

ADDENDUM

2020 IOWA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

PRE-CONFERENCE MANUAL

Table of Contents

XII: Addendum	2
Healthy Conference Initiative	2
Action Calendars	6

XII: Addendum

*The following are additions to the [2020 Pre-Conference Manual](#).
An updated action calendar is at the end of this document.*

Healthy Conference Initiative Bishop’s Operational Team’s Report to the 2020 Iowa Annual Conference

1 Members of the Bishop’s Operational Team: Bishop Laurie Haller; Barrie Tritle; Margaret Biggs; Jeff
2 Branstetter; Lisa Crow; Harlan Gillespie; Joni Mardesen; Bill Poland; Brian Williams; outgoing members:
3 Margaret Borgen; Arthur McClanahan; Sofia Sandoval.
4

5 After dealing with increasing reductions in the Conference budget and the midst of declining
6 apportionment receipts In July of 2019, the members of the Bishop’s Operational Team asked this
7 question: “What would our Conference look like if we could start over designing it around our vision, our
8 mission and our strategic priorities, in today’s context?” We recognized increasing polarization of our
9 church, our country, and our world. We noted growing distrust and suspicion and our desire to do
10 something about it because Jesus calls us to something more.
11

12 We know the world around us is changing and people are feeling lonelier and more anxious. These
13 symptoms contribute to our growing sense of spiritual dis-ease and declining mental health. The
14 Bishop’s Operational Team invited a team from the Conference Council on Finance and Administration
15 to come and share where they felt our Conference Budget needs to be. We did this not out of an image
16 of scarcity. We did this out of the belief that God’s abundance is not revealed only in money
17 apportioned from churches, but also in the gifted people of God and the richness of relationship and
18 mutual ministry.

19 Taking the six-million-dollar figure given to us by CF&A, Bishop Laurie led us into the Conference to ask
20 what kind of Conference would you build with \$6,000,000? We also asked what excited you and where
21 are our challenges? And we tried hard to listen. We collected what we heard you say and worked with
22 the Appointive Cabinet to formulate proposals that we took back in a second round of listening sessions
23 with Bishop Laurie to test what we heard.
24

25 Chief among those was a desire to build leadership skills in clergy and laity closer to where you live. We
26 also heard the desire to empower more direction and leadership closer to the local church. We heard
27 your anxiety about the future of the United Methodist Church and the hope of being in deeper
28 relationship with each other. We heard the cry of the laity to be real partners in ministry with their
29 pastors who are often feeling overworked and sometimes “out of gas.” Some of that feeling expressed
30 by many, arose out of a lack of clarity of what is expected and how to meet those expectations.
31

32 While this was happening, the Appointive Cabinet began to look at appointment making in Iowa with
33 the goal of establishing a missionally directed appointive system with clear expectations for
34 congregations and the pastoral leaders appointed or assigned to them. To that end the Superintendents
35 began working with Staff-Parish Relations Committees to develop three to five areas that need attention
36 and focus to move the ministry setting forward in the mission of Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the
37 Transformation of the World. The superintendent brought those expectations back to the Appointive
38 Cabinet where potential pastors were identified by their gifts and abilities to meet those expectations.
39 Ministry settings were identified with similar expectations and pastors were appointed based on those

1 expectations.

2

3 When pastors were called by the asking superintendent those expectations were lifted and the pastor
4 affirmed or clarified their gifts. In the introductory meeting those expectations were again re-enforced
5 as the basis of the appointment. This summer, as the expectation workshops are held, those
6 expectations will be formulated into strategies, Ministry Action Plans, that will be implemented in the
7 coming one to three years.

8

9 At the professional interview, our pastors will collaborate with their superintendent for support and
10 accountability in meeting these established expectations. It is hoped this ongoing focus will increase
11 leadership capacity and effectiveness. One caveat is the capacity of superintendents to do this
12 effectively with all the clergy under their supervision. The voice of Jethro as he counselled Moses echo's
13 today: "You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you. For the task is too heavy
14 for you; you cannot do it alone." Exodus 18:18 NRSV.

15

16 In the early days of Methodism superintendents worked with direction of our bishops to establish
17 circuits where pastors where appointed to go and develop ministries (Societies) where they would
18 identify gifted laity who they would train as leaders. These leaders often became local pastors, and
19 some went on to training as elders. Those pastors in turn in each local place raised up and trained laity
20 who established small groups (classes) and they developed other laity who developed even smaller
21 groups (bands). In each of these groups people were developed as disciples of Jesus. They literally
22 shaped much of life of world around them. The circuit riders often covered distances of hundreds of
23 miles. At each stop they would preach, train, and empower people to be in ministry while offering the
24 sacraments wherever they went.

25

26 The circuit riders also met with their superintendents for direction (and in those days to get paid) who
27 were also riding the circuits to meet at charges of local pastors and elders once each quarter. This whole
28 system was designed to grow people in discipleship (leadership) while intentionally engaging the world
29 with the love and salvation of Jesus Christ. The inspiration of this model came from Exodus 18. Circuits
30 were multiplied when the number of leaders supervised exceeded the capacity to supervise them. These
31 relationships of ongoing support and accountability the life in Christ was what defined the "Connexion".

32

33 We believe God is calling us to rediscover this "Connexion". During the time of "Circuit Riders, ministry
34 grew, and influence expanded. Under Bishop Laurie's leadership we are using the learnings we received
35 from Pastors Phil Rogers and Keith Pitts to begin a new round of pilot Circuits that have been somewhat
36 delayed with the onset of Covid-19 from this summer to this fall. Our process of forming Circuits will
37 begin this fall and will continue throughout this next year with our hope to have most of the Conference
38 in circuits by the end of 2021.

39

40 The Appointive Cabinet is identifying potential circuits and the Transition team of Superintendent Paul
41 Wilcox, Directors Lanette Plambeck, Jaye Johnson, and Bill Poland will be consulting first with pastors
42 then with lay leadership to share the L3 model of Loving God and each other, Learning together in
43 swiftly changing time, and adaptive Leadership. This Discipleship model of Loving, Learning and Leading
44 will be used by the pastoral leaders of the circuit meeting with a team of clergy and lay circuit leaders
45 for eight hours each month.

46

47 The team will start with a smaller group learning from them and applying those learnings as more
48 circuits are formed. Training for the circuit leaders will begin in September with the next group of pilots.
49 The Superintendent will meet monthly with the circuit leaders for continued prayer, support, and
50 consultation.

1
2 The goal is that the ministry action plans derived from the 3-5 missional expectations will be shared with
3 the Circuit Leaders and other members of the circuit. Moving forward on these ministry action plans will
4 be the leadership focus of the circuit and part of the consultation the circuit leaders have with the
5 superintendent. As needs are identified, it is our intention that support, and learning would be
6 resourced for the circuits by the superintendents and ministry directors. More than that it is our hope
7 that learnings and best practices developed in the circuit would be shared with other circuits.

8
9 For all of this to work effectively we as a conference must be conscious of our leadership capacity. Jesus
10 chose twelve disciples with whom he spent the bulk of his leadership development time. Of the twelve
11 there are frequent references to three: Peter, James, and John. His three closest companions to whom
12 he would trust the bulk of future leadership. Jesus had his twelve and his three.

13
14 Human Resource and other leadership professionals tell us what Jesus practiced: the highest number an
15 extremely gifted leader, like Jesus, can supervise is twelve. For most the number is seven to ten. To have
16 significant impact, you guessed it, is three.

17
18 During the listening sessions we heard many of you say you desired a reduction in the number of
19 districts. Hearing that, we are recommending a reduction to five districts. You may have seen a
20 proposed map of what those district boundaries might be. Those tentative lines are based upon the
21 number of pastoral leaders, not churches, that would be in each district. With a goal of ten leaders to
22 each circuit there would be approximately 10 circuits in each district. That is ten pastoral leaders that
23 each superintendent would oversee directly. Some of the missional oversight, the implementation of
24 missional expectations, that is the ministry action plans would be delegated to the circuit leaders who
25 will be trained for this function. We believe with a Circuit Model of Leadership we can build trust,
26 increase missional effectiveness, and deepen our leadership pool with a smaller number of districts and
27 shared oversight.

28
29 The Bishop's Operational Team will coordinate with district and conference leadership for the necessary
30 organizational structural changes to be presented at the 2021 Iowa Annual Conference.

31
32 These are rapidly challenging times. We no longer have the choice to change or not. Change is imposed
33 upon us. Most of us would like to just settle in to a new normal, but that is not where God is leading. We
34 do not yet have a destination, a settled place, but we do have a direction and a God who will lead us.
35 Our journey will require patience, persistence, and much faith. For these gifts we must invest much
36 prayer. Please commit with me to pray for our Bishop, our Conference, and our United Methodist
37 Church in the midst of the challenges before us. Thank you and God bless you.

38
39

40 **ACTION ITEM # 701**

41
42 **Recommendation to reduce the number of districts from eight (8) to five (5) effective July 1, 2021.**

43
44 Reduce the number of districts serving the churches of the Iowa Annual Conference from eight (8) to
45 five (5). The reduction in districts will take effect July 1, 2021.

46
47 This recommendation comes from the Bishop's Operational Team (membership listed below).

48
49 The Annual Conference must vote on the number of districts per Book of Discipline ¶415.4. The Bishop,
50 in consultation with the sitting Appointive Cabinet of the Iowa Annual Conference, will determine the

1 geographic shape of these districts in accordance with ¶415.4 of the 2016 Book of Discipline of the
2 United Methodist Church.

3

4 The Bishop’s Operational Team will coordinate with district and conference leadership for the necessary
5 organizational structural changes to be presented at the 2021 Iowa Annual Conference.

6

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Action Calendars

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3 *As each Action Calendar is presented for adoption, members of conference may move to have an item*
4 *lifted from the Action Calendar by stating their reason for requesting removal (for amendment,*
5 *discussion or information). If the motion to lift an item receives a second, it requires an affirmative vote*
6 *of 10% of the members present and voting to lift items from the Action Calendar. Lifted items will be*
7 *considered at a later time.*

8
9 **Action Calendar #1A: Rules of Order**
10 Item #101
11 *(require a 2/3 majority vote)*

12
13 **Action Calendar #1B: Rules of Order**
14 Items #102, #103, #104, #105
15 *(require a majority vote)*

16
17 **Action Calendar #2: Conference Missions – Programming Agencies**
18 Items #201, #202, #203, #204, #205, #206, #207, #208, #209, #210, #211, #212

19
20 **Action Calendar #3: Conference Ministries - Connectional Resources**
21 Items #301, #302, #303, #304, #305, #306

22
23 **Action Calendar #4: Clergy & Congregational Support**
24 Items #401, #402, #403, #404, #405, #406

25
26 **Action Calendar #6: Board of Pension and Health Benefits**
27 Items #601

28
29 **Action Calendar #7: Addendums**
30 Item #701

31
32 *Section #5 is for informational purposes.