



Firelands District

CHARGE CONFERENCE 2020: GUIDELINES AND INSTRUCTIONS

2020 CHARGE CONFERENCE CONSULTATIONS & FORMS

In an attempt to simplify charge conference forms – from the perspective of **you** completing them AND **me** collecting them – this guide will walk you through all the steps necessary for a successful Charge Conference season. Not all may apply to you, but hopefully this will act as a reference for those who need it! Questions? Please don't hesitate to reach out! ~Jenn *District Admin Asst.*

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FAQ's

Where can I find all the forms required for Church Conference?

Charge Conference forms are available on the District website (<http://www.eocumc.com/district-forms/index.html>) as PDF fill-ins. Microsoft Word forms and paper copies may also be requested by contacting the District office.

I am trying to fill in and save the PDF, but when I do it is blank!

Remember to download the form first before you fill it in (regardless of file type, browser, or type of computer). Even though most browsers will allow you to fill in the blanks while the page is open IN that browser, there is no way to save the data if that is where you enter all your info. If getting the document from the website, you will only see the PDF version and must download the form and save it to your computer FIRST, then open it in Adobe Acrobat to complete. *Don't have Adobe Acrobat? It is free – you can download it from the District Forms page or go [HERE](#). (Just make sure to uncheck the boxes for McAfee Anti-virus before you download, or you'll get extra software you don't want!)* If you want the Word version, and I email it to you, again you should download it before you attempt to type and save.

Do I have to submit all of the documents to the District office before Charge Conference, even if they need signatures?

YES! We do expect and require you to submit all forms for review **two weeks prior** to the actual date of Charge Conference. **It is preferred that all documents are submitted by email (get your scanners ready!).** All of the forms can be signed prior to the Charge Conference **except** the Omnibus. **The Omnibus must be signed by the elected recording secretary AT Charge Conference.** **Since Charge Conference will be virtual this year, once the omnibus is signed, it must be scanned & emailed or snail mailed to Jenn at the District office by the Friday following your Charge Conference meeting.**

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(Fun fact: Submitting documents ahead of time makes sure you are ready with all information at hand for the actual meeting, plus if we see something missing, we can bring it to your attention so we don't all have to hunt down data later.)

The omnibus asks if our church has access to the church dashboard on EZRA. What do they mean?

EZRA is the database used by the East Ohio Conference to record church information, clergy information, and leadership contact data (local, district, and conference level). You may be familiar with EZRA as the program you use to enter End-of-Year stats and data in January. If you are unsure how to access it just give the district office a call for help. The advantage to having you do it for your own church is that you can easily update leadership and other church information on your own without having to go through me (anytime of the year!), and it saves me time by not having to enter data for **all** of the Firelands District churches (and often hunt down contact information for those in leadership positions when info is not provided, is illegible, or gets cut off on the document). All Leadership information needs to be entered into EZRA no later than December 1st.

If I enter the local church leadership into EZRA by December 1st, will you *really* notice if it is late, or if I don't do it?

YES! I check everyone's data in December, and if you said you were going to enter it, and I don't see it there, well I'm going to send you coal for Christmas! Honestly, I understand how insane the Advent season can be at a church – one of the reasons for the request for entry pre-December 1st. Also, by the end of December the District and Conference start compiling contact lists for specific elected positions (Lay Leaders, Treasurers, Mission Chair, SPR Chair, Youth Leaders etc.). That said, if you know there is no way you'll complete it on time, all I ask is that you let me know, and give me a general ETA of when you expect it to be entered so I won't bug you about it until after that date has passed. If you come to the conclusion that it falls completely out of the realm of possibility to complete it, you will not lose points if you let me know that, too – I just need to make sure it gets done in a timely fashion.

If I am the one entering the data into EZRA, do you really need the table of leadership on the Omnibus completed with ALL the information requested?

YES! There are many parts of the omnibus which contain information for required voting AT Charge Conference. The table (after question 17) contains many of those voting pieces – anything with an asterisk (*). You are electing the leadership for the coming year, and everyone in attendance at Charge Conference for your church needs to be able to view and vote on those names presented. (It also provides a back-up of information for me when I look through your leadership on EZRA – I am sure you figured as much!) ****You can enter your leadership information into EZRA prior to your charge conference and print off the leadership report then attach it to your Omnibus so you only have to do it once****

Please make sure the names you list are upcoming leadership, not the ones currently serving. If someone is carrying on the same role through the next year that is fine, but it should be indicated as their term ending in the future, not 2020.

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Ok, I have read through the FAQ's, reviewed the documents, and taken note of the guidelines and instructions in this document, yet I am still a little lost. Can you help?

YES! I understand this can be an overwhelming amount of data both to compile and to receive. To help you on your end – so it helps the collection and review on my end – I am happy to schedule a phone call or one-on-one ZOOM meeting with you to discuss questions you might have. Please feel free to ask questions about where things go, how to report them, what we're really looking for, or any other piece that may be confusing.

Great! I get everything we have to do, but remind me again when Charge Conference is, and where?

Thanks to COVID, Charge Conference will **not** be at host churches in person, but rather, via ZOOM with small groupings of churches. A schedule will be out soon – prior to the start of consultations -- (and this form updated when possible) with meeting dates.

Who needs to attend Charge Conference?

You need at least 4 members to attend along with your pastor. *Basic, right?* A pastor cannot attend on their own, even if documents are completed with signatures – you have to have members there to vote, particularly as part of the omnibus is voting on the clergy salary. It is preferred these voting members be members of leadership. In a strict charge conference meeting, the lay leader and members of leadership/church/administrative council attend. To encourage broader participation by members of the church, Rev. Lewis, as the DS, has the right to (and does) convene the District Charge Conferences technically as a *church* conference, extending the vote to all professing members of the local church present at such meetings.

What do we need to bring to Charge Conference since we already sent all our paperwork to you?

The key piece to Charge Conference is your **omnibus**! Omnibus, Omnibus, Omnibus! That might sound like an easy thing and just a little stapled 6 page report to carry, **but.....** within the omnibus there are requests for information, reports, other data, and documentation to supplement what is written within the six pages. If you look on the information sheet in this packet regarding Charge Conference paperwork, you will see a detailed list of items to be contained within your omnibus. The addendums also give your voting members a complete and informed picture of what they are approving. This should give a clear answer to what should come along with the omnibus report pages. (Also, make sure any information that is listed on supplements matches the data/info filled in on the omnibus – like pastor's salary and housing exclusion, financial data, Lay Servants, etc.) **This needs to be signed at the end of your Charge Conference and scanned or mailed to the district office within a week of your conference date**

AND THE GOLDEN RULE OF SUBMITTING PAPERWORK:

If it says there is a signature required, *there is a signature required*. Please make sure you submit the document (unless otherwise indicated in the directions) WITH the signature already on the form.



Want to learn more about what the *Book of Discipline* says about Charge & Church Conferences? Look here for details: <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/the-charge-conference>

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Checklist for Charge Conference Paperwork:

Clergy Consults: **These were concluded on 9/3/20.**

SPR Consults: (Due 2 weeks prior to consultation with DS)

- ☐ LCPA
- ☐ Clergy Ministerial Assessment (*new this year- normally in May*)
- ☐ LCPL (*as applicable; complete every 3 years or with updates to church mission or dynamics*)

For Charge Conference: (due 2 weeks prior to meeting)

- ☐ **Omnibus** with attachments: (Omnibus itself should be signed after Charge Conference)
 - ☐ Pastor's report
 - ☐ Lay Leader's report
 - ☐ VIM report*
 - ☐ **Lay Servant(s) reports***
 - *Is each one signed by the lay servant AND pastor?*
 - ☐ Membership report (if not enough room on omnibus lines)
 - ☐ **Parsonage inspection***
 - *Is it signed by the trustee/parsonage chair AND pastor?*
 - ☐ 3rd Quarter Financial Statement(s)
- ☐ **2021 Clergy Compensation Worksheet** (one per pastor)
 - *Is it signed by pastor & SPR/Finance chair?*
- ☐ **2021 Pastor's Housing Exclusion** (one per pastor)
 - *Is it signed by pastor & Admin Board chair/secretary?*
- ☐ 2021 Budget (Due by December 1st)
- ☐ 2021 Church Leadership (Due in EZRA by December 1st)

* *not applicable to all churches*

(PURPLE: there's a set form for that!)

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Charge Conference Paperwork – The Omnibus

The Church staff and leadership should complete the appropriate documents with their pastor(s), then submit to the District office at least two weeks prior to Charge Conference. It is requested (and preferred!) that all documents be sent via email to the District Office. Please send them to Jenn who will share with Rev. Lewis. Send to firelandsdistrict@gmail.com

This is a reminder that your forms need to be completed in their entirety **before** the Charge Conference meeting happens! You will be coming to the Charge Conference meeting to go over the items on the omnibus, take votes, make modifications as necessary, and sign. This is **not** the time to be attempting to complete the entire document! To help with completion of the forms, please see the guidelines below. If you still have more questions, don't hesitate to contact the District Office.

Last reminder about why we do all of this paperwork: First, yes it does provide a report to the District and some of what is reported is used in District/Conference communications and further reports we create. Second, and most importantly, Charge Conference paperwork is like an annual check-up on the health of your church. The data and reports requested are to reflect on how you are doing, what is working, what changes might need to happen, and areas where you need focus. The data reported is important to the District, yes -- but it needs to be meaningful to you!

FORMS *Below is a walk-through of all of the questions on the Omnibus and Pastor Compensation form with explanations or details of data along with addendums that are needed*

□ Omnibus (this will be signed AT/immediately following Charge Conference)

1. Call to Order/Devotions
2. **Election of Recording Secretary***: Will be done AT Charge Conference (*not your pastor!)
3. **Submitted annual Lay Leader and Pastor reports? ADDENDUM ALERT!** You are expected to have a report from both your lead pastor and lay leader every year reflecting on congregational goals and your mission. This is attached as an addendum to the omnibus.
4. **Volunteer in Mission Team report?** If you have a VIM team or participants, please include a report (there is no specific form for this). *This is not applicable to all churches.*
5. **Child Protection Policy:** Every church should have one! Please complete all three questions with policy details (date, reviews, person who monitors it).
6. **CANDIDACY/Ministerial Candidacy:** Is there anyone in your church who has spoken with the pastor and SPR as being interested in exploring a ministry as a candidate? Or is currently on this pathway to ministry? *This will not apply to every church*, but if you have someone who falls into any of the four categories listed, please complete all requested information so we can pass it on to dCOM.
7. **Lay Servants: ADDENDUM ALERT!** If you have anyone who is interested in or currently serves as a lay servant, speaker, or lay minister, they **MUST** complete an annual report and have it signed by the pastor before it is given to the District Office. All reports are reviewed and signed by the DS, then forwarded to our District Lay Servant Director.

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8. **Membership:** Please provide the numbers requested! Church membership for this year (2020) should match the number on your LCPA form (end date of 6/30). If you prefer to report the first three quarters of the year (so end date of 9/30) go ahead – or tweak to whatever time frame makes the most sense for your church reflection purposes (just make sure to write down the changes). Please note the new distinction between in-person and on-line worship (explanation in the LCPA).
9. **Pastor's report on membership rolls: [POSSIBLE] ADDENDUM ALERT!** There are some churches who can use the blank lines provided for the rolls, but most will attach another page filling in the blanks from questions a. to e. (please complete another page if needed).
 - a. Member names and how received (profession of faith, transfer from UM, transfer other denomination)
 - b. Member names and how removed (death, transfer to UM or other denomination, withdrawal, or termination from rolls after second reading)
 - c. Member names who have been inactive and when/how you initiated contact to see if they were still interested in continuing their relationship/membership with your church. This will be the First [year of] Reading of the names. *If you have sent postcards or letters to these individuals, we do not need copies of the communication attached.*
 - d. Member names who have been inactive since last year's First Reading and when/how you initiated contact to see if they were still interested in continuing their relationship/membership with your church. This will be the Second [year of] Reading of the names. *If you have sent postcards or letters to these individuals, we do not need copies of the communication attached.*
 - e. Members who are college students. Include their full name, college they are attending, and contact information. Refer to the note on the omnibus – this information is gathered to help allocate ministry money, as well as pass on the campus chaplains or local churches. We promise we're not going to inundate your child with unnecessary solicitations or show up at their door to convince them to come to church!
10. **Clergy Matters:** Straight-forward. Please answer!
11. **SPR – Pastor Discussion of Continuing Education:** Straight-forward. Please answer! (Add separate page of notes as needed.)
12. **Other Clergy:** Are there any other clergy who call your church home (have a relationship with your church) but are not appointed here nor at any other church? This is often retired clergy or extension ministry clergy who affiliate themselves with your church. *Not applicable to all churches.*
13. **2021 Church Pastor Compensation:** In order to complete these fill-in-the-blanks, you (SPR & Pastor) MUST have completed the 2021 Clergy Compensation forms FIRST. You must also have completed the Housing Exclusion form FIRST to be able to cite the number requested. Use only the lines requested for reporting numbers (see image on next page of Comp form section referred to).
 - a. Total Cash Salary (Only the cash salary)
 - b. Total Plan Compensation (Cash salary + Housing (parsonage amt or housing allowance))
 - Pastor's Housing Exclusion for 2021: **ADDENDUM ALERT!** Pastors either complete the "parsonage" side or the "no parsonage" side of the form.

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2021 Pastor Compensation Report
CLERGY SERVING 100% or 75% TIME


Part 1 – General Information. Please complete a report for each pastor under Episcopal appointment to the church or charge.

Church _____ Charge _____ if different name than church _____ District _____

Pastor's Name _____ SS # (if new appt) _____ Birthdate _____

Status (Circle One) ☐ AM ☐ FD ☐ FE ☐ OD ☐ OE ☐ OF ☐ PD ☐ PE ☐ FL (100%) ☐ PL (75%) ☐ Retired/Supply

TIME INCREMENT (circle one) ☐ 100% / ☐ 75%

 **Part 2 – PLAN COMPENSATION**

1. Total Cash Salary (Total carried from Worksheet 1 TOTAL) \$ 0

Is a Parsonage Provided? ☐ YES --Go to LINE 2; ☐ NO -- Go to LINE 3. Select 'Yes or No' to complete Line 2

2. Parsonage Amount = Total Cash Salary (Line 1) x .25 \$ 0

3. Housing Allowance to be received in lieu of parsonage. (Different than Housing EXCLUSION) \$

4. TOTAL PLAN COMPENSATION (TOTAL OF LINES 1 & 2 or 1 & 3) \$ 0

Complete Worksheet Page FIRST, start with Worksheet 2, Followed by Worksheet 1. This will correctly populate necessary fields. [CLICK HERE](#) to jump to worksheets

14. Worker's Comp & Payroll Plan:

- Workers Compensation -- Straight-forward. Please answer!
- Conference Payroll Plan: Straight-forward. Please answer! Do you do your own payroll or someone in the Conference office (Melissa, Robin, or Annette)?

15. Property & Financial Report:

- Annual Parsonage Inspection: **ADDENDUM ALERT!** If you have a parsonage – whether it is being utilized by the pastor or rented out – there needs to be an inspection conducted of the property every year. And there's a form for that (found on the [EOC website](#) with other charge conference forms). Please complete the inspection form in its entirety.
- Church parsonage: pastoral use or rent? *Answer as applicable to your church.*
- Insurance Information: Yes, this needs to be there! Amounts don't change too frequently, so likely numbers will remain the same for several years in a row.
- Church Incorporation: Please answer. If you are unsure of your last renewal, you can look on the Secretary of State's website: <https://businesssearch.sos.state.oh.us/>
- Deeds information: Please answer all to the best of your ability. It is especially important for you (as the church) to note the location of the deed(s) and who has access.
- Stewardship Campaign: a brief description is welcome.
- Remodeling/Building programs: *as applicable.*
- Audit for 2019: Very important! Make sure it was done and submitted to the District office.
- Indebtedness and Fund Balances: The general guideline is to make the report of fund balances for the first three quarters of the year; they should be reflective of January 1 – September 30.

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- j. Fund Balances: **ADDENDUM ALERT!** Please complete all blanks as they are applicable. Again, the preference is a report of the funds through September 30. You are also requested to submit a year-to-date financial report (ie., 9/30) with your answers.
- k. Expenses? Straight-forward. Please answer!
- l. Investment principal? Straight-forward. Please answer!
- m. Fundraising? Straight-forward. Please answer!
- n. Ministry Apportionment contribution plan: Straight-forward. Please answer!

2021 Budgets are due by December 1st. If you will not have it completed by that date, please let the District office know an ETA for it. If you will have it completed by Charge Conference, please attach it to the omnibus or send it directly the District office as a separate file.

- 16. **Nominations for Committee on Nominations & Leadership Development:** *As applicable for your church.* These individuals will be voted in to their positions at Charge Conference.
- 17. **Nominations for District Members-at-Large for Annual Conference 2022:** These are individuals you would like to nominate to represent the Firelands District at Annual Conference in a year (2022). Their names, emails, mailing addresses, and phone numbers must be included. These nominees will be voted on at Spring District Conference in March/April 2021. (I will get in touch with them after the new year for biography data, so need accurate contact information.)
- 18. **Nominations for Lay Leadership at your church (Table on pages 4-6):** **These are not the people currently serving, but those nominated to begin in their leadership role January 1, 2021.** Please include the complete names of nominees, their mailing address, their best contact phone number, AND their [email address](#). Even if your church admin inputs all the information into EZRA, I still need to have a copy of this as back-up in case they cannot enter it and/or I need to check data. I promise we won't bother the individuals listed with unnecessary contacts or solicitations; we need contact information for Conference and District business related to their leadership positions and committees. **All those with asterisks (*) need to be voted in.** If you have a one board model, list those individuals who are representative of these positions. (We realize some churches have a mid-year rotation model, but those know to communicate with me in May/June.)

Does your church have access to the **Church Dashboard on EZRA**? Did you (church admin) attend the training session in August 2018 with Brenda Vaccaro from the Conference office? If so, you have access and know what to do with it. If you didn't, you can still gain access, and I can send you the "cheat sheets" regarding entering data. **If you check off that you are entering your church's data by December 1st, please plan to do so!** If you do not plan on it or cannot enter it by the deadline, please let me know as I have to make sure all church leadership is entered into EZRA by the end of the calendar year.

Your recording secretary will sign the complete omnibus AT the conclusion of your charge conference and turn that signed copy in to Jenn, the District Administrative Assistant, via scan & email, or through snail mail by the following Friday after your charge conference.

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☐ 2021 Compensation Forms

These MUST be signed by both the pastor AND the SPR or Finance Chair before they come to the District office. The PDF forms will calculate everything for you. Just look for the **START HERE!** highlighted box to begin. Please scan and email (or use digital signature). A few things to remember:

- **Worksheet 2 on page 1 -- *IF Applicable: Cash Allowances* --** is the first step, however, it is a rare circumstance that a pastor is given a cash allowance (it will impact benefits, taxes, etc.). So, unless you are a rare case, jump down to Worksheet A and B to fill in reimbursable amounts. These worksheets do state “For INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY” but that does **not** mean they are optional for completion if a pastor receives them. *The info here is information for the church, the District office, AND the Conference office.* Please fill it in!
- **Worksheet 1 – Compensation Paid by the Local Church. Your true starting point!** MOST pastors will only have a number in “a. Cash Salary.” This should automatically populate into “Total Cash Salary (Line a + b + c + d).” Click the box right below this to jump to Part 2 – PLAN COMPENSATION on the next page.
- In Part 2: PLAN COMPENSATION – this is where the information that goes on your omnibus (#13) will be derived. Go through all of the numbers answering completely.
- Take a minute to jump up to Part 1 – General Information – to complete the pastor’s information. If you are at more than one church, make sure to use the form designed for multiple churches, and only ONE form needs to be submitted for the pastor (remember, these are *clergy* compensation reports, not *church* compensation).
- Do not skip the part under #7 about the payroll being done by the Conference Treasurer’s Office. No penalties for doing your own payroll, but they do need to know who is or isn’t on the plan in order to accurately update numbers on the Conference end if you are part of their plan.
- Part 3 – UMPIP contributions. If the pastor changes the amount being contributed to their pension for the new year (1/1/2021), a new Contributions Elections form must be completed and sent to Wespath (NOT to the Conference or District office). More details on the Comp form.
- Part 4 – Signatures. SIGN SIGN SIGN! These can be signed in advance of Charge Conference. Again, both the pastor and the SPR or Finance Chair sign before Rev. Lewis signs, and I send them to the Conference office.
- DONE.

Firelands District of The United Methodist Church

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Office Hours: MONDAY - FRIDAY , 9:00 A.M.—3:30 P.M.

Rev. Doug Lewis, District Superintendent Jenn Kent, Administrative Assistant