

INFORMATION & GUIDELINES FOR LAY MEMBERS

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.

Bishop Thomas Bickerton, who has returned to Western Pennsylvania for a new four-year term, will cast an exciting vision for our time as United Methodists in covenant relationship.

There is so much packed into a few days, it can be overwhelming at times. Starting each day at the early morning worship service will help us focus on the work of the day. The blessing of Christian fellowship and worship will stay with you all day. Your role, according to our denomination's 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 no 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 and the processes used for conducting business, such as Robert's Rules of Order, consensus, or discernment, as well as when the various processes might be appropriate.
- **REVIEW** the content of the Book of Discipline and Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church
- **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 will be your first time at annual conference, you may want to 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 may want to speak with others who have attended before, or contact Conference Lay Leader Sharon Gregory at 412-727-1235(H), 412-273-8589(C), or conferencelayleader@wpaumc.org.

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.

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 laity and clergy who have served our God and us with their ministries and have passed into eternal glory. At the **Lay Academy** we further our own growth and 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 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**.

ALL laity are encouraged to attend both the **Lay Academy** and the **Day of Spiritual Preparation** activities on Wednesday, June 12. The Day of Preparation is an inspiring time and sets the tone of the annual conference for us all.

Plan to arrive by 12 noon to attend the prayer service at 12:45 p.m. Join others in a campus PRAYER WALK at 2 p.m. Spend time in personal reflection while visiting the PRAYER ROOM. Attend the evening PRAYER AND HEALING service at 6:30 p.m. Ordinands will be prayed for and receive their own vial of anointing oil to prepare them for this important aspect of their ministry.

Attend one of the Lay Academy classes offered at 8 p.m. so you can attend a second class on Thursday morning to maximize your learning experiences. Invite your pastor to attend a Lay Academy class with you. The schedule of classes will be posted online at wpaumc.org/AC2013. **PLEASE REGISTER FOR LAY ACADEMY CLASSES ONLINE.** Use the link on the AC2013 page.

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, Powerpoint 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, please contact Sharon Gregory at 412-727-1235(H), 412-273-8589(C), or conferencelayleader@wpaumc.org or any member of the lay ministry team. We are here to serve you.

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

--Sharon Gregory, Conference Lay Leader