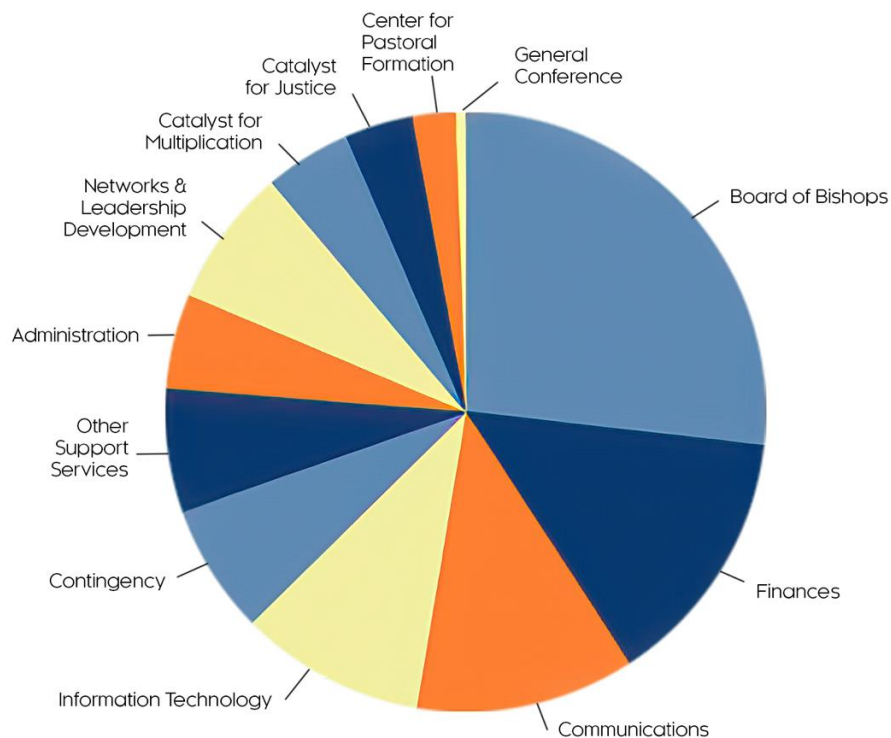


The 2024 Equal Participation Plan (EPP) is a financial partnership among all the churches that comprise the Free Methodist denomination. The conference system of the Free Methodist Church relies upon the continual contribution of its members to accomplish its worldwide ministry.

The Ministry of EPP

- Support your Conference Churches.
- Submit timely and accurate Annual Reports online. Your church’s yearly statistics aid in decision making and clearly seeing where God may be leading us as a movement.
- Encourage collaboration between churches, ministry contexts, and cultures for a local and global impact. Participation in conference and denominational initiatives equips churches to do more together than possible individually.
- Encourage your congregation to make annual commitments to support missionaries, international church planning and national leader development through the work of the Free Methodist World Missions.

You are a part of a community that equips and supports the church and its leaders to minister and to multiply. We are accountable to you. We commit to ask for no more funds than necessary to maximize the ministry dollars for the local church.



The 2024 Equal Participant Plan budget is **\$4,274,410**. The following details are how your contributions are making a difference in the ministry of the church around the world.

26.8% (\$1,146,642) Board of Bishops

Elected bishops promote the vision of the Free Methodist Church and pursue the strategic priority of multiplying disciples, leaders, groups, and churches. They equip leaders in the United States and partner with leaders in emerging Free Methodist conferences around the world. Additionally, they serve as liaisons between our Free Methodist colleges and universities, the Free Methodist Financial, and our Human Service Ministries. Your support provides salaries and benefits for the board of bishops and their staffs. Their staffs provide critical support to the ministry of the church and expand the capacity of the bishop they serve. Resources needed to accomplish their ministries (such as travel, training and equipping) are included in the budget.

14.0% (\$597,648) Finance

The finance team provides audited, timely financial reporting. This information is used for decision making by missionaries, WMC work groups, and denominational leadership. You make processing tens of thousands of gifts and the safe sending of ministry resources to more than 70 countries possible.

11.8% (\$505,980) Communications

Your support funds Light + Life Communication, which is responsible for our family of websites, publishing, social media, and graphic design. This ministry provides clear and compelling identification of our church's mission and core values and easy access to Free Methodist information & ministry opportunities. Communications makes publishing our award-winning *Light + Life* magazine and other Free Methodist branded resources possible.

10.0% (\$428,035) Information Technology

Your EPP provides for an onsite IT team, backed up by contracted professionals, whose job is to maintain all digital systems used by the FMC-USA. The budget includes annual costs of donor management and financial software and the purchase of equipment following a replacement plan that ensures reasonable technology updates.

7.5% (\$319,490) Networks & Leadership Development

Your support allows for the development of flexible, need-meeting networks that empower leaders in kingdom outreach and expansion. Current networks include Chaplaincy, the Superintendents Leadership Team (SLT), and FM: Infuse (National Student Ministries Team). This fund also assists with new leadership development initiatives under the guidance of the Board of Bishops.

7.0% (\$300,000) Contingency

Your support provides a fund in case of a shortfall in gifts, a safety net for conferences in difficulty and other unexpected events. The 2024 contingency budget was almost completely funded from reserves.

6.5% (\$279,529) Other Support Services

Human Resources (\$109,804)

Our Human Resources staff oversees payroll and benefit services for the employees at the World Ministries Center and missionaries around the world. They also coordinate the ministerial pension plan for some 3,000 Free Methodist pastors and leaders.

Board of Administration (\$56,400)

Enables our elected leaders who serve between General Conferences to meet twice each year to set policy and budgets and offer counsel and guidance in fulfilling the mission of the church.

Marston Memorial Historical Center (\$65,728)

Your support enables the Historical Center at our World Ministries Center to provide valuable services to churches and scholars and to archive significant historical documents for future research and guidance.

Retiral Assistance (\$7,000)

Provides retirement assistance to general church personnel and retired ministers who served prior to the establishment of our pension plan.

Mailroom & Shipping (\$40,597)

5.1% (\$219,955) Administration

These funds provide for World Ministry Center operations and leadership through the office of the Chief Operating Officer. Their staff serve in reception, event coordination, facilities management, and the mailroom. Legal and financial informational resources and counsel used by churches across the United States are included in this budget.

4.7% (\$199,020) Catalyst for Multiplication

Refocusing priorities to align with core beliefs expressed in the Free Methodist Way required resourcing two new initiatives: Multiplication and Justice. EPP provides for salaries, benefits, travel and working funds to support denominational leadership under these initiatives.

The Catalyst for Multiplication will help Annual Conferences develop plans and provide coaching on the execution of those plans pursuant to living out the mission, vision, and strategies of the Free Methodist Church. Additionally, the CMS advises the Board of Bishops to increase the overall effectiveness of the FMCUSA. Church Planting Grants are now included in this budget.

3.6% (\$155,087) Catalyst for Justice

This initiative's goal is to define justice from a biblical perspective and promote action consistent with those principles. In addition to matters of race and gender, the Catalyst for Justice could encompass immigration, access for persons with different abilities & languages, and other issues. Your support allows leaders to work with existing FM justice-related networks, raise up regional advocates and create opportunities for collaboration and joint initiatives at the conference level.

2.3% (\$98,024) Center for Pastoral Formation

An endowed gift provides for a substantial portion of this cost center. Your support enables staff to assist superintendents and Ministerial Education and Guidance Boards in the work of identifying, recruiting, and deploying competent leaders. As well as providing for the administration of ministerial scholarships, guidance to those who are preparing for ordained ministry, the annual Starting Strong conference (new pastor orientation), short-term intensive classes (j-term) and correspondence courses toward ordination.

0.6% (\$25,000) General Conference

Preparations for General Conference 2027, a substantial portion of the cost is covered by registration fees.

0.0% (\$0) Building & Maintenance

The upkeep of our current building is completely funded by investment earnings from sale of the prior building.

EPP Calculation

As a member of the Free Methodist denomination your church can accept charitable contributions that are tax-deductible by donors. Your membership also means your church is not required to pay federal and state income taxes, nor is your church required to file income tax returns. Other benefits of participation are access to ministry resources like networking support, leadership development opportunities and the planned giving and lending resources of Free Methodist Financial. Participation in the EPP provides your church with the resources of global connection and direct access to missionaries and projects. The Free Methodist church provides reliable avenues to contribute to fruitful ministry elsewhere in the world. By building international relationships we can securely send funds and reduce the impact on the recipients. Annual budgets for the various services the denomination provides are determined in part by the total of these EPP assessments, so it is important that EPP assessments be fully funded.

Conference contributions are calculated using annual reports submitted by individual churches. These annual reports are accumulated into the Yearbook that serves as a directory for the Free Methodist Church and the data is used to identify trends. The EPP calculation begins with the total revenue reported by conference churches. Contributions for Free Methodist missionaries, certain mission projects, church planting, capital campaigns, and other specified items are deducted from total revenue before the EPP percentage is applied.

Your annual commitments to Free Methodist World Missions are vital for sending and sustaining missionaries. If these gifts are made through the church, they count as missions-giving deductions in the EPP calculation. Ministry resourcing is determined by your support for missionaries, international church planting, and national leadership development.

The official doctrine of the Free Methodist Church recognizes the denomination as “representative of what the church of Jesus Christ should be on earth.” As such, members recognize a “specific commitment” to common faith and life which is laid out in the Free Methodist Book of Discipline (¶121). Along with this shared theology, there is a shared responsibility to fulfill the Great Commission to the ends of the Earth. By supporting the denomination, each church is participating in the work of Christ around the world.

2023 Book of Discipline (The Church, ¶121)

The church is created by God. It is the people of God. Christ Jesus is its Lord and Head. The Holy Spirit is its life and power. It is both divine and human, heavenly and earthly, ideal and imperfect. It is an organism, not an unchanging institution. It exists to fulfill the purposes of God in Christ. It redemptively ministers to persons. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it that it should be holy and without blemish. The church is a fellowship of the redeemed and the redeeming, preaching the Word of God and administering the sacraments according to Christ's instruction. The Free Methodist Church purposes to be representative of what the church of Jesus Christ should be on earth. It therefore requires specific commitment regarding the faith and life of its members. In its requirements it seeks to honor Christ and obey the written Word of God.