

GUIDELINES FOR LAY MEMBERS OF THE WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA 2010 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Thank you for accepting the call to be the lay representative of your church or district at annual conference. Your responsibility is to provide leadership, and be the link between the laity of your church or district and the rest of the conference. This link is the first of the "connections" that make all United Methodists part of a great Connectional Church. The annual conference is a time when my "spiritual batteries" get recharged. Bishop Thomas Bickerton is casting an exciting vision for our time together at annual conference, as United Methodists in covenant relationship.

There is so much information packed into a few days, it can be overwhelming at times. Starting each day at the early morning worship service helps me focus myself for the work of the day ahead. I invite YOU to join me as we start each day with Him. The blessing of Christian fellowship and worship will stay with you all day.

Your role, according to the Book of Discipline, is to understand and communicate the purpose of the annual conference. Your attendance at ALL sessions of the annual conference meeting will help prepare and educate you for this responsibility.

The Book of Discipline also explains your leadership role. You are to serve as the interpreter of the actions of the annual conference session, and to report to your local church on actions of the annual conference as soon as possible, but not later than 3 months after the close of the conference.

To prepare for annual conference you should:

- STUDY the pre conference journal and materials that are sent to you to know the resolutions and petitions submitted for action
- BECOME FAMILIAR with the conference rules of order
- REVIEW and have knowledge of the content of the Book of Discipline and Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church
- KNOW and understand the process used by the conference for conducting business and when the various processes are appropriate to the matters at hand, such as Robert's Rules of Order, consensus, or discernment
- MEET with the members of the congregation, your pastor, members of the district, and the district lay leader to discuss issues coming before the conference

If this is your first time attending the annual conference, you could review previous Conference Journals (ask your pastor for a copy) so that you will have an idea of the proceedings and what to expect. You should speak with others who have attended before, or feel free to contact me.

As an elected member you will have FULL VOICE AND VOTE on the floor of the annual conference, and in the legislative section to which you are assigned. Look in the pre conference journal to find which section you are in. If you do not find your name, please contact Rev. John Wilson, Conference Secretary, at the Conference Center at 800 886-3382, or at 412 767-5646.

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IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR YOU TO ATTEND ALL SESSIONS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE. AN ALTERNATE IS ASSIGNED TO ATTEND IN YOUR PLACE IF YOU CANNOT FULFILL YOUR OBLIGATION. PLEASE ALERT YOUR PASTOR OR DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT SO THE ALTERNATE MAY BE NOTIFIED.

There are many special worship services and experiences that also make up the annual conference. As you attend them, you begin to understand the meaning of being a Connectional Church. Our shared experiences help make us ONE in the Body of Christ. As we come together for ORDINATION we celebrate the lives of those called to ordained ministry. In the MEMORIAL SERVICE we celebrate the lives of lay and clergy alike who have served our God and us with their ministries and have passed into eternal glory. At the LAY ACADEMY we attend to our own growth and personal development. As we visit the DISPLAYS we realize the many ways God uses us all to further His kingdom. As we explore RESOURCES available to us to use in our local churches we realize that we CAN be the link that brings information back to help others come to know Jesus. Sharing ideas for ministry and networking with others, praying with and for each other, worshipping together, taking communion together, makes us ONE IN CHRIST

Please prayerfully consider coming to Annual Conference a day early, on Wednesday to attend the DAY OF SPIRITUAL PREPARATION activities. Plan to arrive by 12 noon to attend the prayer service at 12:45 PM. Join others to PRAYER WALK the campus at 2 PM. Have a time of personal reflection while visiting the PRAYER ROOM until the evening PRAYER AND HEALING service at 6:00 PM, where our new ordinands will be prayed for and given their own vial of anointing oil to prepare them for this important aspect of their ministry. Be prayed for yourself by the new ordinands and others. Attend one of the Lay Academy classes offered at 8:00 PM, so you can attend a second class on Thursday morning, to maximize your learning experiences.

When you prepare your report for your local church, try to include a description of all of these experiences as well as the legislative reports. Let them know what you saw, how you felt, what emotions you experienced, how YOUR LIFE was BLESSED AND CHANGED. Use photos, video, power point or slides to show them what the plenary hall was like, how large the youth delegation was, what the exhibit hall looked like, who were the friends you met.

Remember, if you have any comments, questions or concerns about the annual conference meeting, please contact me at 724-834-4798(H), 814-341-9327(C), or hbarbus@comcast.net or any member of the lay ministry team. We are here to serve you.

Please pray for our Annual Conference meeting, our Bishop, the cabinet members, all clergy and lay delegates, the sessions team and youth pages, and God's work that is before us.

Harry Barbus
Conference Lay Leader