



Church Conference 2018 Planning Guide

The goal for Church Conference is to assist the people in our churches to be better able to see how church conference & the business that we do has a direct connection with greater vitality. We want to inspire the church toward greater health and vitality as well as do the business of the church.

Pastors are invited to design a Church Conference that is meaningful for their churches. A sample/suggested order is below along with a handout that may be given out at the Church Conference. All forms are available online for you to download at <https://dscumc.org/church-forms/>. The 2018 Church Conference Forms & Reports Checklist gives the deadline dates for each form.

The Church Conference must include:

1. Opening

- a. Call to Order & Appointing of Recording Secretary ¶247.4 (Make certain someone prepared to take minutes is present. Minutes should be sent to the superintendent's office within five days. Legible handwritten minutes are acceptable. Use the downloadable outline/form as is helpful)
- b. Devotions – District Lay Leader and Superintendent

2. Required Reports – Vote must be taken.

- a. Adoption of ministry vision/goals/objectives of the local church ¶247.3, ¶252, and ¶213 (Council Chair)
- b. Report on Membership ¶247.15, 231 -- Membership audit must include:
 - i. Names of persons received into membership and method of reception;
 - ii. Names of persons whose membership has been terminated and method of termination. (Report those received and terminated since the last charge/church conference. This differs from the year-end statistical report which uses Jan. 1 – Dec. 31 data).
- c. Presentation/Approval of compensation package for Pastor(s) by SPRC Chair ¶247.13. Use official form.
- d. Report of the Pastor – focus here on question 5 of the Pastor's Report. This should focus on signs of vitality. How is the church living out its mission? Include something about the church's intentional process for developing disciples. Describe how a person who is new to the faith is introduced, then grows, and later matures as a disciple in your church. It should not last more than 10 minutes.
- e. Election of Lay Leadership/Nominations ¶258 and ¶249
- f. Lay Servant Annual Reports/Recommendations ¶247.11, ¶268, ¶269 (To retain their status, certified lay servants must have their status renewed annually. Use appropriate official form.)
- g. SPRC Report on Persons Preparing for Church Related Vocations ¶247.8,9,10 [This includes: 1) Recommendation of persons seeking candidacy for ordained ministry; 2) Reports on those previously approved and recommendations for renewal of candidacy; 3) Recommendations of persons for other church related vocations. Reporting is a responsibility of the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee. Material for written ballots should be available when voting is required by Discipline.]

3. Reports – No Vote Needed – Some items listed may not apply to your setting.

- a. Deacons in Full Connection
- b. Annual Report of Trustees ¶2550 (Use official form and report for current year.) Chair presents the form to District Superintendent
- c. Annual Report of Finance ¶258.4C (Use official form and report for the current year.) Chair presents the form to District Superintendent
- d. Retired Pastors
- e. Pastors Appointed to Extension Ministries

4. Adjournment/Blessing

A SAMPLE AGENDA

1. Call to Order District Superintendent
Appoint the Recording Secretary
2. Devotion District Superintendent/Lay Leader
3. Signs of Vitality -- A Church Vitality Handout is available online to distribute to each attendee that they can complete with information from the presentations below.
 - a. Congregational Health - (Pastor will present; D.S. will ask for affirmation) Pastor/D.S.
 - i. Affirmation of Mission & Vision for the Congregation
 - ii. Affirmation of Ministry Goals for 2019
 - iii. Membership Report

Discussion Question: How are your ministries nurturing the faith of the next generation?
How are your ministries helping people at all stages of faith grow more like Jesus?

- b. Financial & Administrative Health
 - i. Appreciation for General Church Mission Giving (Apportionments) District Superintendent
 - ii. Trustees Report Trustee Chairperson/Pastor
 - Are your corporate status and property tax exemptions current?
 - Is your insurance current and paid?
 - Does your church have a current and enforced "Safe Sanctuary" policy?
 - Are you doing national background checks on volunteers and staff?
 - iii. Finance Report Finance Chairperson/Pastor
 - Have churches financial activities been audited for 2017?
 - Is your church current on its apportionments?
 - Adoption of the Budget for 2019

Discussion Question: In what ways does your financial and administrative health impact vitality and mission? What does your church do to enhance the strength of your financial and administrative health?

- c. Spiritual Health
 - i. Pastor's Compensation & Housing Allowance SPRC Chairperson

Discussion Question: What is our church's definition of a disciple? District Superintendent
How is our church making disciples?
How am I growing as a disciple?

- ii. Report of the pastor(s) (*see instructions above*)
- iii. Extension Pastor(s) & Retired Pastor(s) Recognition
- iv. Lay Leadership Development Pastor/District Lay Leader
 - Affirmation of elected leadership (Nominations)
 - Affirmation of Certified Lay Servants/Certified Lay Ministers/ Lay Speakers
 - Affirmation of Candidates for Ministry

4. Evidence of Fruitfulness

Pastor

One idea for this are **Cardboard Testimonies**. Have people take a piece of cardboard and write on one side a “before” and on the other “after” they experienced God through a ministry, service, mission however God touched them.

5. Prayer of Commitment/Sending Forth

District Superintendent

Commissioning

In The United Methodist Church, we affirm that “all Christians are called through their baptism to a ministry of servanthood in the world to the glory of God and for human fulfillment.” (2016 Discipline, ¶126) I invite you to renew your commitment to God for the coming year.

Prayer of Commitment (All Pray Together)

Eternal God, you who know the hidden parts of our hearts, come now and fill us with the spirit of commitment as we dedicate ourselves to you and to service within your kingdom.

Gracious Lord, we desire to serve you and others with a totality of heart, soul, and strength. We strive to live like Jesus, to be open and obedient to your voice and Christ-like in our loving. We dedicate ourselves anew to the vows of our baptism, to a life of prayer and worship of you. We re-commit ourselves to being servants to the needs of those around us and to the needs of all the world. May we receive and reflect your Spirit, in this place and at this time, where you, our God, have placed us.

Lord, we marvel that you, in your divine wisdom, have chosen us to be your servants and your instruments of creative action. May our ministry, complete with failings and stumblings, be leaven for your kingdom to rise in our world. Bless us now as we strive to be your disciples. May we live out this dedication and commitment as offer our prayers, our presence our gifts, our service and our witness in the coming year. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray. Amen.

Sending Forth

And now let us go forth to love and serve God and our neighbor in all that we do.

May the blessing of God give us strength for the journey.

May the Spirit of divine wisdom give us vision for the road,

May the love of Christ make us caring companions, as together we go forth in his name. Amen.