

Living Water

a quarterly newsletter for

Volume 15, Issue 1
March, April, May 2018

Five Rivers District

We are in Appointment Season. Please be in prayer for our Bishop and Cabinet (made up of the District Superintendents in the Great Plains).

From the Bishop and Cabinet:

Appointment-Making in the Great Plains Conference:

As Christians, God has given us a profound mission: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

To accomplish God's mission, the Great Plains cabinet identifies, stewards, and deploys resources. Our clergy and congregations do this by nurturing people to grow in God's grace by proclaiming Christ so that others may know him and make him known, by serving others (especially the poor), and by seeking social holiness and justice. In consultation with the clergy and lay leaders of our annual conference, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, we strive to make the best possible appointments by knowing the gifts of the clergy, the gifts of congregations, and the missional opportunities in our communities. We will make assignments that seek to create the best matches, call forth our gifts, increase the number of vital congregations, and expand and enhance our Christian witness.

Core Values

We follow these core values related to the making of clergy appointments in the Great Plains Conference.

1. **Discernment-A Divine and Human Process:** Every appointment is made through deep prayer and discernment informed by the Great Plains vision for increasing the number of vital congregations for the sake of the local mission field and the world. As the bishop, and as a cabinet, we acknowledge that we have our ministry by the grace and mercy of God. We are human with limitations and flaws (2 Corinthians 4:7). Although we earnestly weigh and prayerfully consider all appointments, we will not attain appointment perfection. Not every appointment will serve everyone's interests or inclinations.

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Bishop:

Ruben Saenz, Jr.

District Superintendent:

Rev. David Watson

Administrative Assistant/Newsletter Editor

Marve' Ralston

Appointment-Making in the Great Plains Conference continued

2. It's All about the Mission. The primary factor in making an appointment is the mission field, which has two constituencies: those who are not yet part of the congregation because they do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and the disciples already involved in the formative life offered by the congregation. Some guiding questions as we make mission-field appointments:

- Can this pastor lead the local church to make disciples of its existing members and form new disciples of people who are not yet part of their local church?
- Is a congregation in a growing population area growing in average worship attendance, small-group ministries, professions of faith, and baptisms? If so, can the pastor lead greater growth and dreams for the congregation and the community?
- Is a congregation declining in a growing area? If so, can the pastor lead greater growth and dreams for the congregation and the community?
- Where there has been conflict or scandal, can the pastor be the instrument of healing and reconciliation?
- In areas where missional networking leadership is utilized, does the pastor have the gifts, graces, and competencies to lead several other smaller congregations in their region?
- Do we have the right pastor in place to start new faith communities?

3. The Itineracy: Clergy membership resides in the annual conference (§336), not in a local church or an extension ministry. The itinerant system represents the missional or “sending” thrust of the United Methodism—to extend the gospel and develop communities of Christian disciples who build the realm of God according to Jesus’ teachings. For more than 200 years, clergy in the United Methodist tradition have agreed to offer themselves “without reserve to be appointed and to serve” wherever they are needed for the sake of the mission, believing this to be the work of the Holy Spirit. The cabinet realizes that pastors may have temporary itineracy constraints that limit their appointability, such as family concerns, spouse’s employment, and medical needs. The cabinet is sensitive to these needs but keeps the mission foremost in our decision-making. There are occasions when the conference has a compelling missional need to intervene and reappoint a fruitful and beloved pastor when a pastoral transition has not been requested, but this is the exception. We recognize some appointments will be received enthusiastically, while others will be difficult to embrace.

4. Pastoral Fruitfulness: When discerning whom to send to an appointment, the cabinet pays attention to the fruitfulness of a pastor’s ministry in the context of the mission field. As clergy, we are sent by Jesus, who gives us the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20) and the Great Commandment (Mark 12:29-31).

Fruitful pastors lead congregations to:

- **Grow** in worship attendance, in the number of baptisms, and in the number of professions of faith.
- **Engage** people in loving God, proclaiming Christ, serving others (especially the poor), and seeking justice.

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- **Give** to support the church's mission and 100% of mission shares

5. **Mutual Ministry between Clergy and Laity:** The lay people accomplish most of the church's nurture, outreach, and witness ministries. They are supportive of the church with their prayers, their presence, their gifts, their service, and their witness. They believe in the mission of the church and the role of the church in society. Lay people are active advocates of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and they want to be useful for God's good purposes for the world. Effective clergy identify, seek out, nurture, enroll, equip, and collaborate with the laity to be heralds and witnesses of the mighty and transforming work of God in individual lives, in our communities, and in the world. Through inward and outward spiritual disciplines, God's will for each congregation is sought, and vision is discerned for the congregation and its missional future. The United Methodist Church can become a renewed movement as gifted lay people are equipped and released to live out their call through the use of their abilities to teach, minister and reach out in ministries of service and witness that convey God's outreaching love.

6. **Compensation:** Salaries are necessary and important, but they are not the driving factor determining the next appointment. We each seek to avoid reductions in compensation. However, many churches are reducing clergy compensation at times of a pastoral transition, some are reducing full-time salaries to part-time, and some are closing associate clergy positions. We appeal to the congregations not to devalue the pastoral office unless it is a matter of required financial leadership. As clergy, our worth is not tied to financial compensation but to being a beloved child of God made in God's image. Our call is to serve the Lord, our congregations, and extension ministries in the four-fold ministry of Word, Sacrament, Order and Service, in witness of Christ's love and justice (§1340).

In closing, we remain convinced that God has given us a profound mission: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Because Jesus Christ promised to be with us until the end of time as we seek to fulfill this mission, we believe we have a future with hope!

This document expresses the unanimous consensus of the appointive cabinet of the Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church, and is a revision of bishop Ken Carter's (Florida Conference) blog, "Appointment-Making in a Time of Mission: 2016."

The Day After Thanksgiving by Marvé Ralston

The day after Thanksgiving, I had a health scare. I was stressing out about something I had no control over whatsoever. The more I thought about it, the madder I was getting. I could almost feel my blood pressure going up. Since my husband and I routinely check our blood pressure once a day, I decided it might be wise to check mine. I was shocked to read, 199/110. I took it again and once again, it was scary high. After quickly looking online to see when I should be worried, we headed to the emergency room. Once there, it began to go down some. They sent me home to get in touch with my Dr. as soon as possible.

After a check-up, it was determined, I had a newly acquired condition of high blood pressure. The doctor prescribed a drug, and a second one to take if it got scary high again. This seemed to do the trick for a week, then it happened again even while taking the medicine.

I went back to the doctor, after reading my chart, he proposed a new medicine that is a Beta-Blocker. It blocks the effects of stress, which cause the body to produce the fight/flight mode in our sympathetic nervous system. I could also still take the former high blood pressure meds at night when needed,³

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District Calendar:

March 7-9th	Cabinet: DS is in Topeka
March 13th	Five Rivers District clergy meeting, Ottawa 1st, 9 a.m. to noon
March 19th	District Strategist Team meeting 6:30 –8 p.m.
March 22nd-23rd	District office will be moved to Baldwin City
March 25th	Palm Sunday
March 26th-29th	Holy Week: 5R District Office closed, Marvé is on vacation
March 30th	Good Friday, 5R and GP Conference offices closed
April 1st	Easter Sunday
April 18th-21st	Cabinet: DS is in Topeka
April 21st	Five Rivers District United Methodist Women Spring Meeting, Iola Calvary UMC, 9:30 a.m.
May 7th-9th	Cabinet: DS is in Lincoln
June 13th	Cabinet: DS is in Wichita
June 13th-16th	Annual Conference in Wichita



Great Plains Conference Office effective 2.28.18

1207 SW Executive Dr., Topeka, KS 66615

Mailing Address will still be PO Box 4187, Topeka, KS 66604-0187

The Five Rivers District Office is moving: March 22, 2018

Our new mailing address:

Five Rivers District, PO Box 556, Baldwin City, KS 66006-0556

Our phone will stay the same 785-841-4804 and fax 785-841-4820

Our physical address is in the downstairs of Baldwin 1st UMC, come in the east door, 1st door on the right (by the elevator). The physical address is 704 8th Street, Baldwin City, KS 66006.

The hours will change slightly. They will be 8:00 a.m. to noon, closed from noon to 1 p.m. for lunch, 1 p.m.—5:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday

You can still reach the DS directly through his email address, 5riversds@greatplainsumc.org

Please direct all administrative issues and questions through our office email at 5riversdistrict@greatplainsumc.org

Our District Superintendent is also over Parson's District and frequently traveling between us both and to Cabinet.

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This combined with not salting my food and being very careful not to eat processed foods with high salt, and adding back exercise, have brought my blood pressure back to good levels. I have been able to drop the second medicine and maintain the good readings.

This tiny orange pill is a life saver. How many times do we literally need something like this to get us back on track? Does God use things like this to recalibrate us and make us “wake up”? I think so.

Things out of our control are still within God's control. If I had turned this over to Him earlier, and then done what was within my own power, things might have been different. This tiny orange pill and a new awareness of tapping into God, *before* I hit that level of stress, is helping me get back to my life. I'm not going to stress as much about things I can't control and I'm taking better care of myself through diet, exercise and taking this tiny orange pill until I am fully healed.

Sometimes our spiritual life is like high blood pressure. We are moving along in life, just getting by with all we have on our plates. We get off track and we aren't reading the bible, praying and spending time with God. Out of the blue, wham; something happens that sends us to our knees.

Wouldn't it be so much better if instead of that, we were “prayed up,” in the word. We were studying what to do when stressful things happen, using those principles to build a life full of “living water”?

Thank you God for this wakeup call. I'm still learning. God is not finished with me yet.

Dearest Heavenly Father,

We admit our intense longing to understand and predict the course of nature, natural disasters, and situations out of control. We humbly acknowledge our inability to change the forces that drive it.

Into your hands we deliver our fellow United Methodists, our country and fellow Americans, our family and friends, and all those we feel so helpless to protect.

As we read in your word, in Psalms 34:19, “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.”

And, Nahum 1:7 “The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him.”

Lord, we do trust in you. That is why we come to you, our protector in times such as these, when our world seems to spin out of control.

We know you are in control, and so we claim, 2 Timothy 1:7, “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” And we wait on You, and claim Your protective hand, over all we hold dear.

In your holiest of holy names, Amen



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