

Nuts and Bolts of the Annual Charge Conference

The following are some of the details provided by *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church – 2008* which need to be known for a productive meeting.

1. The District Superintendent **shall** preside at any called Charge Conference. The D.S. **may** designate an Elder to preside in the absence of the Superintendent. ¶246.5
2. The Charge Conference **may** be convened as a Church Conference to extend the vote to all professing members of the local church present at such meetings. ¶248
3. The District Superintendent **shall** fix the time of meetings of the Charge/Church Conference. The Charge/Church Conference **shall** determine the place of meeting. ¶246.4
4. The members present and voting at any duly announced meetings **shall** constitute a quorum. ¶246.6 *Please note the word “present” which prevents absentee votes.*
5. Special sessions **may** be called by the District Superintendent after consultation with the pastor of the charge, or by the pastor with the written consent of the D.S. The purpose of such special session must be stated in the call and only such business **shall** be transacted as is in harmony with the stated purpose. ¶246.7
6. The primary responsibility of the Charge/Church Conference in the annual meeting shall be to review and evaluate the total mission and ministry of the church (¶¶ 120-124), receive reports, and adopt objectives and goals recommended by the church council that are in keeping with the objectives of The United Methodist Church. ¶247.3
7. The church council and all other administrative and programmatic structures of the local church **shall** be amenable to the Charge/Church Conference. ¶244.1
8. Alternative plans of organization **may** be developed in accordance with the provisions of ¶247.2, provided that the provisions of ¶243 are observed.
9. The Charge/Church Conference recording secretary **shall** keep an accurate record of the proceedings and **shall** be the custodian of all records and reports, and with the presiding officer, **shall** sign the minutes. A copy of the minutes **shall** be provided for the district superintendent, and a permanent copy **shall** be retained for church files. When there is only one local church on a charge, the secretary of the church council **shall** be the secretary of the Charge/Church Conference. When there is more than one church on a charge, one of the secretaries of the church councils **shall** be elected by the Charge/Church Conference to serve as its secretary. ¶247.4

10. The Charge/Church Conference **may** establish a limit to the consecutive terms of office for any of all of the elected or appointed officers of the local church, except where otherwise mandated. It is recommended that no officer serve more than three consecutive years in the same position. ¶247.7

11. The Committee on Lay Leadership no longer exists. There is now a Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development ¶258 that is composed of professing members of the local church. This committee is to be composed of not more than nine persons, in addition to the pastor and the lay leader. At least one young adult (age 18-30) elected by the Charge/Church Conference **shall** serve as a member of the committee. One or more members **may** be youth. The pastor **shall** be the chairperson. A layperson, elected by the committee, **shall** serve as the vice chairperson of the committee. Retiring members of the committee **shall** not succeed themselves. Only one person from an immediate family residing in the same household **shall** serve on the committee. ¶258.1d

12. The Charge/Church Conference **shall** examine and recommend to the district committee on ordained ministry, faithfully adhering to the provisions of ¶¶310-311, candidates for the ordained ministry who have been professing members in good standing of The United Methodist Church for at least two years.¶247.8 Approval of the candidate **must** be by two thirds written ballot, and the candidate **shall** have been graduated from an accredited high school or received a certificate of equivalency. ¶311.1e

13. The Charge/Church Conference **shall** examine and recommend, faithfully adhering to the provisions of ¶312, renewal of candidacy of candidates for the ordained ministry. ¶247.9

14. The Charge/Church Conference **shall** inquire annually into the gifts, labors, and usefulness of the lay speakers and certified lay ministers (¶¶266-269) related to the charge and recommend to the district committee on lay speaking those persons who have met the standards set forth... ¶247.11

15. The Charge/Church Conference **shall** in consultation with the district superintendent set the compensation of the pastor and other staff appointed by the bishop. ¶247.13 Please note that ¶252.4d states that it is the responsibility of the church council to recommend to the Charge/Church Conference the salary and other remuneration of the pastor(s) and staff members after receiving recommendations from the pastor/staff parish relations committee. *It has been cabinet experience that the church council action is critical to the Charge/Church Conference process and should not be overlooked.*

16. In preparation for and at the Charge/Church Conference, it **shall** be the responsibility of the district superintendent, the pastor, and the lay member(s) of the annual conference and/or the church lay leader to interpret the each Charge/Church Conference the importance of Ministry Shares, explaining the causes supported by each of them and their place in the total program of the Church. The World Service Fund represents the minimum needs for mission and ministry in the Church. Conference benevolences represent the minimum needs for the mission and ministry of the annual conference.

Payment in full of these Ministry Shares by local churches is the first benevolent responsibility of the church (§812). §247.14

17. The Charge/Church Conference shall receive and act on the annual report from the pastor concerning the membership. §247.15 In §231 it states: *the pastor shall report to the Charge/Church Conference annually the names of persons received in to the membership of the church or churches of the pastoral charge and the names of persons removed since the last charge conference, indicating how each was received or removed. The church council shall appoint a committee to audit the membership record, submitting the report annually to the Charge/Church Conference.*

18. In accord with §228.4: If the directives of (§§ 228.1-3) have been followed for the specified number of years (2) without success, the member's name **may** be removed as a professing member by the vote of the Charge/Church Conference, each name being considered individually, provided that the member's name **shall** have been entered in the minutes of the annual Charge/Church Conference for two consecutive years.

19. The committee on finance **shall** compile annually a complete budget for the local church and submit it to the church council for review and adoption. §258.4 The church council **may** submit their adopted budget to the Charge/Church Conference, but only if it has been part of the stated agenda published in advance. *It is not required, and is usually not helpful to the work of the Charge/Church Conference.*

20. The finance committee **shall** make provision for an annual audit of the financial statements of the local church and all its organizations and accounts. The committee **shall** make a full and complete report to the annual Charge/Church Conference. §258.4d

21. When a motion is brought before the Charge/Church Conference by a standing committee, it does not require a Second. The committee constitutes the Second.

22. Should any differences exist between the above information and *The Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church – 2008, *The Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church - 2008 **shall** take precedence.

*Prepared for West Michigan Conference
Annual Charge/Church Conferences
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