

HELP FOR CHAIR-PERSONS & COORDINATORS OF COUNCILS, BOARDS, COMMITTEES, & MINISTRY TEAMS BACK RIVER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Thank you so much for your willingness to chair/coordinate one of our councils, boards, committees or ministry teams. Your commitment and good leadership will be invaluable to the healthy functioning of our church as we move forward, seeking to make and become followers of Jesus who make a holy impact in the world. Whether this is the first time you have held a chair/coordinator position or whether you're an old hat at it, you will find the instructions below helpful. If you have any questions, please contact the pastor and or lay leader of our church.

1. Obtain and read our church vision/mission document **entitled "A Vision of Discipleship"** available on our website. It can also be printed by one of the office secretaries upon request.
2. Obtain and read any available committee description, summary, and **guidelines** provided by the pastor and/or Nominations and Lay Development Team. Please direct questions regarding these documents to either the pastor or Lay Leader.
3. Make sure **everyone else** on your council/board/committee/ministry team has an adequate understanding of the **committee responsibilities and operation** and how these **relate to the church vision and mission**. To assist you in doing this you might want to have each person read "A Vision of Discipleship" and the committee guidelines.
4. More specifically you may wish to lay out the **specific expectations and responsibilities** you (or the church council) have regarding participation in your council/board/committee/ministry team. For example: How many meetings will you have? How long will they be? What happens if someone is unable to attend or has to leave early? Is there training needed? How will individuals be held accountable for completing action-items on time? Etc. (The Church Leadership Council has a **covenant** that it uses for its membership. If you would like a copy to model your covenant after, please contact the Council Coordinator.)
5. Be sure to have the **names and contact information** of everyone on your council/committee/board/ministry team. Email is a great tool if people will take the responsibility to check their email. And of course, some people will not have email capabilities. Be sure to make clear how you will be contacting people and when.
6. Be sure to **plan all your meeting times with one of the church secretaries** who will make sure you find available times and space in the church facilities. Even if you plan to hold a meeting somewhere other than the church facilities, please turn in your schedule to the church office so your meeting times and locations will be posted on the church calendar.
7. Plan an **agenda** in advance for each meeting, taking consideration for what others on your council/committee/board/ministry team think is important to discuss. As possible, make the agenda available to your members prior to the meeting so everyone will come prepared to focus on those specific agenda items only. Agendas should be well organized with issues that need vote or action clearly identified. If something needs a vote or action, it is best to include a clearly stated proposal next to it that indicates plainly

what is being asked of your committee. For more sensitive or complicated issues, more than one meeting may be needed to properly consider all that is at stake and to make sure that a proposal is brought forward that is appropriate and what God wants. Time frames and name of presenters may also be helpful when creating the agenda. Do your best to start on time and end on time. (For an example of a Church Leadership Council agenda, please contact the Council Coordinator).

8. When facilitating your meeting, **keep to the agenda**, and help others to stay on task. If an issue is taking longer than its allotted time, it may be prudent to table that issue until next time, if appropriate.
9. Please provide at least 10 minutes for **devotion and worship** at the beginning of each meeting. This should include a prayer and a Scripture reading. You may also wish to include commentary on the Scripture from your choice of devotional sources and a worship song or two. It is also appropriate to end your meeting with a prayer.
10. Someone should be responsible for taking notes (**minutes**) during the meeting. Usually this is someone chosen to be the committee "secretary." Minutes need not be a word for word transcript but should be clear and succinct with only as much detail as needed to accurately reflect the tone and direction the committee took with each issue. Votes and action-items should be clearly denoted. Indication should be made whether an issue was approved or not, the number of votes for and against, the exact wording of any approved proposal, actions being taken by whom and when, etc. These minutes should be reported back to the committee/council/board/ministry team as soon after the meeting date as possible. Timely minutes provide a written record of decisions made, help with accuracy, and give clear direction regarding delegated tasks and responsibilities. (A blank Minutes Form is available on our church website or from the Church Leadership Council Coordinator).
11. Any **specific items that need addressed by the Church Leadership Council** should be highlighted in the minutes with a request made for those items to be placed in an upcoming Church Leadership Council agenda as appropriate.
12. **Copies of the minutes** for each meeting should be made available as follows:
 - Each member of your committee/council/board/ministry team should receive a copy of the minutes.
 - One copy of minutes should be kept in a safe place by your committee secretary.
 - Another copy should be emailed to the Church Leadership Council Coordinator and Pastor for Council review.
13. It is your responsibility as the chair-person/coordinator of your committee/council/board/ministry team to follow up and **make sure all action items are appropriately taken** within reasonable time frames. When a member of your committee is not fulfilling his/her responsibilities it is the duty of your committee to keep them accountable. If this proves unrealistic, then that member may need to be replaced. Our church's Lay Leadership Team should be consulted if this should occur.