

# EQUAL PARTICIPATION PLAN

In his first letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul described the Church as the body of Christ. The members of the Church function together, like the limbs of the body, to accomplish the work of Christ, its' Lord and Head.

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 (§121) which is laid out in the Free Methodist Book of Discipline. Along with this shared theology, there is a shared responsibility to fulfill the Great Commission from our “Jerusalem” to the “ends of the Earth.” By supporting the denomination, each church is participating in the work of Christ around the world.

The Equal Participation Plan (EPP) is a financial partnership among all the churches which constitute the Free Methodist denomination. It is an aspect of that “specific commitment” dictated by the doctrine of the church. The conference system of the Free Methodist Church relies upon the continual contribution of its members to accomplish its worldwide ministry.

Conference contribution amounts are calculated using annual reports submitted by individual churches. These annual reports accumulate into a kind of report card and directory for the FM Church called The Yearbook. The EPP calculation begins with the total revenue reported by conference churches. Contributions for Free Methodist missionaries and certain mission projects, church planting, capital campaigns, and other specified items are deducted from total revenue before the EPP percentage is applied. 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.

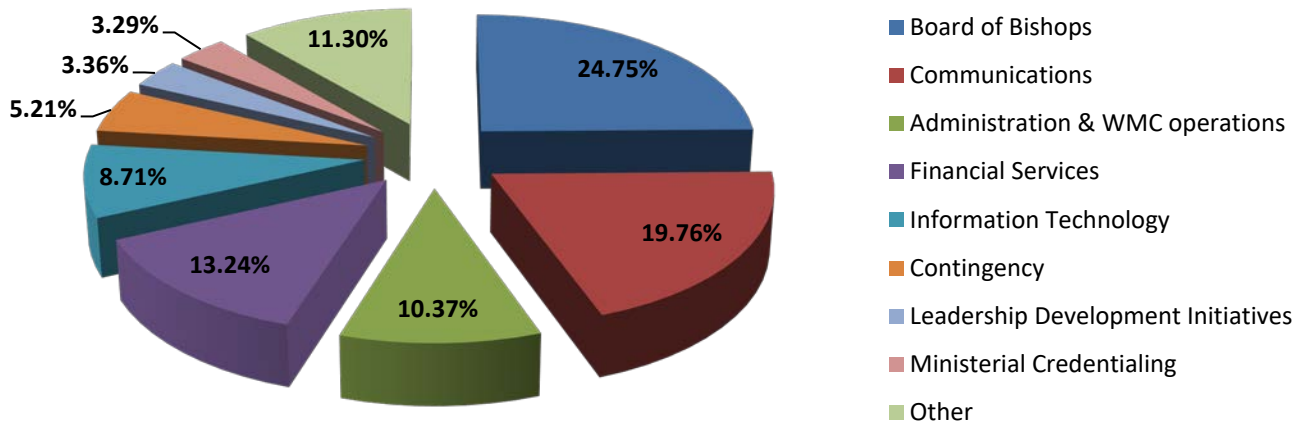
As a member of the Free Methodist denomination your church can accept charitable contributions which are tax-deductible by donors. Your membership also means your church is not required to pay federal and state income taxes, nor is your church required to file income tax returns. Other benefits of participation are access to ministry resources like church planting assistance, networking support, leadership development opportunities and the planned giving and lending resources of the Free Methodist Foundation. Participation in the EPP provides your church with the resources of global connection, providing direct access to missionaries and projects. It also means your church has reliable avenues to contribute to fruitful ministry elsewhere in the world.

You are invited to be 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 cutting edge of the harvest.

## **YOUR ROLE**

1. Support your Annual Conference.
2. Encourage your church to have local and global impact by participating with and using the resources provided by your Conference and the Free Methodist Church.
3. See that your church submits a complete and accurate Annual Report (your church's yearly statistics) online and on time.
4. Encourage your congregation to make annual commitments to support missionaries and country ministries through the work of Free Methodist World Missions. Your commitments:
  - Are vital for sending and sustaining missionaries
  - Help determine ministry resourcing
  - Must be fulfilled in the same manner as made i.e. individually or through the church
  - If made through the church, count as missions-giving deductions in the EPP calculation

## EPP 2020 Allocations



What follows are eighteen ways that your 2020 EPP contributions, budgeted at \$3,993,507 are making a difference in the ministry of the church around the world:

**24.75% (\$988,552) — Board of Bishops.** Your bishops disciple, teach, and minister in the church at large. Their support staffs provide critical support to the ministry of the church and expand the capacity of the bishop they serve. Your bishops equip leaders in the United States and partner with leaders in emerging Free Methodist conferences around the world. They partner with superintendents, denominational leaders, and FM Network facilitators. They also serve as liaisons between our Free Methodist colleges and universities, the Free Methodist Foundation, and our Human Service Ministries. Your bishops promote the vision of the Free Methodist Church and pursue the strategic priority of multiplying disciples, leaders, groups, and churches. Your support provides salaries and benefits for your bishops and their staffs. Resources needed to accomplish their ministries are included. These resources include funds for training, equipping and travel.

**19.76% (\$789,045) — Free Methodist Communications.** Your gifts are expanding and maintaining an interactive website that provides a clear and compelling identification of the mission and core values of the Free Methodist Church; providing easy access to Free Methodist information, ministry opportunities, resources and community, and providing a means of teaching and dialogue for our leaders and others which unites us. Your support funds the publication of Free Methodist branded resources such as FreeMo Journal and makes possible the publishing of our award-winning *Light & Life* magazine.

**10.37% (\$414,272) — Administration and World Ministries Center Operations.** Your support makes possible outstanding administrative leadership through the office of the Chief Operating Officer and his staff who serve in reception, event coordination, facilities management and mailroom. These funds also provide the legal and financial informational resources and counsel used by so many churches across the United States.

**13.24% (\$528,901) — Financial Services.** You make possible the processing of tens of thousands of gifts and the economical and safe sending of ministry resources to more than 70 countries. Audited, timely financial reporting provides information for decision making to missionaries, WMC work groups, and denominational leadership.

**8.71% (\$347,887) — Information Technology and Equipment Purchases.** Your EPP provides for an onsite IT team whose job is to maintain all digital systems used by the FMC-USA, as well as annual maintenance costs of donor management and financial software and the purchase of equipment following a replacement plan that insures reasonable update of technology

**5.21% (\$207,977) — Contingency.** Your support provides for a contingency fund for the unexpected, or in case of a shortfall in gifts. The 2020 budgeted amount is larger than the previous few years to cover expense that may be incurred in the transition from one Board of Bishops to another.

**3.36% (\$134,230) — Leadership Development Initiatives.** Your support assists with recalibration and other equipping events as well as new leadership development initiatives under the guidance of the Board of Bishops.

**3.29% (\$131,433) — Ministerial Credentialing Services.** Your support enables our staff to assist superintendents and Ministerial Education and Guidance Boards in the work of identifying, recruiting and deploying godly competent leaders. Your gifts provide for the administration of ministerial scholarships, guidance to those who are preparing for ordained ministry, the annual Starting Strong (New Pastors Orientation) conference, short-term intensive (J-Term) classes and correspondence courses toward ordination.

**2.38% (\$95,097) — FM Networks.** Your support provides for the development of flexible, fruitful, need-meeting networks that empower godly, competent leaders in Kingdom outreach and expansion. Current networks include the African-Heritage, National Latin, Central African, FM: infuse (national student ministries team) and Overseers (conference superintendents).

**2.17% (\$86,688) — Human Resources.** Your support enables our Human Resources staff to oversee payroll and benefit services for the employees at the World Ministries Center and missionaries around the world. In addition, HR staffers coordinate the ministerial pension plan for some 3,000 Free Methodist pastors and leaders.

**.97% (\$38,581) — Church Planting Grants.** Your support provides church planting grants to approved first- and second-year church plants; these are matching grants with the sponsoring church/conference.

**1.44% (\$57,530) — Marston Memorial Historical Center.** 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.

**1.08% (\$43,203) — Ministerial Education Grants/Loans.** Your support provides grants to students through John Wesley Seminary Foundation, which are recovered either in service to the Free Methodist Church or by financial repayment.

**1.13% (\$45,212) — 2023 General Conference.** Your support goes to preparations for General Conference 2023 in TBA.

**1.42% (\$56,767) — Board of Administration.** Your support enables our elected leaders who serve between General Conferences to meet together twice each year (April and October) to set policy and budgets, and offer counsel and guidance in fulfilling the mission of the church.

**0.38% (\$15,071) — Chaplaincy.** Your support assists with salary, travel expenses, and office supplies for our Free Methodist Chaplaincy Endorsing Agent.

**0.33% (\$13,061) — Retiral Assistance** Your support provides general church personnel and retired ministers who served prior to the establishment of our pension plan retirement assistance and pension supplement for retired bishops.