



*Healthy Congregations in Mission  
Effective Spiritual Leaders*

August 27, 2009

Dear Colleagues in Ministry:

We are introducing a new format for the East Central District this fall called Community Charge/Church Conferences. In order to celebrate the ministries in our local congregations, we will gather together geographically for these Conferences. I will preside at all the Conferences and will be joined by Janet Kelley, our East Central District Lay Leader.

On the Florida Conference Website Home Page ([www.flumc.org](http://www.flumc.org)), you will find the Fall 2009 Charge/Church Conference Icon which will link you to all the Charge Conference Forms along with the East Central District Charge Conference schedule of the date, time and place for your Community Conference. We have designed a schedule that allows us to celebrate with all of the East Central District Churches at fifteen different locations. We are hopeful that the date of your Conference is not in conflict with any other church events as rescheduling may be a bit impractical.

Please plan on a maximum of two hours for worship, community sharing, and individual church conference voting. Please have your Church Council pre-approve the clergy compensation and come as prepared as possible with your nomination report. This pre-work will make the voting for each church conference move seamlessly. Only your church members will have information regarding compensation and leadership agenda items for your specific church. Review instructions to see how this will happen.

***Worship and Celebration!*** We will come together as a connectional church to worship, witness, and celebrate! We will close the Conference with the Celebration of Holy Communion.

- Music will be led by the host church, incorporating other musicians from participating churches where feasible.
- I will bring a message.
- As a response to the word, I want you to invite a person or persons to share an experience of transformational grace related to the **Five Practices of the United Methodist Way**. (5-7 minutes per congregation). Isn't this what the Methodist Way is all about? Has someone come to saving faith in Jesus Christ? Has a family found healing and new life through the ministry of your church? Has your congregation launched a new mission of mercy or justice in your surrounding community? Did someone in your church or community have a transformational experience of God's grace through participation in Celebrate Jesus or Celebrate Recovery? Was someone healed of illness through prayer? Like God's grace, the possibilities for sharing and celebrating are endless!

***The "Accountability" of the Conference!*** This is one of the few times in the life of a United Methodist Church that the people DO get to have a say and to vote on matters that effect congregational life. Yes, a lot of it is scripted, but don't discount the value of discernment and a vote. I have always asked for and received permission to hold a church conference (§248, the professing members of the congregation have voice and vote) rather than a charge conference (§246.2). So, unless I hear from you with a specific request and rationale for a charge conference, I will authorize all to be a **Church** conference. The invitation for your entire congregation to attend will be appropriate.

To facilitate the work of the conference, each church should prepare a packet for distribution to your members which will contain the following materials:

- ★ 2009 Community Church Conference Meeting Agenda/Cover Sheet (*District Specific Form*)
  - ★ 2009 Church Conference Agenda “Voting Matters” (*District Specific Form*)
- (1) A list of 1st, 2nd and 3rd readings of members to be removed by church conference action
  - (2) The recommendation of the SPR Committee/Church Council regarding pastoral compensation
  - (3) The report of the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development for election of 2010 leaders
  - (4) A list of persons being recommended (or to be renewed) for candidacy for licensed or ordained ministry
  - (5) A list of persons being recommended (or to be renewed) as Lay Speakers

Each congregation will vote on each of these matters as applicable. ***Call me if you have any special concerns or needs for the conference.*** Any business beyond the five actions indicated above, such as a proposal for a property purchase or to approve a loan, etc., should be handled at another Charge/Church Conference. This is a time mostly for building community and sharing our witness.

***Fellowship!*** I hope each church in a Community Conference will step up and assist the host church in providing refreshments so that, at least for a brief time, people from our churches can greet and connect. I hope to meet many of the members of your church in this informal setting.

***Key documents!*** This year, we are requesting only two reports sent (e-mail, fax, US mail) to the district office at least three days prior to your church conference: 1) The Agenda “Voting Matters” 2) The 2010 Appointed Clergy Compensation Form (1 for every appointed clergy as already approved by your Church Council). This will guide me in knowing what business needs to be approved at the church conference. All other reports will be submitted to the District Superintendent at the actual Church Conference. An agenda with a detailed outline of the essential elements for participants of each conference is posted on the website along with the other Church Conference forms. Read all the materials, start early preparing what is necessary, and help your leaders and congregation be ready. Please call Janet, Pam, or me in the district office with questions or concerns. We are available to assist you.

We will do our best to support you in your preparation and completion of what is required for your conference. We are counting on you to do your best to have all Charge Conference paperwork completed, signed, and ready to submit the day of your Church Conference.

I Love Being Your District Superintendent,

***Wayne***

***2 Timothy 1:7 "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.***