



California-Nevada Annual Conference
The United Methodist Church

Ted Virts
Conference Superintendent

August 7, 2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Blessings to you as the fall gets closer. In the past at this time of the year you would receive a schedule that assigned your date for the fall for church conference. Things are different now. Church conferences will be the responsibility of the circuits. The circuits will gather in the early fall to decide how best to implement the church conference process within the circuit. In some districts the circuit leader will conduct the church conferences, in other districts members of the circuit will be assigned to lead the church conference, and in some circuits church conferences will be held in a group format. The circuits will locally determine how best to do this particular work.

The church conference has a long history in our Methodist tradition. It is the time where we report to each other about the activities of the church in the past year. This is done in a huge variety of ways across our conference. The specific requirements for a church conference are few. Reports must be received about VIM trips, progress and approval for those who are candidates for ordained ministry and for those who are seeking to have their lay speaking status renewed. The church conference is required to set the compensation for the pastor for the coming year and to receive from the pastor or the membership committee a report on membership. Finally, the church conference is required to elect leaders for the coming year.

The style of the meeting this year will be developed with your pastor in consultation with the clergy circuit. The work can begin now with your local church around the reports that are expected and around the setting of compensation. Material for these activities is included in this packet or is available on the cnumc.org website. The actual scheduling will be worked out in a way that will be appropriate for your circuit.

Our expectation at the District Office is that we will receive the compensation form at least one week before the actual church conference meeting and that minutes of the church conference will be sent to the district office within ten days of the completion of the church conference.

We are entering into a time of renewed cooperation and connectionalism. The way that we report to each other and to the annual conference starts with the annual fall conference. Each district superintendent will have his or her unique way of making sure that these conferences take place. There may be situations where the superintendent will need to be present for the church conference. If you believe that your church has unique situations that require the DS to be present, please contact your superintendent as soon as possible.

District Superintendents will review the material of each church conference. They will be present in your churches throughout the course of the year to be engaged with you in ministry review and other activities that are part of what our work is as United Methodists. The formality of receiving reports, setting compensation, voting on membership and electing officials, is work that does not necessarily require the presence of the District Superintendent. In fact, the *Book of Discipline* allows an elder authorized by the Superintendent to conduct such a meeting.

Each elder that will be conducting a church conference will be given instructions about how to preside at a church conference.

We are looking forward to a new way of doing our work together. Our main focus is on the ministry we do. Forms and data are collected to help us do that ministry.

Please feel free to contact your Superintendent or to talk with your circuit leader about this new way of doing things.

Sincerely,

Rev. Ted Virts
Conference Superintendent

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