

2020 CHURCH CONFERENCE AGENDA

Meeting via ZOOM is due to the extreme circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

WELCOME, CALL TO ORDER, OPENING PRAYER DS (3 minutes)

MESSAGE FROM THE DS and BISHOP DS (5-8 minutes)

“WHY CHURCH?”

¹⁴⁻¹⁵ The Messiah has made things up between us so that we're now together on this, both non-Jewish outsiders and Jewish insiders. He tore down the wall we used to keep each other at a distance. He repealed the law code that had become so clogged with fine print and footnotes that it hindered more than it helped. Then he started over. Instead of continuing with two groups of people separated by centuries of animosity and suspicion, he created a new kind of human being, a fresh start for everybody.

¹⁶⁻¹⁸ Christ brought us together through his death on the cross. The Cross got us to embrace, and that was the end of the hostility. Christ came and preached peace to you outsiders and peace to us insiders. He treated us as equals, and so made us equals. Through him we both share the same Spirit and have equal access to the Father.

¹⁹⁻²² That's plain enough, isn't it? You're no longer wandering exiles. This kingdom of faith is now your home country. You're no longer strangers or outsiders. You *belong* here, with as much right to the name Christian as anyone. God is building a home. He's using us all—irrespective of how we got here—in what he is building. He used the apostles and prophets for the foundation. Now he's using you, fitting you in brick by brick, stone by stone, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone that holds all the parts together. We see it taking shape day after day—a holy temple built by God, all of us built into it, a temple in which God is quite at home. (Ephesians 2:14-22 – The Message)

For continual updates about the denomination, [click here](#) to sign up for the weekly NIC eNews or visit www.umcnic.org (scroll to the bottom left of the page and click on “Newsletter signup”), you can also sign up at the United Methodist News Service at www.umnews.org for a daily or weekly news brief.

SHARING CONFERENCE SHEPHERDING TEAM VISION DS (10 minutes)

Goal 1: To Grow and Reach New Disciples of Jesus Christ

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:19 (NRSV)

Goal 2: To Live Out the Conviction that Racism is Incompatible with Christian Teachings

[Jesus said] “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Matthew 22:36-39 (NRSV)

Goal 3: To Increase the Number of Highly Vital Congregations

All of you together are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of that body.
(1 Corinthians 12:27)

PASTOR shares at least one achievement by the church for each goal listed above.

HOLY CONFERENCING

(10 minutes)

(These questions may be used in breakout groups or for the church to engage in future conversations.)

- What is your reaction to what the pastor shared concerning the three goals?
- What has the church learned during the pandemic about what is most important?
- Did you start any new programs or ministries that should be continued?
- Did you stop doing programs or ministries that now you realize should not be reinstated?
- How has your church made a difference during this time?
- Where has God been more visible during this time?
- What must you do to reclaim or increase the focus on the mission of the church?
- So, “Why Church?”

BUSINESS OF THE CHURCH CONFERENCE

(15 minutes)

- Leadership Nominations and Election
- Clergy Compensation
- Ministry Recommendations
- Lay Servant Reports
- Additional Business

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

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The questions below are for your continued reflection and can be used by congregational leadership as is helpful during the upcoming year.

Goal 1: *(Please note: new people come from new ideas. Suggest something you are not already doing).*

- How many baptisms has the church had in the past year?
- How many new members?
- When was the last time you had a conversation with someone who has no faith tradition?
- Where are non-Christians hanging out in your community? What is the church doing to connect there?
- What new things should we be doing to grow to reach *new* disciples of Jesus Christ?

For some good ideas please consider the resources that Discipleship Ministries have provided at www.seeallthepeople.org.

Goal 2:

- Is it easy or difficult to talk about race? Why?
- What conversations have you had about racism in the last month?
- What is one thing your congregation can do over the next year to begin to grow in its anti-racism work?
- What is your understanding of privilege as it relates to the church and anti-racism work?

For some good ideas, please consider exploring the resources at www.gcorr.org/category/resource-types/discussion-guide

Goal 3:

- What are the demographics (race/ethnicity, economics) in your church neighborhood? How does your congregation reflect these demographics? What is the plan to reach the people in your neighborhood?
- What are the felt needs in your community? How does your congregation respond?
- What are some things that will need to be done differently in the next three years to help you change or to allow momentum to continue?

Check out UMdata.org.