

North Central District Charge Conference Instructions 2008

As the new Superintendent of the North Central District, I realize that presiding over Charge Conferences personally is a good way for me to get to know the churches, pastors and lay leadership in the district. So this year and for the next several years, I will be presiding over approximately one third of the District's Charge Conferences myself. The other 2/3 of our district churches will be responsible for scheduling and holding their own Charge Conferences at a cluster gathering. Next year, I will preside over a different one third, and so on until I have been in each church for a Charge Conference.

The list of clusters which are responsible for their own Charge Conference event is listed here in the district instructions. Likewise, those churches that will be having individual Charge Conferences with me presiding are listed along with the date and time of the Conference. Since I'm trying to use time and gas wisely, please understand that these preplanned dates and times have very little, if any, flexibility.

The agenda for the actual Charge Conference will be the same whether it is an individual or a cluster Charge Conference. However, if it is an individual Conference with me presiding, we will begin with a short devotional time of worship. Cluster Charge Conferences will include a time of worship at the beginning or in the middle of the event and a suggested order is mentioned in the instructions below.

I hope this will all be clear as you read through the instructions below. Just call the office if you have any questions.

Instructions for the Cluster Charge Conferences are as follows:

1. **Cluster Team Leaders** will work with the clergy of the cluster to schedule and plan the cluster charge conference event. Clusters may select the date of their choice (between Aug. 25 and Nov. 5). If your cluster is very large (a few are), the Cluster leader may choose to split the cluster and schedule two different events.
2. **Bishop Whitaker has selected the theme for the Cluster Charge Conferences for 2008: Five Practices of the Methodist Way.** Each church is asked to share a report on how you see God at work in your church in the five practices, your goals for 2009 in these practices, and what challenges you face in these five practices for which you want the other churches of your cluster to pray.
 - a. Passionate Worship
 - b. Salty Service
 - c. Extravagant Generosity
 - d. Intentional Discipleship
 - e. Radical Hospitality
3. **The sharing on the Five Practices of the Methodist Way need to be done (in part) with the whole cluster.** Then churches can split up and go to separate rooms to briefly address the issues of election of leaders, clergy compensation, candidates for ministry, removals of members. I am suggesting the following program for your cluster charge conference gathering/worship:
 - a. **Singing**
 - b. **Opening prayer**
 - c. **Testimonies from each church (by a layperson) on the Five Practices of the Methodist Way (you could pray for each church after their sharing, if you choose)**

d. **Communion**

e. **Sending forth/dismissal to charge conference**

4. The cluster could meet before worship and do half of the Charge Conferences first, then have worship together, and then split again to do the other half of the Conferences, depending on the number of elders in the cluster present to preside. If you need additional elders to preside over all the Conferences that need to be held in the cluster Conference, the cluster team leader may simply invite other elders from the district to be present and preside. Only elders under appointment or retired from Florida in the NC District may preside (local church or extension ministries). If the Cluster Leader would like to utilize a retired elder from another conference or an elder who is a member of another conference and not under appointment by Bishop Whitaker, please get permission from me, (Annette Pendergrass). After you have organized the cluster Charge Conference, please notify the district office of the date, time, and the presiding elders.
5. **Cluster Team Leaders, please call or e-mail the district office no later than Sept. 15 to let us know the date of your cluster Charge Conference.**
6. You do **not** need to send your Charge Conference forms to the district office **one week before** your charge conference, no matter what the conference instructions are. Your DS will read all your Charge Conference forms **after** your Charge Conference; just get ready for Charge Conference.
7. When your Charge Conference is over, each pastor needs to take responsibility to send her/his own pastoral charge forms to the district office. **We must have all Charge Conference forms no later than Nov. 19.** Belinda Luquis will be doing the input for the first time this year, and she is by herself in the office, so we really need you to be prompt in this so she can get all the input accomplished by the Dec. 1 conference deadline.
8. **Again, if you are scheduled for an individual Charge Conference this year,** please have everything prepared and ready for your Conference on the scheduled date and time. Fill out and use the following agenda, keeping in mind that we will begin with a short devotional.