

The Logistics Transition Team FAQ

South Carolina Conference of
The United Methodist Church



(Updated March 15 at the end of this document)

1) When will the changes to the new Ten Districts take effect?

The changes will go into effect July 1, 2026, when pastoral transitions occur and in alignment with the GCFA calendar.

2) Will a map be shared showing the new district lines and the churches assigned to each new district?

A map will be prepared that shows the new district lines by churches. Lists of churches assigned to each district can be made available from each District Superintendent.

3) Will the district offices in the new districts remain open and accessible to clergy and laity?

At this time there are no plans to close any district offices. Hence, they should all be accessible to clergy and laity during each office's business hours.

4) Will my District Office be in the same place?

Most District Offices will continue in their current location. It is likely that the Marion District office will move to Conway, and the Anderson District office will move to Easley. Additional changes may be needed to support district operations.

5) With the increase in the number of churches in my district, will I still be able to get timely help from the District Administrative Assistant and the Superintendent?

That should not be a problem. Although the District Superintendents will be responsible for more churches, they will continue to do their best to serve all well. The Administrative Assistants will still be able to help with most of your needs.

6) Will you consider increasing the service time (currently about 20-22 hours per week) of the District Administrative Assistants as the size of the district (number of churches; number of clergy, etc.) may increase?

There are no plans to increase District Admin work hours at this time, but the Conference Staff Relations Committee and District workload team will continue to monitor the situation.

7) Will churches/charges be given directions for preparing church records to be moved to the new district?

Yes, the logistics team is partnering with the Cabinet and the District Office to develop guidance to local churches moving to new Districts. Charge conference records are digital and will follow each church/charge to the new district.

8) How will directions be given to district administrative assistants regarding preparing church records, clergy files, and committee files for transference to a new district?

The logistics team is working with the Bishop, Cabinet, and administrative teams to develop guidance to be shared with all district offices before Annual Conference.

9) How much of the file transfers can be handled through technology rather than moving paper files?

Many of our conference and district files – such as charge conference materials, dCom files, and ACStats – are already stored electronically. Our goal is to make greater use of technology and to offer training so it can be used effectively.

10) Will the Conference make arrangements to help with moving any files of closed churches to the Archives at Wofford College?

The Commission on Archives under Dr. Phillip Stone has a document that specifies the items that need to be sent to Wofford College. This was developed in the past for the separating churches but can apply to churches that are closing. This can be made available to any interested churches.

11) What will happen to the existing District Committee and Boards?

We have an active leadership list for every church which will move with the church to the new District. Additionally, each District has a nominations committee who help identify lay and clergy for service in the district.

12) Will my church's apportionments change (increase)?

The conference budget will decrease, which may result in your apportionments decreasing or remaining more or less the same. Apportionments are based on a two-year average of money spent by a local church, so any changes will likely not be immediate.

13) How will our church's Charge Conference be affected?

District Superintendents may need to be creative in conducting Charge Conference meetings. For example, some may hold cluster charge conferences, with multiple conferences occurring simultaneously at a central location and elders designated to preside on the DS's behalf.

14) Will the Districts be renamed?

At this point, the Anderson District office will be relocated to Easley and the Marion District will be relocated to Conway. Districts will retain geographical names for the foreseeable future. The Jeremiah Team for District Realignment had discussed this in length and concluded that naming districts for the town in which the district office is located is the most convenient and equitable solution. This could change with further reductions.

MARCH 1 UPDATE

15) What is the time frame that the Transition Team is giving themselves if there are to be additional reductions?

We can't give you an exact deadline, because we have to hold in mind a couple of different things. First, there is a process related to litigation of churches that are attempting to separate from The United Methodist Church, so we want to give enough time for that process to run its course. It is also true that we do not want to undervalue the commitment of our local United Methodist churches.

Secondly, many of our churches are still recovering from a couple of large variables – the COVID 19 pandemic and the fallout from the separation process. We want to give those churches an opportunity to be able to see how they are recovering. We want to give our local churches a reasonable period of time to see how they are weathering the storm and coming through that process.

When the Jeremiah Teams were looking at various possibilities for reducing, one thing we learned from other conferences was not to go too far, too fast. That's why we suggested going to 10 districts as a first step. We need to give this first step of 10 districts time to settle out before

While we can't promise you, it is certainly our hope that most of this will have been resolved by the end of the current quadrennium in 2028.

16) Will current district officers of United Women in Faith and United Methodist Men be impacted by the transition?

It could be that those persons who are serving now will become a part of leadership teams in their new districts. The leadership of both UMM and UWF have been sharing leadership lists and discussing how these changes will affect them. In some cases, there are discussions of having co-presidents of district groups to ensure that we are being inclusive and taking advantage of the strong leadership already in place.

And as it relates to district boards, committees and commissions, what that really means is that we have a larger pool of laity and clergy from whom to draw our leadership, and we're really excited about the possibility of having additional persons in our districts with the leadership skills and experience to be able to strengthen the work that's ongoing there.

MARCH 15 UPDATE

17) In light of district mergers, what role will geography take in creating local pastor mentoring groups?

The District Committees on Ministry are responsible, alongside the district superintendents, for setting up local pastor mentoring groups. In each of the districts, we try to set up as many groups as needed and as possible, based on the number of mentors that we actually have. We try to set those up to keep the groups close geographically. Some local pastor groups meet in person, some meet on Zoom, and some do both.

The district superintendents and the District Committees on Ministry will work to find ways to have them be as close as we can to the geographical areas where the churches and the pastors are located. We also try to keep those groups as small as possible.

18) What are the requirements attached to funds gained from selling district parsonages and office spaces?

According to The Book of Discipline, when a local church parsonage is sold, those funds can only be used to provide another parsonage or provide a housing allowance related to that local church. The same would be true for district parsonages, and when offices are relocated. If those properties are sold, they are used to acquire spaces in other areas.

For more detail, see Paragraphs 2540-2542 of the 2020/2024 Book of Discipline.

19) What is the rationale for moving the Marion District office from Marion to Conway?

The original suggestion to do that came from a member of the team who was from the Marion District. It was felt that Conway had a lot more aesthetics to offer a district superintendent and their family, as opposed to Marion. The Marion District administrative assistant had already moved to Conway for that reason. So, it was not so much that Marion or Conway is more centrally located.

20) If the goal of redistricting is to save money, and the Marion District parsonage and office are already paid for, how is moving to Conway, which is a more expensive area, saving money?

Finding a house in Conway comparable to the parsonage in Marion would certainly be more costly. But the proceeds from the sale of the Florence District parsonage, coupled with the proceeds from the sale of the Marion parsonage, should allow us to buy a house in Conway without incurring additional or new expenses to the district. As we are trying to save money and reduce our expenses, we do not want to do so at the cost of services and care for the churches and for the pastors.

So, while we could have kept things in Marion and saved some money, we would still create a greater hardship on serving the churches that are now part of the Marion District. Even though we're spending a little more money up front, in the long run we view it more as an investment of what can be done for the care and the service to those churches that are now part of the Marion District.

21) In the Florence District, white and black United Methodist Men seem to have separate agendas. Will we continue to serve our new district in that respect?

The work of crossing boundaries has to begin with each of us personally. We all have a personal responsibility for seeking to know our neighbors around us and those who we do not know, and to continue building on those relationships together, even as the district lines are redrawn.

22) For churches historically in the Florence District, traveling to Conway or Marion is farther than traveling to Florence. How efficient is this?

Currently throughout the conference, there are about 60 churches that are more than an hour away from their district office. With the changes, across the conference, that number's been reduced to about 24. So, two-thirds of our churches have been helped by this. But again, helping every church didn't happen, and it's not always possible.

Some may indeed have a little longer drive than they had before, but I know the attempt was to keep everyone under an hour and a half, or under an hour and 20 minutes, if at all possible. They succeeded in that for the most part, but not completely.

23) With the increasing size of districts, what efforts are being made to foster Connectionalism in a season in which we could easily become more isolated?

We try to encourage smaller networks within the districts. In another time in the life of our annual conference, we had cluster groups, which some of our districts still use as a way of being able to draw people together. Within a district, you may have 5 to 6 clusters. That means that work is closer to where people actually live. Superintendents are trying to help foster some of those clusters, and it'll be something for all of our districts to consider.

We encourage people to find networks for clergy and laypersons. There's not going to be a perfect solution yet, but absolutely, we would do everything in our power to try to encourage smaller cluster groups that would bring people together. What's really important is the relationships with one another, and that's a concern that we will certainly be taking to the Cabinet.

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24) Why were the Florence and Greenville districts dissolved, when the Walterboro District did not have a district superintendent for almost 2 years? What was the main goal with making this decision?

Firstly, the Walterboro and Greenville districts were not without district leadership for 2 years. The Walterboro District has been covered by Rev. Terry Fleming, Rev. Jeffrey Sally, and myself; and the Greenville District has been covered by Rev. Cathy Mitchell, Rev. Chris Lollis, and Rev. Steve Patterson. So, each of those districts actually had 3 superintendents. They also had their district administrative assistants and the persons who continue to do that work.

That said, the main goal was to make reductions across the conference that would have as minimal an impact as possible to the overall number of churches. We looked at other districts, and we felt that dissolving some of those would have created a greater disadvantage to a lot of more churches than the ones involved with the Florence and Greenville districts.