

Committee Preparation for 2024 Annual Charge Conferences

Please allow four to six weeks to prepare your Charge Conference reports. All reports MUST be completed 14 days before your scheduled Charge Conference so that the AADS can check for completeness.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee will need to meet to complete the Annual Report of the Finance Committee for the current year 2024, receive (for budgetary planning purposes) the pastoral compensation package for 2025 that is recommended by the S/PPRC, and review Connectional Apportionment Calculations for 2024 (emailed to your pastor in July 2024).

Budget Considerations: The 2025 church budget does not need to be COMPLETED prior to the Charge Conference, but these are the first steps in the budgeting process. Church Leaders will need to submit budget requests about 6-8 weeks in advance of the charge conference depending on how the budget is created. Finance will need to meet and consider:

- Is there guidance needed on requests (% increases, hold steady, decreases)?
- Once requests are submitted, what will be the budget?
- NOTE: technically, charge conference only has to approve the salary of the appointed clergy. However, probably over half the churches approve the whole budget.

Lay Leadership / Nominations Committee

This committee will need to meet 1-3 times to nominate leaders for 2025. These nominations will need to be confirmed with the persons being nominated and then submitted to the Administrative/Church Council for approval prior to the Charge Conference. OLDACS will bring forward the lay leadership from last year so edits will need to be made by opening the “Church Leadership page”. This will auto populate the Nominations Report and the Minutes of the Charge Conference. Typically, this will take the most time to complete.

*Note: Please be sure to complete the Leadership Report with the individuals’ correct phone number, email address and mailing address. This information is used throughout the year by various NC Conference offices to share important information. Incorrect information will delay work and will require the Conference to contact the Pastor for correct information.

- If the pastor is new to the parish, consider asking leaders/committee personnel to extend their “term” for one year.
- Most churches run a three-year “term” for committee members. Only new people need to be voted on. Unless told otherwise, assume that the others listed in the committee structure will continue.
- While “terms” are for 3 years, if someone is taking on a new role/committee it is typical to ask them to try it out for at least a year and if they don’t like it they can serve in a different way. If they do like it, then they can fill out their full term.
- Entire process: Depending on the number of people incorporated into the structure it will take several meetings to get the slate of officers filled.
- Check with key lay leaders on how this typically is done. Many hold weekly meetings over 4-6 weeks and try to keep meetings to 60-70 minutes.
- Everyone identified to fill a committee should be contacted and provided with a clear description of responsibilities to make sure they are willing to serve: an honest “no” is

better than a fudged “yes”.

- Try not to use the same people all the time. Depending on the size of the church, this might be the only choice.
- *Allow plenty of time for the process to be completed. Smaller churches may take less time because there are fewer spots to fill and fewer people to fill them.*

Trustees

Trustees will need to meet to complete the Annual Report of the Board of Trustees (for year 2024) and to complete the Parsonage Checklist-review. Please plan for a time with your parsonage family to have this walk-through. *If your church does not own a parsonage, you will still need to complete this report by checking the box on the online report that indicates you have no parsonage. If your parsonage is currently being rented, there is an option to upload the rental lease and skip completing the Checklist.

The Trustees Report can be given to the business manager or trustee’s chairperson. It is helpful to find out who has done it in the past. Many of the figures can be used from one year to the next. Do look over previous reports to make sure that no changes are needed for this year.

S/PPRC (Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee)

S/PPRC will need to meet to complete the State of the Church Report, to review the Report of Pastoral Ministry once completed by the Pastor, and to recommend the Pastor’s 2025 compensation to the Finance Committee. *Please note that the State of the Church Report functions as your congregation’s charge conference report and church profile for the year.

The SPRC Committee will:

- Need at least 2 meetings prior to Charge Conference:
- Set salary for 2025. Usually in first-year appointments, pastor salary remains stagnant.
 - Remember to consider the other clergy compensation pieces such as pension and health & life insurance.
- Start the State of the Church report – Churches with newly appointed pastors won’t have much input at this time because the pastor is new to the church. The previous year’s report may provide a starting point. (1-2 pages)
 - It can be helpful to have people give input and then one person put it together.
 - Don’t try to draft the document in a committee meeting.
 - It is not expected that this be a detailed report. Summarize and highlight the important things.
 - The report can be positive and negative (strengths and concerns/weaknesses).
 - Be sure to reflect the actual life of the congregation.
 - Think 2-3 pages.
 - In churches with a new pastor, reference to the “pastor” should be the pastoral office and not just on the initial few weeks. The response can reflect both currently appointed and the person previously in the role.
- Draft Anti-Racism report (if the church has an Anti-Racism Team, it is recommended that they complete this report).

The Administrative Council

The Church or Administrative Council should meet three to four weeks in advance of your Charge Conference date. This meeting should include voting for your 2025 leadership nominations and pastoral

compensation. An opportunity should be given for the pastor to share from their *Report of Pastoral Ministry*, and an opportunity for the S/PPRC to share their *State of the Church Report* and the *Anti-Racism Report*. If there are additional Charge Conference matters to be considered (Candidates for Ministry, Lay Servants, Members to Be Removed, Housing Exclusions, etc.) please name these in this Council meeting so that no one is surprised at the Charge Conference.

Pastors

Please make time to adequately complete your *Report of Pastoral Ministry* prior to a meeting of your S/PPRC. This document will serve as part of your assessment and profile for the coming year and will be used in Cabinet conversations. As soon as your Council approves your compensation for 2025 please complete your Compensation Worksheet and UMPIP elections (if enrolled in the Pension Plan). As soon as July 15, begin delegating members of the leadership team to collect the information for the following reports found in the Conference Online Data Collection System (OLDCS).

- *Safe Sanctuaries Report*
- *Camping/Retreat Ministries*
- *Current High School Seniors and College Students* *Please note that we only be collect information on college students going to a NC school with a Wesley Fellowship.

Pastor's Report: Newly appointed pastors may not have a lengthy Pastor's Report, though it is still important. As you fill this out, consider in your answer what you want the Cabinet to know about your ministry. Again, it is ok to include not only your strengths, but also your growing edges.

Typical Schedule

Timeline Guidance:

Use your Forms Due Date (14 days before your charge conference) and work backwards to schedule these meetings: Church Council Date, Finance Committee Date, Leadership/Nominations Date, S/PPRC Date; all of these meetings must take place a minimum of 15 days prior to CC. It will be necessary to coordinate your dates for meeting in a timely manner to meet the deadlines for consideration before all the other committees.

Finance Committee

- Finance Chair can fill out the Finance Report or someone else can with information provided by the Finance Chairperson, Treasurer or Financial Secretary.
- Finance Chair and S/PPRC Chair should have some conversation to determine how much money is available if there will be a consideration of an increase in compensation.
- Finance Committee should begin to build a budget
 - In churches with static membership, attendance and/or giving, the budget remains pretty stable and so budgets typically will be roughly the same year to year.
 - If that is the case, then you may get through the process with only one Finance Meeting – to approve the budget including the compensation for pastor
 - If the budget is more dynamic, you may need at least 2 Finance Meetings –
 - First: to begin the budget process and get input from work areas (the Finance Committee can gauge the general increase in budget that seems practical)
 - Second: Finalize budget – especially pastoral compensation package
 - Note: It is the S/PPRC that recommends compensation, not the Finance Committee

Nominations Committee

- Begins work on the nominations report 4-8 weeks prior to Charge Conference Date

S/PPRC Meeting #1:

- Start the conversation about the *State of the Church Report*
 - Encourage people to share their reflections about the questions in the report's prompts
 - Develop a draft document with the input from committee members
- Start the conversation about Salary (this probably won't take as long)
- Start *Anti-Racism Report* Conversation
- Any other S/PPRC discussion points

S/PPRC Meeting #2

- Review draft of *State of the Church Report* – have community approve/affirm the report
- Finalize compensation package – salary, allowances, etc.
- Finalize *Anti-Racism Report*

Church Council/Administrative Board

It is crucial that the church council meet prior to the charge conference. That way, if there are issues, they can be ironed out in that meeting rather than at the charge conference.

- AFTER Finance Committee approves Budget/Compensation package,
- AFTER Nominations Committee finishes staffing the committee structure with willing laity,

- BEFORE the Charge Conference (at least 2 weeks prior to Charge Conference)
- APPROVE: Compensation/Budget and Nominations Report, and
- SHARE *State of the Church Report* with Church Council – you don't have to read it word for word, but certainly share key ideas.

***The Conference Online Data Collection System (OLDCS) will be available for data input on August 1, 2024. [Watch a video](#) from our District Superintendents walking you through the planning process of preparing for your Charge Conference.**