

## Q9 Are there any tasks being managed by district offices that you believe can be more effectively handled at the conference level?

Answered: 14 Skipped: 19

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Complaints, disaffiliating, church closures	6/22/2022 2:56 PM
2	None at this time.	6/22/2022 1:50 PM
3	Follow up with risk management info (insurance, Ministry Safe, etc)	6/22/2022 9:44 AM
4	Coordinated trainings for leadership of local churches so that everyone is getting the same information. Perhaps having in person once every 4 years and on-line the other years.	6/22/2022 9:05 AM
5	I don't have enough information to answer this question	6/20/2022 11:43 AM
6	The personal tasks are the most important thing a DS and the district office can attend too in times of confusion, to help avoid more problems within the church. This takes time and relationships and this cannot be done at the conference level.	6/20/2022 10:35 AM
7	No	6/20/2022 6:22 AM
8	No	6/19/2022 9:37 PM
9	There are tasks that can be done either place, but it depends on where the conference is willing to place the resources and staffing.	6/17/2022 3:17 PM
10	Conference health insurance and building insurance should be a conference matter and not a DS issue. There is a sense at times that the DS works for the conference treasurer,	6/17/2022 1:07 PM
11	Neutral	6/17/2022 9:02 AM
12	The heaviest work for the district office occurs during charge conference season. I believe that the conference has and can continue to improve that process which has and will lessen the district office workload.	6/17/2022 8:44 AM
13	I don't know.	6/17/2022 8:33 AM
14	I can think of nothing at this time.	6/17/2022 8:05 AM

## Q10 Are there any tasks being managed by the conference that you believe can be more effectively handled at the district level?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 18

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Licensing Candidate recruitment COS Communications	6/22/2022 2:56 PM
2	None at this time.	6/22/2022 1:50 PM
3	No	6/22/2022 9:44 AM
4	Mission Shares, programing, clergy educational events,	6/22/2022 8:13 AM
5	Need more information	6/20/2022 11:43 AM
6	The conference could best manage the disaffiliations and churches leaving the connection for other reasons with a designated person at the conference level to work with congregations. This would help all to be done with consistency.	6/20/2022 10:35 AM
7	No	6/20/2022 6:22 AM
8	No	6/19/2022 9:37 PM
9	Anything that can be managed at the District level is better, because it is closer to the local church.	6/18/2022 1:30 PM
10	No	6/17/2022 3:17 PM
11	Lay and Clergy Leadership Training and Motivation	6/17/2022 11:19 AM
12	Neutral	6/17/2022 9:02 AM
13	No. At one time I believed the collection of district mission shares was best served by the districts; however after experiencing both the pros and cons I agree with the effectiveness of the present arrangement. The district offices have a full plate without that task.	6/17/2022 8:44 AM
14	I don't know.	6/17/2022 8:33 AM
15	I can think of nothing at this time.	6/17/2022 8:05 AM

## Q11 Are there any other specific changes you would recommend in how the conference and/or district offices currently operate with each other?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 18

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Reduce Conference staff and programming allowing for an increase in District level involvement. The DS must be present frequently in local churches in order to maintain a strong connection to the greater church.	6/22/2022 5:07 PM
2	Continue to strengthen the relationship with Conference Directors and Superintendents	6/22/2022 2:56 PM
3	None at this time.	6/22/2022 1:50 PM
4	Need more aligned communication among senior staff with districts with greater lead time.	6/22/2022 9:44 AM
5	better communication of what each other is doing would be helpful so that we are messaging the same things and so that we aren't duplicating resources	6/22/2022 9:05 AM
6	No	6/20/2022 11:43 AM
7	The relationship continues to be viewed as a top/down management style. The conference office also continues to appear to operate as different silos from time to time.	6/20/2022 10:35 AM
8	No	6/19/2022 9:37 PM
9	I think the more visibility the DS has within the bounds of the District, the better.	6/18/2022 1:30 PM
10	Conference staff needs to consider the resource limitations of the districts and district staffs when planning events and programs that must be implemented on the district level.	6/17/2022 3:17 PM
11	There should be a sub-set of DSs with expertise in area such as complaints, property and disaffiliations that can wor across districts rather than each DS learning everything.	6/17/2022 1:07 PM
12	Already expressed	6/17/2022 9:02 AM
13	There should be more opportunities of shared ministries/tasks across district lines.	6/17/2022 8:44 AM
14	No.	6/17/2022 8:33 AM
15	No.	6/17/2022 8:05 AM

## Q12 Is there anything else important that you think the Task Force needs to know or consider in this work?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 16

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Consider shift to part-time District Superintendents/Presiding Elders who also serve churches as a pastor. This would involve an increase in the number of Districts/Superintendents with smaller geographic districts and resulting in greater contact.	6/22/2022 5:07 PM
2	The DS is the direct link to local churches in order to establish trust. If these relationships are not established and nurtured, churches will cease supporting the conference and district.	6/22/2022 2:56 PM
3	Building solid relationships with both clergy and laity across the district is key for the effective ministry of any DS. Increasing size of districts/number of churches per DS puts that important work in great jeopardy.	6/22/2022 1:50 PM
4	The sacramental dimension of the DS role has disappeared over the decades. For instance, the instructions for hosting a bishop include the statement that if Communion is celebrated, the bishop should be the celebrant. Why not something similar for the DS? The sacred, spiritual aspect of the DS role needs elevation and emphasis. I very much missed being celebrant at congregational Communion when I served as a DS and realized that it was a dimension missing from the role. Being present as DS at least annually in each congregation is key...at worship, or a church-wide fellowship event, not just on Sunday...present to enter into and observe the life of the congregation. Visible to the congregation. It is hard to be caring without being present. There can be no Connection without connection. The DS is the link with the Church beyond the local. Settings might have to be created in the local church calendar to make this possible. Charge conferences won't suffice...few church members attend those and they are "meetings." What is needed is for the DS to be present in the life of the congregation enough to form a connection, as well as to gain understanding of and empathy with that community of faith. Being the "pastor's pastor" is deeply misunderstood. A pastor can listen to the deepest personal struggles and the confession of sins. The DS is a supervisor... responsible for holding pastors ethically and legally accountable, including discipline and reporting misbehavior. This is very different from the pastor role and often in conflict. Encouraging, honest, relationship with each pastor is vital, including shared spiritual life. Each district superintendent MUST take time to know every pastor under appointment. But it differs from the traditional pastor role. The "pastor's pastor" expectation does (and should) extend to retired clergy who are sometimes completely ignored by the DS. Even though I am a retired pastor/DS, the two past DS's of the Hattiesburg District have never once made contact to check on me or my family. I have not needed this until recently, but it caused me to wonder how other retirees might be made to feel in terms of the Connection. It does not take much effort make a simple phone check-in with pastors on location or retired. Other elders selected by the DS could be formed into a team to conduct routine charge conferences, thus spreading the load. It is not important for the DS to be at every annual charge conference; but it IS important for the conference to be held within each charge. Collective, grouped charge conferences do not encourage the Connection, though they might seem to do so. They are dreaded and avoided and attended only by those who "have to" go. Each charge is important enough for a designed elder, representing the Conference connection, to be present with them, just for them. And worship including Communion should ALWAYS be at the center of each annual charge conference. They don't need to be long, but they should be more than administrative. Ad-Ministry as a concept should be anchored and wedded here. I would be happy to discuss these thoughts as needed. It is good to reduce the number of districts. It is good that the DS be encouraged to select a team of elders to assist. And it is good for each DS to elevated to importance time spent in each congregation/charge...though it may mean many Sundays and a couple of nights a week and attending where one is not in-charge and the spotlight is not on you. David Price - Hattiesburg	6/22/2022 11:02 AM
5	Help consider how to communicate shifting expectations from local churches and clergy.	6/22/2022 9:44 AM
6	No	6/20/2022 11:43 AM

## District Realignment Survey of District Superintendents

7	In addition to 11 above, the task force needs to consider the fact that the district offices are closer to the local congregations geographically, but even more important relationally than the conference office can ever be at this point in time. There is a level of uncertainty among many clergy and laity about the concern of the church beyond the local congregation for local churches. This is also beginning to develop into a level of mistrust even among smaller membership congregations in dealing with the larger congregations. This will continue to be a challenge with the current UM culture. A micro-management style at any level outside the local congregation may be a detriment to future connection if we are not careful.	6/20/2022 10:35 AM
8	The congregations of each church should be educated once a year on the structure/governance of the United Methodist Church, from local church to highest level	6/20/2022 4:57 AM
9	No	6/19/2022 9:37 PM
10	I feel we can operate effectively with fewer districts, but I think the work of the DS should be focused on the District and the local churches within the District.	6/18/2022 1:30 PM
11	The DS as an individual is still a very important symbol of the connection. We need to find ways for the DSs to be visible in the churches. In my opinion, the cutting of districts must reflect changes in the size of the conference.	6/17/2022 3:17 PM
12	In the past each had more clergy and charges while still managing to attend each charge conference. It is hard to manage the districts while spending an enormous amount of time in cabinet meetings.	6/17/2022 1:07 PM
13	Clergy Spouses should not be District Secretaries. It inhibits clergy from being forthcoming with DS about personal issues, family issues, and local issues.	6/17/2022 11:19 AM
14	My main concern is the lack of contact with local churches and clergy. This began before Covid in my opinion.	6/17/2022 9:02 AM
15	In all due respect to the authority of any of our episcopal leaders and his/ her cabinet, the need for more innovative options to provide appointments to the local churches in this continually changing climate of our Church and the communities it serve is reaching a crucial point.	6/17/2022 8:44 AM
16	I believe all district secretaries may need to move to a 40 hour work week in order to accomplish the demands placed on them. They are overworked.	6/17/2022 8:33 AM
17	No.	6/17/2022 8:05 AM