



# Baltimore-Washington Conference

The United Methodist Church

Dear Sisters and Brothers on the Southern Region,

For the past five years on this region, we have planned and labored together to focus our work on *missional discipleship*. We believe that *time is precious*, and we seek to use your time and ours wisely, in order to support the mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We are writing to let you know about a revised process for church conference that we believe will free up more time for mission, while still accomplishing our goals of having items approved according to the Book of Discipline. This allows for more flexibility for churches in scheduling, and more opportunity for the superintendents and administrators to support the clergy and churches.

Here is the process we will be following:

- Presiding elder contact information shared with pastors of all congregations
- Pastor schedules date with a presiding elder to come to the congregation, possibly during an already-scheduled church council meeting, in order to vote
- Pastor notifies the DA of the date of the church conference. All paperwork will still be due 10 days before the scheduled date for DA/DS review.
- Church conference will take place with a consistent agenda for the region, and documents turned in to the DAs.

In recognition of the need for interaction with the DAs and DSs during the fall, we commit to the following ways of supporting the process we have outlined:

- DAs will provide church conference training for the church administrators during the summer
- DSs and DAs will provide the training for the presiding elders in September
- DSs and DAs will spend several days on their respective districts during the fall, in order for DAs to provide direct assistance for church administrators, in order for DSs to have clergy annual interviews, and to open up time for anyone to come and eat with us as we share a time for "brown bag lunch conversation"
- DSs will lead and provide three days during the fall when all are invited to a time of serving and learning together about mission field engagement

We also pray that this revised process frees up time for you and your congregation. Rather than spending a significant chunk of a day attending a church conference, imagine some possibilities for new paths of discipleship, or mission field engagement! We are so grateful for our partnership with the presiding elders. We also desire to spend more precious time with the laity, not focused on voting on paperwork that has already been thoroughly vetted, but rather focusing on the main thing: making disciples of Jesus Christ. We thank you in advance for your spirit and heart for ministry, your dedication to our connection, and to the mission. To God be the glory!

Rev. Dr. Rebecca Iannicelli

Washington East District Superintendent