**WHY DO WE DO CHURCH CONFERENCES?**

The purpose of Church Conferences are to achieve the following goals (¶ 247):

* Review each congregation’s previous year of ministry, complete essential church business, and affirm goals for the coming year
* Foster collaboration and an outward-focus among all congregations by holding conferences in regional groups to push us beyond our own boundaries to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world
* Inspire, energize, and motivate local congregations through high quality resourcing

“The Charge Conference shall be the connecting link between the local church and the general church (¶ 247)… The primary responsibilities of the Charge Conference in the annual meeting shall be to review and evaluate the total mission and ministry of the church, 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).”

**WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF EACH CHURCH CONFERENCE REPORT?**

**Clergy Compensation and Expense Report**

This report is used to set the pastoral compensation for those under appointment by the Bishop to a church. This report insures that pastors are receiving a salary consistent with GNJ’s equitable salary guidelines, as well as appropriate benefits based on conference relationship and appointment status. This report, along with the Housing Exclusion Resolution, is completed by the SPRC and then brought to the Church Council for approval and signature prior to submission and action by the Charge Conference. The recommendation becomes final after action by the Charge Conference and the signature of the District Superintendent.

**Clergy Housing Exclusion Resolution**

This form is needed to meet IRS requirements that allows a clergy person to exclude a portion of his/her salary spent on maintaining or furnishing a home (either in a parsonage or in his/her own home) from taxable income. It may not be done retroactively, and only that amount that is actually spent and can be accounted for can be claimed. Any amount set aside and not spent must be added into the taxable amount by the clergy person.

**Directory of Officials**

This report is an almost complete listing of persons who are elected to serve in the local church, including specific officers, lists of all team/committee members, optional committees (such as a lay personnel committee or an investment committee), members at large of Church Council or other committees, and additional leaders for specific ministries of the congregation. This report provides the names and contact information of persons elected at the Charge Conference. This is the primary means by which GNJ gathers contact information for lay leadership to foster better communication and information to persons serving in particular ministries. This is also another way for the church to lift up lay leadership throughout the congregation. **Note:** only persons elected at the Charge Conference as Lay Members or Reserve Lay Members will be eligible to register for Annual Conference. Not all elected persons are listed on this report. As chair of the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development, it is the pastor’s responsibility to complete this report.

**Church Profile/Advisory for Appointment Making**

This advisory is completed annually by each SPRC and serves as the primary document of consultation between the church and the Cabinet for appointment purposes. Included in this form are a variety of questions that help the Cabinet better understand the strengths and needs of the congregation moving forward. The Advisory Section of this profile informs the Cabinet of the church’s thoughts around the continuation or change of the current appointment. **Note:** this form is only advisory as all appointments are made by the Bishop on an annual basis. This report should be completed and submitted by the SPRC with the other Charge Conference paperwork.

**Pastor Profile/Advisory for Appointment Making**

This advisory is completed annually by every pastor under appointment in GNJ. The purpose of this profile is to serve as the primary document of consultation between the pastor and the Cabinet for appointment purposes. Included in this form are a variety of questions that help the Cabinet understand a pastor’s gifts for ministry, as well as his/her thoughts around appointment for the coming year. A section at the end of this report is for Limited Itineracy and should be completed by any pastor who has limitations as to where he/she can be appointed. **Note:** this form is only advisory as all appointments are made by the Bishop on an annual basis. This report should be completed and submitted by the pastor with the other Charge Conference paperwork.

**Report of the Pastor**

This is the report where all membership actions taken by the church in the previous year are verified by the pastor and congregation. It is important that individual names are added as this becomes a back-up record to local church records. This report also asks for the names of clergy who report to the Charge Conference, candidates approved for ministry that must be re-approved annually, and a narrative of the pastor’s significant ministries for the previous year as well as plans for the coming year. This report is completed by the Senior Pastor only.

**Deacon’s Report**

This is the annual report for all Deacons in Full Connection and Provisional Deacons. All commissioned or ordained deacons should complete and submit this report to the Charge Conference where they are connected, whether this is a primary or secondary appointment.

**Report of the Trustees**

This is a mandatory report required by the Book of Discipline which provides needed information on incorporation, property, insurance, and investment matters. The Discipline requires that this be submitted and approved by the Charge Conference and should be completed by the President of the Board of Trustees or a designated officer.

**Parsonage Evaluation**

This provides important information to the SPRC, Trustees, and the District Superintendent about church-owned parsonages. This report must be completed annually following a walk-through by a member of the Trustees, an SPRC member, and the pastoral family. This report provides valuable information about the size, configuration, and condition of a parsonage which is important within our itinerant appointment system. The District Committee on Church Location and Building will be assisting the District Superintendent in following up on these reports with periodic, scheduled walk-throughs of each church-owned parsonage. A parsonage that is rented or used by someone other than the pastor should still have an annual walk-through and this evaluation report completed.

**Certified Lay Servant Report**

This report is to be completed by persons who have completed the basic and at least one advanced lay servant course. This report serves as a request by the Lay Servant/Speaker to the Charge Conference for recertification which must be done on an annual basis. Without this report, there is no request to continue certification. Initial certification must have the approval of the pastor and the SPRC in addition to the completion of the required courses.

**Certified Lay Minister Report**

This report is required for persons who have been approved by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (DCOM) following the completion of required course work and additional requirements as outlined by the Book of Discipline and the Board of Ordained Ministry. Initial certification must have the approval of the pastor and the SPRC as well. Reports are to be submitted annually, and recertification by the DCOM happens every two years.

**Congregational Appraisal**

This appraisal is completed by the Church Council and serves as a means of self-assessment of the effectiveness of the church in growing vitality. A separate assessment is done for pastors in the spring so that the focus of this assessment is how the church sees its strengths and its growth areas. Information from this evaluation should be the source of conversation and goal setting, including vitality goals that will be requested early in the coming year.

**Fund Balance Report**

This audit is used to facilitate transparency in the church in financial matters and protect those handling funds on behalf of the congregation. This audit also provides an accounting and report to the leadership and members of the church. The report is due on June 1 of each year and should be completed by someone other than those handling funds or their family members. The report should be submitted to the Regional Administrator, as well as copies to the pastor, the finance chair, and the church council chair for sharing amongst the leadership. Per Book of Discipline, this audit must be received by the Charge Conference as well. This report is completed by the church’s Auditor or Auditing Committee.

**Year-to-Date Treasurer’s Report**

This is a means of providing financial transparency to the congregation as to the church’s financial health. Treasurers should submit a year-to-date report based on the end of the month prior to the deadline date for the Charge Conference paperwork. This should be a copy of the same report that is produced for the Church Council and other church leadership.

**Church Conference Minutes/Special Charge Conference Minutes**

These minutes provide an account of the previous year’s Charge Conference and any special conferences that have occurred over the past year. The report recounts the significant action items that were approved by the Charge Conference since last convened. It is completed by the recording secretary of the Charge Conference, and new minutes should be submitted as soon as possible after the completion of the current conference.