

CHECKLIST FOR CHURCH CONFERENCE PREPARATION

General Advice for Charge Conference Preparation:

- Read, read, read, read, read your materials carefully every year (memory is fragile and the process sometimes changes).
- Don't be afraid to ask for information. Call Pat at the District Office (217.359.0640) if you have questions.
- Don't procrastinate. Charge conference preparation is hard partially because clergy tend to put off preparation too long. If you follow this checklist, preparation should not stress you unduly and you will be ready for your Charge Conference.

Timeline	Task	Notes/Comments
Meet by no later than the second half of August	<p>Immediately schedule (in consultation with the appropriate leadership) the following meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations, to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Make recommendations for pastoral and staff salaries and support for 2009, and <input type="checkbox"/> Interview, review, and approve candidates for ordained and licensed ministry. (First-time candidates must answer questions in ¶310 of <i>The Book of Discipline</i> to the satisfaction of the PPRC.) 	Materials for this PPRC salary-setting meeting (including minimum salary figures, health insurance requirements, cost of living increases, mileage rates, and a worksheet) are mailed out to S/PPRC Chairs and Pastors by late July or early August. You have a right to be at the meeting where your compensation is discussed, although some clergy prefer to leave after communicating any financial needs or concerns they have.
Meet by no later than the second half of August	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Nurture or Membership Committee, to update, discuss, and pray over the names of persons on the congregation's cultivation list. In fact, it would be a good practice to pray over the names at <i>every council meeting</i> all year round and/or ask members of the congregation to make contacts and pray on a regular basis. Cultivation is a <i>year-round congregational</i> task, not a once-a-year letter sent out by the pastor.</p>	"Cultivation" means "fostering the growth of." Often an inactive pilgrim's growth is fostered by gentle reminders that they are missed, but sometimes it can be fostered only by the "tough love" represented by removal of their name from the membership roll until such time as they can return to active discipleship in and through the congregation. This is difficult work and should be wrapped with prayer.
Meet for the first time by end of August	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Lay Leadership Committee, (the pastor is the chair of this) to discern officers and leaders for 2009. The work will probably require more than one meeting, but make sure the committee shares in the work of calling prospective leaders!</p>	Check <i>The Book of Discipline</i> for guidance, and/or purchase from Cokesbury a resource called, Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation 2009-2012 . (These can be purchased as a set - 26 books or individually.)
Meet in the first half of September	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Finance Committee, to prepare the budget for 2009. Be sure to include the recommendations for pastor and staff salaries in the committee's final report, as well as apportionment figures for 2009.</p>	Apportionment figures are mailed out by the Conference Treasurer in late July or early August.

Sometime in mid- September	2	<input type="checkbox"/> Distribute copies of charge conference forms to the following persons for them to fill out. Give them a deadline of the Council Meeting described in Task #6 below. While you are not responsible for filling them out, you <i>are</i> responsible for seeing to it that they are correct and returned in a timely way for polishing, district deadlines, and photocopying for the charge conference. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Pastoral Financial Support</u> to PPRC Chair. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Parsonage Report</u> and <u>Parsonage Checklist</u> to the Parsonage Committee Chair. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Trustees Report*</u> to Board of Trustees Chair. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Cultivation Form</u> to Nurture Chairperson. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Church Official Roll</u> to the secretary of the Lay Leadership Committee. 	*The Trustees Report must be submitted at the Charge Conference along with other forms.
Sometime in September	3	<input type="checkbox"/> Assign someone beside yourself to create the final copies of the CC forms that will be turned in. This is not difficult work if other people do their jobs, and particularly if your chairpersons complete their copies on the computer. The person needs to be computer literate and able to send attachments through email.	All CC forms may be obtain by – downloaded from the district website – www.iroquoisriverdistrict.org or obtained on a disk from the district office or obtained in hard copy from the district office
Meet anytime in the month or two before your CC	4	<input type="checkbox"/> Remind the Parsonage Committee to walk through the parsonage and assess its needs. The <u>Parsonage Report</u> (see Task #3 above) cannot be completed accurately or acceptably without this on-site visit. If the church doesn't own a parsonage, you don't need to worry about these forms.	Sometimes the church trustees are the parsonage committee.
This happens at a regularly scheduled Council meeting in September or October prior to the CC	5	<input type="checkbox"/> Add to your Church Council agenda, the following matters for their discussion and approval: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The CC <u>Church Council Report</u>, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendations for Lay Speakers* for Basic or Advanced classes <input type="checkbox"/> Candidates for Ordained or Licensed Ministry† 	*The names of lay speakers are recorded each year on the Church Council's Report to the Charge Conference. If you're not sure who your lay speakers are, the previous year's CC forms are a good place to start. These forms should be on file in your church office. Call the District Office if you can't find any. †The names of candidates for ordained or licensed ministry can be found on the previous year's CC forms, too, unless they're new, in

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The Finance Committee's proposed <u>budget for 2009</u>, including pastor's salary and benefits. <input type="checkbox"/> Questions 11-17 (it is <i>the Council's</i> job to answer these, not yours) <input type="checkbox"/> The <u>Parsonage Report</u> <input type="checkbox"/> The <u>Trustee's Report</u> <input type="checkbox"/> The Nurture or Membership Committee's <u>Report on Cultivation</u>. <input type="checkbox"/> After the reports are given, have each chairperson sign off on the signature form that will be turned in to the superintendent on the day of the charge conference. 	which case they come from the PPRC.
Sometime in early October	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Fill out the forms for which you are personally responsible, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Pastor's Compensation Reduction Agreement*</u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Report of the Pastor</u>[†] (a membership secretary may have to assist with some of the numbers that need to be reported) 	<p>*The Reduction Agreement is for licensed and ordained pastors only.</p> <p>†Note that part of the report is a written "account of pastoral ministry." This is not a facts and figures report, but rather an opportunity for you to reflect on your faith, journey, and place in the life of the congregation. You may want to use this as an opportunity to celebrate ways the congregation has been faithful as well as describe some of the congregation's growing edges.</p>
By mid-October	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Check with all the lay speakers whose names are listed on the Church Council Report to ascertain that they have received and will be filling out their annual lay speakers report. 	Annual report forms for lay speakers may be downloaded from: http://www.iroquoisriverdistrict.org/layspking.htm
10-14 days before the Charge Conference	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review all the instructions for the charge conference and make sure you've done the required work and filled out forms properly. <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure all lay speaker reports are completed with your signature and theirs and included in the charge conference packet of materials. <input type="checkbox"/> Check with your "clergy in special circumstances"* to be sure they are filling out their forms and know your deadline. 	*Clergy in special circumstances (e.g., retired, honorable location, leave of absence, extension ministry) receive their form directly from the district office. If they report losing it, it can be downloaded from the same web page as the charge conference forms.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Make copies of each report for each person you expect to attend the charge/church conference. Arrange them in order of the agenda, please. <input type="checkbox"/> Email the completed forms (or deliver them by mail or in person) to the District Office by no later than 10 days prior to your charge conference. <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure your ad council secretary will be attending, especially if the Pastor's Compensation Reduction Agreement forms are not signed prior to the Charge Conference. <input type="checkbox"/> Invite some people to help with set-up for the charge conference the day it is held. 	
Day of Charge Conference	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Arrive at the charge/church conference setting at least 30 minutes ahead of the beginning of the meeting, and urge your congregation to arrive at least 10 minutes before the meeting. This enables us to begin on time and address any last minute issues. <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure each of your members has a packet of the church's forms and understands that they will be voting on much of the material in them. <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure your charge conference secretary is present. His/her signature will be required on the Pastor's Compensation Reduction Agreement form. <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure you come to see Pat after the conference to sign off on the tax forms. 	
After the Charge Conference	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Relax a little. You've worked hard! <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure your secretary has filed the CC forms (along with a copy of the signature document) in the church office. You should maintain possession of a second set. The district office will have the original set on file. 	