

Marianna/Panama City Charge Conference Guidelines 2018

Conference preparation time is upon us and I wanted to be sure all of our pastors and churches have everything they need in plenty of time. We have some changes this year, both in forms and meetings. So regardless of how long you have been in ministry, please take time to review these guidelines. It will help our charge conferences to go smoothly and be a positive experience for the pastor, church, and superintendent.

Charge Conference Training Events: These are scheduled for Monday, August 27th at 10:00 AM (District Office) and Thursday, August 30th at 6:30 PM (ChIPLEY UMC). These are open to everyone, but I especially encourage new pastors to come and bring a few key lay persons. Even if you are very experienced with charge conferences, it can be very helpful to train some lay people to assume some of this responsibility. It will be worthwhile!

- 1. Start early on nominations.** Go ahead and schedule your nominating committee meetings so the committee members will have plenty of time to prayerfully consider candidates for leadership in your church. Don't wait until the last minute. Don't make this an afterthought. Don't just fill blanks with names. This is a matter of considerable significance for the kingdom of God.
- 2. Have a one-page summary of nominations.** In some cases, that may need to be front and back. A suggested form is included with this email, or you may use your own. This will allow every church council member to easily see the nominations at a glance. This will be in addition to the multi-page Report of the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development, which can be difficult for people to navigate. This one-page summary is not a substitute for the Report of the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development. Both are required for Charge Conference.
- 3. The Parsonage Checklist is required** for the Marianna-Panama City District this year. Even though the conference website lists it as optional, I recommend that this be done annually. An annual review of the condition of the parsonage will help to catch maintenance issues to avoid expensive repairs later. Refer this to your parsonage committee, S/PPR committee, or trustees.
- 4. The Report of the Finance Committee** requires the audit report for 2016 or 2017 to be attached. If your church financial books have not been audited, I will be working with your church to insure that is done this year. This is a requirement that we cannot continue to ignore.
- 5. The Report of the Trustees** requires a certificate of insurance to be attached. The declarations page of your current active insurance policy will suffice.
- 4. I am asking that you have a church council meeting prior to your charge conference to look over and give tentative approval to the nominations and salary recommendations.** This can avoid a lot of conflict, confusion and embarrassment at charge conference. This church council meeting should be at least several days before charge conference in order to give S/PPR and/or nominations to meet again if needed.
- 5. Be prepared to have someone give a brief report** on the state of the church. This can be presented by the pastor, lay leader or another designated lay person. We don't need a recap of every activity in the church over the last year, but just a summary with a few highlights. The should not be more than 6-8 minutes.
- 6 Charge conference reports are required to be turned in to the district office one week before the charge conference date.** This has proven to be an effective way to get mistakes corrected and problems solved before charge conference. Feel free to email, fax, snail mail, or deliver your charge conference reports to ensure they are in district office one week prior to your charge conference date.

7. **I look forward to being with you.** I will be sharing a devotion as well as words of encouragement related to the uncertainty of the General Conference coming up in February 2019.

Grace and peace,

Doug Pennington

Superintendent

Marianna-Panama City District

Alabama-West Florida Conference

The United Methodist Church