



02/07/2020

Dear North East District Family,

Every Annual Conference is important, but the 2020 Annual Conference could have extraordinary implications for the future of Methodism in Florida. Last year there was concern over how district at-large lay members to Annual Conference are chosen. Some felt they were chosen unfairly and purposely to engineer a certain outcome in voting for General Conference delegates. I am not in any way saying that happened, but it is definitely a concern. I can attest that we tried hard in the North East to make sure our at large members were a diverse group from multiple theological streams.

As we begin to work on at-large lay members for the 2020 Annual Conference, the Cabinet decided to set some values for who could serve and left it up to each individual district superintendent to decide on a system. Our Operations Team and I have settled on a system that we believe will help ensure a fair representation across our district. We have decided to use a system that the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference uses in allocating its at-large lay members for its districts.

Accordingly, using one district at-large lay member for every 350 members (*based on 2018 statistical report data*) or a max of three per church. The following churches will receive additional member(s):

- Arlington UMC – 1
- Avondale UMC – 1
- Beach UMC – 3
- CrossRoad UMC– 2
- First UMC, St. Augustine – 1
- First UMC, Starke – 1
- Grace UMC, St. Augustine – 2
- Isle of Faith UMC – 1
- Keystone UMC – 1
- Lakewood UMC – 2
- Mandarin UMC – 3
- Memorial UMC– 2
- Middleburg UMC - 1
- Orange Park UMC– 3
- Ortega UMC– 3
- Palm Coast UMC– 1
- Ponte Vedra UMC– 1
- Southside UMC– 3
- St. Paul UMC– 1

That is a total of 33 people. Additionally, our four lay supply pastors would be made lay members so they can have vote and voice. Lastly, the following multi-point charges would be given extra

lay members to ensure each church has at least one lay person representing their congregation:

- Fish & Fern – 3
- Trinity/First, Interlachen – 1
- Arlington/St. Paul – 1
- San Marco/Spring Glen – 1

Derrick Scott and CCW would get one lay member as well, which would fill the 45 slots that the North East District has available.

The churches (**senior pastor only will send once the church council has confirmed the person**) will be asked to send us the names of the person(s) that will come from their churches no later than **MARCH 2, 2020**. Pre-Conference email blasts begin on March 4. In addition, we highly recommend that you have your local church lay member and alternate member listed in the church dashboard by March 2, 2020.

Local churches **WOULD NOT** be responsible for paying these people's expenses. The district has never done so, and we would not have that expectation of local churches. Lastly, the Cabinet set the policy that we would not allow more than three lay members from one household.

I fully understand this is a new way of selecting lay members and may mean that some people who have gone before will not go this year. We deeply appreciate the sacrifice lay members have made in previous years. Please understand that we are not trying to disenfranchise anyone, but instead ensure that the process is as fair and representative as possible.

Please let me know what questions you might have, and I will be glad to talk with you. God bless you!

**All God's love,  
Jay**

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