

Charge Conference Training Summary

Sunday, August 3, 2025

Quick recap

The meeting focused on preparing participants for charge conference season, with Martha leading a training session on accessing resources, completing forms, and managing administrative tasks through the church portal. Chris provided detailed explanations about ministerial support forms, pension options, and compensation reporting requirements, emphasizing the importance of accurate data entry and timely submissions. The session concluded with guidance on proper form arrangements and communication protocols, with Martha and Chris offering ongoing support for participants in the Greenville district.

Next steps

- Pastors to complete personal retirement contribution elections through the Personal Retirement Contribution Management Page at least one week before creating the 2026 Ministerial Support Form
- Pastors to complete and submit Ministerial Support Forms to the District Office for review before printing
- Pastors to ensure all charge conference reports are completed and signed before consultation meetings with Reverend Lollis
- Pastors to organize charge conference reports in proper order as per directions
- Pastors to bring completed charge conference packet to consultation meetings
- Pastors to ensure direct billing percentages equal 100% on Ministerial Support Forms
- Pastors to avoid entering cents in gross compensation figures on Ministerial Support Forms
- Pastors to ensure housing allowance is not confused with utility parsonage exclusion on Ministerial Support Forms
- Pastors to check their current Ministerial Support Form to ensure proper church listings when completing 2026 form
- Pastors to review and update Safe Sanctuary policies
- Pastors to ensure all church leader contact information is entered correctly in nominations database
- Pastors to print correct report versions for charge conference forms

- Pastors to complete online pastor consultation forms at least one week before scheduled consultations

Summary

Charge Conference Preparation Training

Martha led a training session on charge conference preparations, guiding participants to access resources on the Greenwood district webpage, including calendars for consultations and charge conferences. She emphasized the importance of checking the calendars for dates and locations, and encouraged participants to explore the webpage thoroughly. Reverend Lollis was scheduled to discuss the Ministerial Support Form later in the session, which contains new information for full-time pastors.

Church Portal and Forms Training

Martha guided participants through the process of completing an online pastoral consultation form, which is available on the District webpage in the section for 2025 Charge Conference Information. Martha and Chris emphasized the importance of submitting the Pastor Consultation Form one week before the consultation to allow time for review. She also demonstrated how to access and edit the charge conference worship bulletin and explained the church portal's features, including how to manage nominations and accountable reimbursements. Martha encouraged participants to familiarize themselves with these processes to streamline their church administrative tasks.

Database Address Entry Guidelines

Martha emphasized the importance of accurately entering email addresses and mailing addresses into the leadership database, as incorrect addresses often lead to returned mail. She explained the process of updating and submitting this information, as well as printing the nominations report and PPRC roster for the charge conference. Chris reminded attendees to ensure they print the correct report screen rather than the input screen for forms requiring signatures.

Charge Conference and Safe Sanctuary Updates

Martha provided a detailed overview of charge conference reports, explaining the requirements for lay servants, local church sexual misconduct policies, and various forms that need to be completed and submitted to the district office. She emphasized the importance of reviewing and updating the Safe Sanctuary policy, which must be on file in the district office, and mentioned that more detailed Safe Sanctuary training would be conducted after January 1st. Martha also covered the trustee report, noting that while the current report shows last year's figures, new data can be entered, and the names of trustees will be updated after their term expires in December 2026.

Clergy Forms and Pension Updates

Martha emphasized the importance of completing charge conference reports and bringing fully signed packets to consultations, while Chris highlighted the need for pastors to complete their own ministerial support forms to avoid errors. Chris also introduced the Compass Plan, a new pension option for full-time clergy, and advised that full-time pastors should make their pension elections at least a week before creating the ministerial support form to allow for Benefits Office review. Pastors must login to their Conference online account (using personal login credentials) to access the pastor portal for making their pension elections. (This is the same login process used when creating/updating the Clergy Profile.)

Retirement Contribution Options Overview

The Personal Retirement Contribution Management Page now offers three contribution types: before-tax, Roth, and after-tax contributions, with options to contribute a percentage of compensation, a whole dollar amount, or not at all. Automatic contribution escalation is available for percentage contributions, increasing by 1% annually up to 10%, but participants cannot opt into auto-escalation if choosing multiple contribution types. Once contribution elections are set, users must select an effective date, with the earliest option being January 1st of the next year, and changes will be processed by the CBO before finalization. Additionally, users can add optional email addresses for notifications and must handle retirement contributions through the personal retirement contribution page, not the ministerial support form system.

Pension Contribution Process and Limits

Chris explained the process for pension contribution changes, emphasizing that full-time employees must log in to the portal to make adjustments, rather than relying on the district or benefits office. He outlined the three types of contributions—pre-tax, Roth, and after-tax—and their tax implications, noting that projected contribution limits for 2026 are \$24,500 for those under 50, with additional catch-up limits for older employees. Chris also advised participants to contribute a percentage of their salary instead of a fixed amount to account for salary increases over time and encouraged utilizing Westpath's financial tools for retirement planning. He concluded by clarifying that the ministerial support form's effective start and end dates for 2026 should be noted, regardless of retirement plans.

Pastor Appointment Form Process

Chris explained the process for completing a form related to pastor appointments and financial details. He outlined options for selecting pastor status, service time, and pension participation, emphasizing the importance of consulting the district office for any changes in status. Chris also discussed the proper way to indicate parsonage availability and financial resources, stressing the need to check the parsonage box even if not living in it to avoid pension impacts. He advised pastors with multiple point charges to ensure consistency with their current ministerial support form when inputting church information.

Ministerial Support Billing Requirements

Chris explained the direct billing percentage requirements for ministerial support forms, noting that it must total 100% regardless of part-time status. He clarified that housing in lieu of parsonage is only available for ordained clergy, not lay supply or CLM serving churches, and discussed pension form requirements for retired pastors. Chris also covered the importance of completing contributions to the portal before creating ministerial support forms and mentioned that healthcare elections would not be available until December 15th.

Ministerial Compensation and Forms

The meeting focused on explaining various aspects of ministerial support forms and compensation reporting. Chris explained the utility parsonage exclusion, housing allowance, and billable compensation, emphasizing that churches should not confuse housing allowance with utility parsonage exclusion. Martha advised on the proper submission process for ministerial support forms, noting that only one copy is needed for multi-point charges until after charge conference. Debbie clarified that compensation reported should reflect what the church actually pays, not including grants that are paid to the church and then to the clergy person. Joseph inquired about the order of forms for charge conference, to which Martha referred to the directions for proper arrangement.

Charge Conference Preparation Support

The meeting focused on preparing for the charge conference season, with Martha emphasizing the importance of reaching out with questions and offering her assistance. Chris and Martha highlighted the significance of checking emails regularly for announcements and updates, particularly for those in the Greenville district, which will now receive communications from both Martha and Sherri. They assured attendees of their support in resolving any issues and encouraged proactive communication.