



# Welcoming Remarks

# Time for Centering

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Dr. Mary White, Lay Leader

# Prayer Moment

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“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday  
and today and forever.”

*(Hebrews 13:8 ESV)*

**Precious Lord, as we come together to prayerfully  
consider a new way of connecting ourselves  
with one another, be with us. Strengthen our  
resolve to look to you for stability in the midst of  
change. Amen.**

# Connectionalism

- An important part of our identity as United Methodists ( ¶132 2012 Book of Discipline)
- A vital web of **interactive** relationships
- A means of practicing what we believe

# Our Connectional Responsibilities

## Conference Mission

- Empowering local congregations to be in mission for God through Christ our Lord and Savior (Matt. 28:18-20)

## Conference Vision

- Calling persons to new life in Christ
- Nurturing persons to be disciples in God's community
- Addressing the needs of each community in EPA and the world



# The need for redistricting

**Missional Reason**

**Financial Realities**

# Missional Reason

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**More effectively empower the local church  
– our “front line” –  
to be in mission for God,  
making disciples of Jesus Christ**

# Missional Response

How  
do we  
get it  
done?

- Redirecting resources and reinvesting in local congregations
  - ▣ Tailor training and resources for the specific needs of the local churches
  - ▣ Use more of DS's time for vision casting and coaching

# Missional Response

How  
do we  
get it  
done?

- Strengthening "cluster" usage
  - ▣ Encourage connection among pastors and laity and support healthy "cluster" churches
  - ▣ Invest in local/global ministries that can be accomplished collaboratively
- Promoting intentional inclusivity

# Missional Strategies

- Find ways to make technology accessible to all churches
- Use retired and experienced elders in the oversight of charge conferences and mentoring clergy; Use laity and clergy (deacons, local pastors, elders) in “cluster” leadership positions

# Missional Strategies

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- Provide the City of Philadelphia (mayor, school board, ecumenical entities, etc.) with one DS with whom to relate
- Address specific urban, suburban and rural challenges on every district
- Be deliberate about racial inclusivity and involving youth/young adults

# Financial Realities

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- EPA Conference budget reflects:
  - Reductions in support staff, program staff and program dollars
  - Decreasing/plateauing receipts in apportionment giving
  - Need to fulfill unfunded liability by 2021

# Financial Realities

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- Aging congregations – members with fixed incomes
- Aging buildings – deferred maintenance issues and burdens of utility costs
- Churches seeking to change from full time to part time appointments

# Financial Realities

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- Church closures resulting in decreased apportionment receipts
- Missional churches successfully reaching the poor in large numbers but are unable to sustain a full time pastor
- Increasing costs of health and pension benefits
- Maintaining four conference camps

# Financial Implication

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Reducing the number of districts would be a way to stay within our budget and also provide funds for the unfunded Pre-82 Pension Liability (which is about \$11 million dollars, due by 2021)

# UMC Connectional Reality

## 2012 – Redistricted conferences

- Arkansas  
from 9 to 5
- Cal-Pacific  
from 8 to 5
- North Carolina  
from 12 to 8
- Oregon-Idaho  
from 6 to 4
- Susquehanna merged  
from 11 to 7
- Western North Carolina  
from 15 to 8

# UMC Connectional Reality

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## 2011 – Redistricted conferences

- Central Texas from 7 to 6
- Detroit from 7 to 6
- Virginia from 18 to 16

# UMC Connectional Reality

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## 2010 – Redistricted conferences

- Cal-Nevada from 7 to 4
- Dakotas from 5 to 4
- North Texas from 6 to 4

# UMC Connectional Reality

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## 2009 – Redistricted conference

- S. Indiana/N. Indiana merged, from 19 to 10

## 2008 – Redistricted conferences

- Baltimore-Washington from 9 to 8
- Minnesota from 6 to 5

# Prayer Moment

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” *(Joshua 1:9 ESV)*

**Mighty God, keep our eyes on you. We pray for a willingness to consider walking down roads that we might otherwise hesitate to walk were it not for your faithful presence among us. Amen.**



# Proposed District Realignment

# Who does what?

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- It is the responsibility of the annual conference membership to determine the number of districts
- It is the bishop's duty to form the districts after consultation with the district superintendents and after the number of the districts has been determined by vote of the annual conference (Para 415.4, Book of Discipline 2012, Judicial Council Decision 422)

# 6 Districts

Central – dark blue

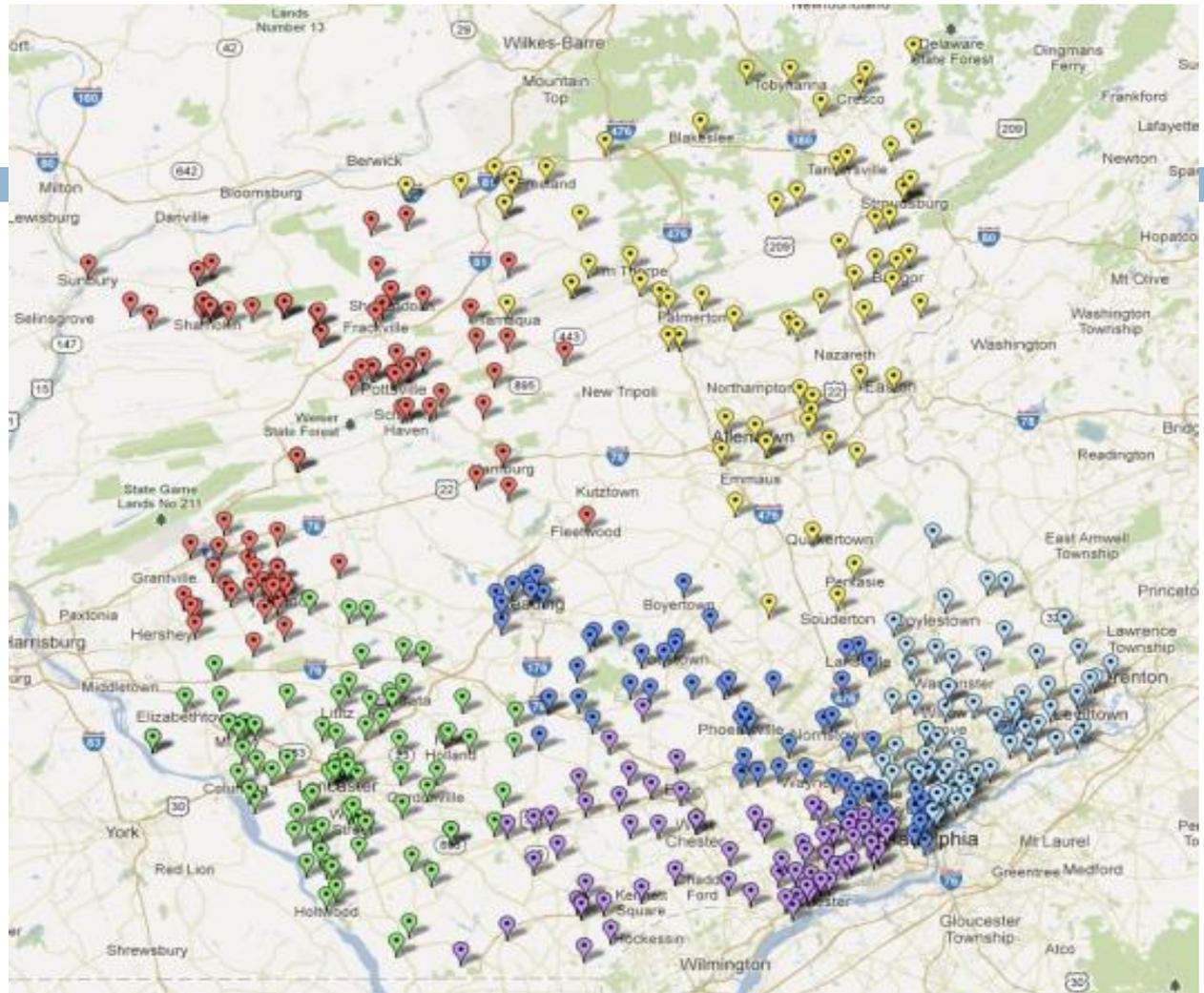
East – light blue

Northeast - yellow

Northwest – red

Southeast – purple

Southwest - green



# 4 Districts

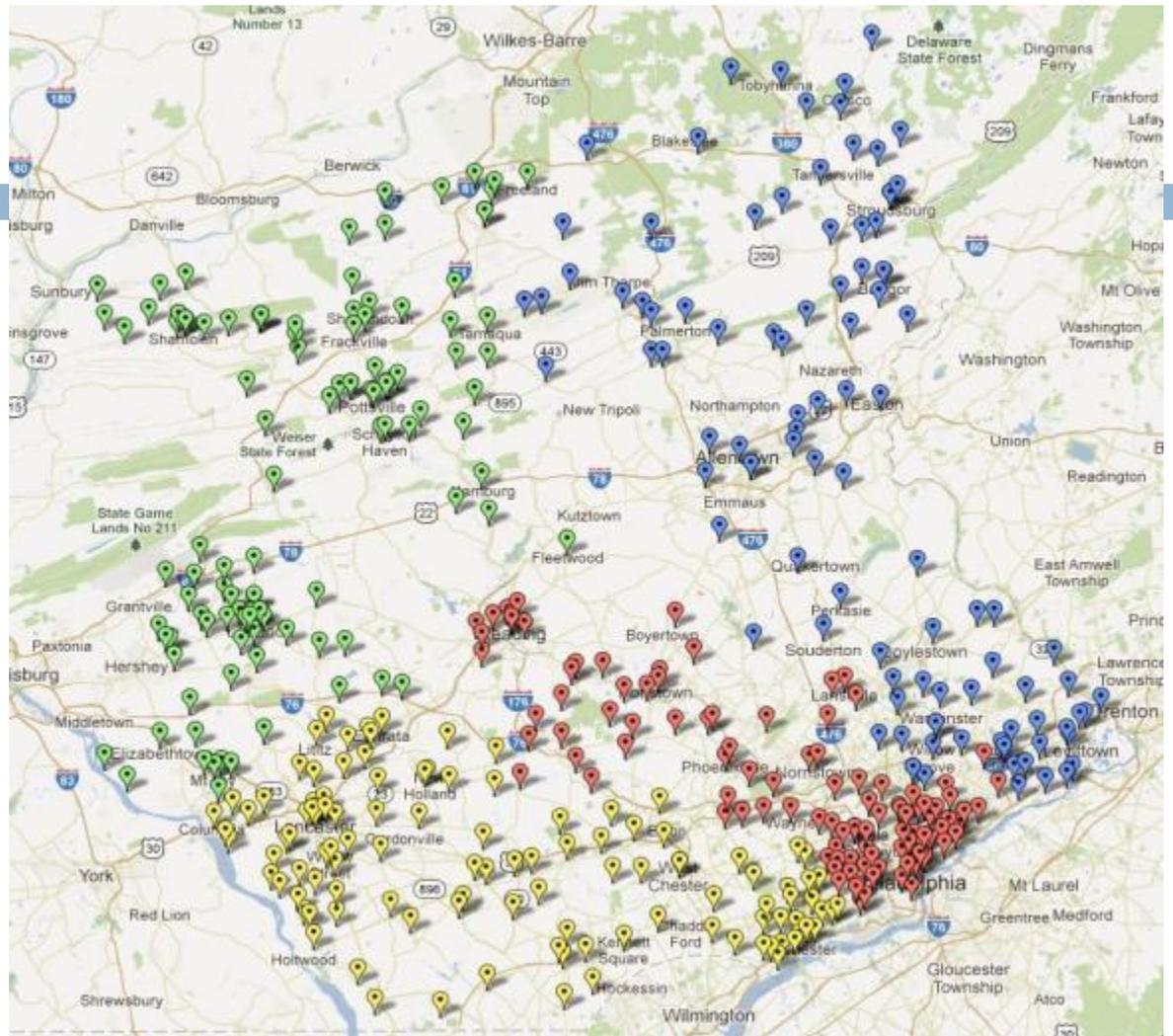
District 1 - red

District 2 - blue

District 3 - green

District 4 - yellow

442 churches



**District 1**  
**114 churches**

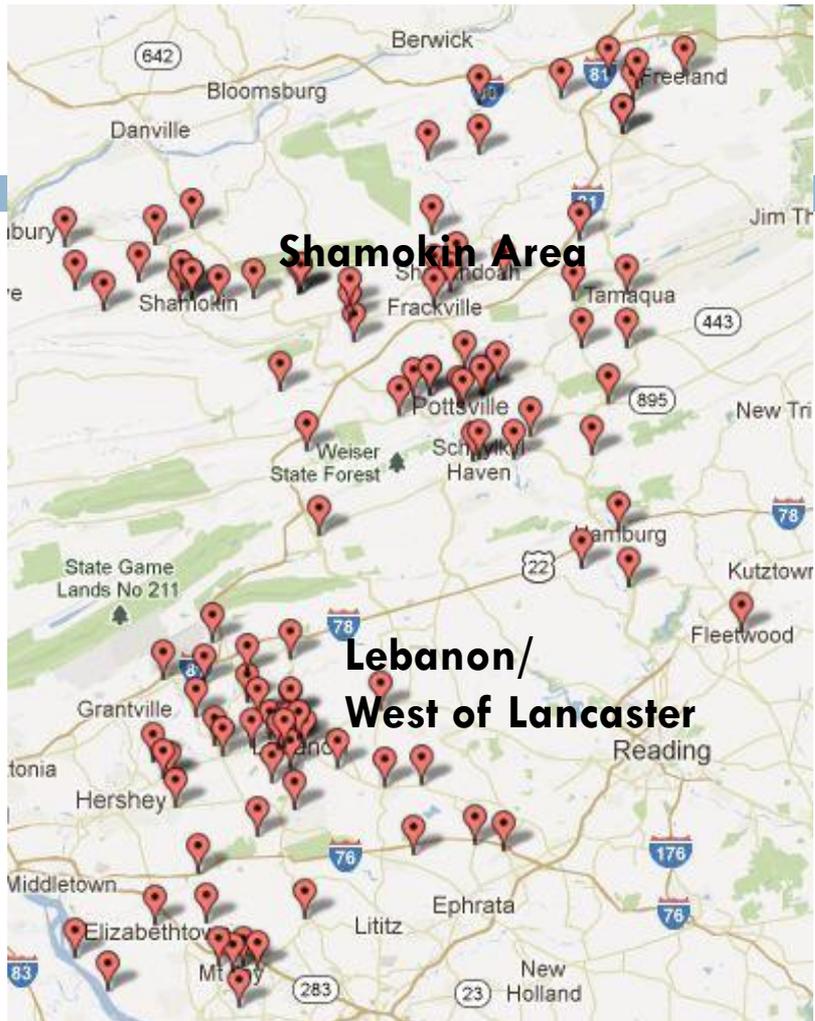


**District 2**  
**102 churches**



District 3

110 churches



**District 4**

**116 churches**



# Prayer Moment

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

*(Romans 12:1b-2 ESV)*

**God of Wonder, may we catch a glimpse of your marvelous plan for the Eastern PA Conference. Encourage us to seek your wisdom. Amen.**



# Timeline

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**November 12, 2012**

Bishop convened Blue Ribbon Committee with intention to implement in 2014

**December 11, 2012**

Blue Ribbon Committee recommended 4 district model to Bishop

# Timeline

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**January 1, 2013**

Two DS vacancies;  
resulted in  
conversations about  
accelerated  
implementation

**February 2013**

District-wide town hall  
meetings to discuss 4  
district model

# Timeline

**March 4, 2013**

Blue Ribbon Committee reconvenes to discuss town hall feedback, 6:30 pm, Conference Office, all welcome;  
April 2013 mtg TBA

**May 2013**

Annual Conference votes on number of districts;  
if 4 then timeline continues

# Timeline

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**Summer/Fall 2013**

Districts will need to reorganize (6 DRAs maintained through 12/31/13)

**December 31, 2013**

Redistricting completed



# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

# FAQs

- Who is on the Blue Ribbon Committee?
  - ▣ *Representatives from each district nominated by the DS. Committee is inclusive of lay and clergy as well as ethnic, gender and age representation*
- Why four districts? Were other numbers considered?
  - ▣ *Blue Ribbon considered 5 first*

# FAQs

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- Why these particular district lines?
  - ▣ *The current district maps are just proposed. The Cabinet and Bishop still have a great deal of work to do and are being intentional about listening to all recommendations provided at the town halls.*

# FAQs

- What is the impact to the churches?
  - ▣ *East and Southeast churches will be integrated but all churches will experience some changes as a result of redistricting*
  
- What happens to East/Southeast District office rentals and parsonage?
  - ▣ *Cared for by the Board of Trustees 2012 Book of Discipline, Chapter Six, Section 5*

# FAQs

- What will happen to the DRAs from the East (Clarita Krall) and Southeast (Lin George) Districts?
  - ▣ *The two will be employed through 12/31/13 and receive severance packages in 2014 based on years of service*

# A Moment of Gratitude

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Clarita  
Krall



Lin  
George

# FAQs

- How will the role of the DS change?
  - ▣ *The expectation of a DS role has changed.*
    - ¶ *419.1, 2012 Book of Discipline states “The Church expects, as part of the superintendent ministry, that the superintendent will be the chief missional strategist of the district .....*

# FAQs

- How can DSs manage so many more churches?
  - ▣ *Through the use of "cluster" leaders (\$35,000 to be given to each district for stipends and/or mileage reimbursements for "cluster" leaders and local program resourcing)*
  - ▣ *Conversation will be needed regarding involvement on conference committees due to time constraints*

# FAQs

- How many “cluster” leaders per district?
  - ▣ *Decided by the DS based on need*
  
- Has there been consultation with Susquehanna Conference regarding “cluster” use?
  - ▣ *Yes, there has been conversation and they will be present at an upcoming cabinet meeting.*

# FAQs

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- How will accountability be handled within the “clusters”?
  - ▣ *Every clergy appointed to a local church will be a member of a “cluster” with full participation expected and DS has supervisory responsibilities*

# FAQs

- How much money will this actually save the Annual Conference?
  - ▣ *Approximately \$200,000*
- Will our apportionments go down if we vote for 4 districts?
  - ▣ *No. Savings from the redistricting will be allocated to the Pre-82 Pension Liability (as per Resolution 2012-2 voted on and passed at Adjourned Session that mandated that all surpluses be directed to the Pre-82 Pension Liability and the Conference Reserves)*

# Prayer Moment

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“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding”

*(Proverbs 3:5)*

**Almighty God, we need to lean on you for wisdom. Help us to hear the voice of your Spirit. May your will be done. Amen.**



# Time of Listening

Bishop Peggy A. Johnson