

Connected for Transformation Transition Policies and Procedures

In June 2004, The Florida Annual Conference adopted “Connected for Transformation,” a new way of ordering the life and functions of the Annual Conference. We are well underway in our transition. What follows is a description of these functions, including some of the policies and procedures for our Annual Conference and District Operations.

District Structure and District Committees:

Members of the District Committee on Leadership (Nominations) of the fourteen 2004 districts have been meeting with members of the District Committee on Leadership (Nominations) of their neighboring districts as they nominate leaders for the district offices and committees of the new districts. Those District Committee on Leadership members who worship at churches within the geographic boundaries of the new district, are gathering to nominate their new leadership.

There will be some overlap of responsibilities in our transition year. The newly elected District Leadership Council, which assumes its responsibilities as of July 1, 2005, will begin meeting as a “provisional” Leadership Council as of January 2005.

What Boards and Committees will the new District have?

Each of the nine new districts shall have the following Boards and Committees:

- District Leadership Council - serves as the Committee on Superintendency according to ¶663 of The Book of Discipline, 2000; Finance Committee, and Leadership Committee
- District Committee on Leadership (Nominations)
- District Committee on New Church Development (formerly called a “Board of Missions”)
- District Board of Church Location and Building (*May be included in the functions of the District Committee on New Church Development*)
- District Housing Committee
- District Committee on Ministry
- District Committee on Congregational Transformation. (*may be included in the functions of the District Committee on New Church Development*)

- Additional boards and committees, as needed, to care for ministry unique to a district

The District Committees on Leadership shall nominate the District Leadership Council, to be elected at a District Organizing Event in the Fall of 2004. In the Spring of 2005, the District Committees on Leadership shall nominate members of the other district boards and committees to be elected by the Annual Conference. (The exception is the District Committee on Ministry whose members are nominated annually by the district superintendent in consultation with the chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry, The Book of Discipline, 2000, ¶660.1.) These names are to be forwarded to Jessica Michel and Anne Burkholder no later than March 30, 2005. Each District Superintendent has worksheets available to help with the work of the District Committee on Leadership (Nominations). These worksheets further explain disciplinary requirements and the options districts have in combining the work of some of the committees.

Where will the District Office be located?

The Leadership Council of the new district will make the decision, in consultation with the district superintendent of the new district and the bishop and cabinet, on the location of the district office and district parsonage. District Leadership Councils may recommend that the date for relocation to a relatively central location be postponed until a successor D.S. is appointed.

Incorporation and Property Matters

All fourteen districts are coming to an end, as of June 30, 2005, and nine new districts will be created as of July 1, 2005. The pre-2005 districts will be legally merged into one of the nine new districts with property adjustments to take place both before and after merger. In order to care for matters of incorporation and property in a consistent and efficient manner, The Florida Annual Conference has engaged one law firm to care for all legal matters related to the old and new districts. The Conference Treasurer is working with each District Office and our attorney to identify all property and assets belonging to each of the current 14 districts.

Purchase or Lease of District Office Space & Purchase of District Parsonage

In districts where relocation of the District Office and/or Parsonage is needed, the “provisional” Leadership Council of the new district shall take responsibility for purchasing or leasing office space and the purchasing of a parsonage. They shall work in cooperation with the District Boards of Trustees prior to July 1, 2005, when they assume the task of Trustees.

The Sale of District Office and District Parsonage Properties

The District Boards of Trustees of each of the 14 former districts, upon recommendation from the “provisional” Leadership Council of the new district, shall be responsible for the sale of properties, some of which may be sold prior to June 2005, and some of which may be sold after June 2005. The Leadership Council will take responsibility for disposition of properties after July 1, 2005. In the case of a building owned by a district on land owned by a local church, the District Board of Trustees will be responsible for determining the selling price of that building to the local church.

Distribution of District Owned Technology, Office Equipment, and Furniture

The Boards of Trustees of each of the 14 dissolving districts shall care for the distribution or sale of technology, office equipment, furniture and other materials belonging to the district, giving primary consideration to the needs of its succeeding district(s), and secondary consideration to the needs of local churches. The District Boards of Trustees will be permitted to negotiate lease terminations, to give or sell technology, office equipment, furniture and materials to the succeeding district, or local churches and missions, as it deems appropriate.

Division of District Assets

The liquid assets of the dissolving districts shall be divided among their new district(s) using a formula based on the 2005 fair share apportionment decimal.

Indebtedness of District Properties

The indebtedness of mission congregations and mission projects that are the responsibility of the former districts, shall be transferred to the new district within which the mission or ministry is located.

Proceeds from Sale of District Office and/or Parsonage

The proceeds from the sale of district offices and parsonages in each of the dissolving districts shall be divided among their new district(s) using a formula based on the 2005 fair share apportionment decimal.

Distribution of Mission Properties, New Church Start Properties, and Vacant Land

Mission properties, new church start properties, and vacant land owned by districts will be distributed to the new district in which the property is located. District Boards of Missions are asked to meet no later than the Spring of 2005 to disclose, in detail, commitments made to missions and new church starts and to negotiate any transfer of funds to the new district for which a commitment has been made. Any properties whose proceeds are designated for a particular mission/new church start would be given (properties or proceeds) to the district in which the mission or new church start is to be located.

Designated Funds

Designated funds of the dissolving districts shall be evaluated by the pre July 1, 2005 District Board of Trustees or the District Finance Committee, where applicable, and make recommendation to the bishop and cabinet for the appropriate location of designated funds.

District Operations:

Standardization of Administrative & Financial Tasks

There shall be a standardization of the basic administrative and financial tasks for all districts, including

- Financial accounting software (by January 2006)
- The adoption of a uniform basic chart of accounts, to which other accounts may also be added (by January 2006)
- Standardized method of receiving District Apportionments (beginning January 2005)
- The District audits (by January 2007, for the audit/review of 2006). The conference selected auditors would work together to standardize the audit for each district.

Standardization of Employee Benefits and Policies

There shall be a standardization of benefits and policies for district staff, including

- Health insurance for full time employees, unless otherwise covered
- Participation in the United Methodist Pension program for all full time employees
- Uniform personnel policy for full time and part time employees (Conference and Episcopal office policy)
- Salaries would not be uniform. Salaries would be based on factors such as years of experience, geography/cost of living.

District Payroll

Districts are encouraged to use the Conference staff for District payroll (including district staff and mission/new church start staff).

Office Hours & Holiday Schedule

There shall be relatively uniform District Office Hours in order to facilitate conference wide communication. District Offices shall be open approximately the same days and hours that the Episcopal Office and the Conference Office are open, with some minor flexibility. The same holiday schedule would be adopted. These hours are currently, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Each District will post its office hours on the Conference and District web sites.

The Role of the District Superintendent:

Evolving Role

The District Superintendent who has responsibility for 75-95 churches, will function differently than the District Superintendent who had responsibility for 40-70 churches. The District Superintendent will focus on the leading the district in vision for ministry and transformation. Much of the operational function of the district will be accomplished in new ways. The annual Charge Conferences will become cluster events, or will be structured differently. The District Boards and Committees will take more active leadership in their areas of responsibilities. The District Superintendent will not be a member of the Board of Directors of every Advance Special and Ministry Project within the bounds of the district. The role of the District Superintendent will be evolving as the Annual Conference lives into Connected for Transformation. The cabinet has committed to securing training from an appropriate coach on the changing Role of the DS.

Pastor Consultations

District Superintendents will consult in January and February of each year with pastors who designate “move” or “either” on their “Preference For My Next Appointment” forms, and those pastors whose churches have requested a change of appointment. District Superintendents may have consultations with other clergy at other times during the year, not necessarily during the appointment season. Extension ministers, Deacons in Full Connection, and others who secure their own employment and are then appointed by the bishop, will take responsibility for keeping in touch with the District Superintendent, as needed.

District Office Lay Employees Severance

District Office Lay Employees who fulfill their duties through June 30, 2005, shall be granted one week salary and pension, where applicable, for each full year of service, with a minimum of one month salary. Health Insurance, where applicable, shall extend for one month more than the salary benefit. Severance salary and benefits are to be paid by the district in which the staff person was employed. (Salary and benefit payment may be transferred to the Conference Treasurer’s Office for these districts beginning in 2005).

District Office Lay Employee Farewell.

The Committee on District Superintendency may plan a farewell function of their choice for District Office lay employees who are finishing their service to the district(s) on June 30, 2004. Tokens of appreciation and a fond farewell are encouraged. There shall be no “love offering” solicited from churches or individuals.

District Office Lay Employee Employment Transition

Districts shall permit Lay Employees whose positions are being terminated due to relocation or dissolution of district(s) be given district time to work on their resumes and attend interviews, related to the securing of employment.

District Superintendent Farewell

The Committee on District Superintendency may plan a farewell function of their choice for District Superintendents who are finishing their work, or changing regions. Tokens of appreciation and a fond farewell are encouraged. There shall be no “love offering” solicited from churches or individuals.

Boards of Missions to Negotiate Property & Assets

Boards of Missions of old and new districts are to meet no later than March 2005 To disclose commitments, and to share plans. Boards of Missions shall discuss the financial commitments they have made to missions and new church starts and consider whether some earmarked funds should be transferred to the new district from the old district to fulfill the financial commitments made. We recommend that old and new districts be permitted to negotiate the transfer of funds. Otherwise, assets will be distributed on the basis of the 2005 fair share apportionment formula.

Builders' Clubs

The Florida United Methodist Foundation will review the functions of Builder's Clubs and make recommendations on how these entities might be developed for better service.