



# The United Methodist Church

Alabama-West Florida Episcopal Area  
Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference

Paul L. Leeland  
Resident Bishop

TO: Chairpersons, Pastor-Parish Relations Committees  
Clergy of the Alabama-West Florida Conference

FROM: Bishop Paul Lee Leeland and the District Superintendents

DATE: January 4, 2010

RE: 2010 Advisory Forms and Appointment Making Process

Grace to you and peace through our Risen Savior Jesus Christ.

Consultation with local congregations regarding the needs of ministerial leadership, and consultation with clergy who are discerning how God may use them to serve the church, begins on many levels. The first step in this consultation process will be your response to our 2010 Advisory Forms indicating your best judgment about the needs of ministry for the coming year.

It would be helpful if you could remind the members of your committee and congregation that all appointments are made on an annual basis. Every year, all members of our conference are engaged in this process of consultation and discernment, acknowledging that every clergy person is available for being sent into the world to serve and glorify God as determined by those whom the Church has temporarily given authority to make such appointments.

The United Methodist Church does not work with a “call” system, but rather uses the model of Acts 13, where after a period of worshipping and praying, they “laid hands on them and sent them off” to where they were needed. Itinerancy is not about moving; it is about obedience.

As a member of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, and as clergy, you are essential partners in this consultation process. We pray that you will cultivate a spirit of obedience to our Lord to be open to how God is speaking and moving among us to provide effective Christian leadership for the coming year. To assist in this conversation, you will find enclosed in this mailing the **Advisory Forms** for 2010. We encourage you to complete these forms in prayerful conversation, with thought to the mission of your particular congregation, and for the effectiveness of your shared ministry. Please take the time to discuss openly and honestly with one another – and with us – your best counsel regarding the appointment of the pastor for the coming year. As always, we remind you that in signing and returning these forms to your District Office this is considered “consultation only.” Consultation does not mean consent, it means consultation. Your forms are only one of several pieces of information the Cabinet uses in working out the appointments for the coming year. We urge you to enter this process with prayer, reflection, and a deep desire to honor God in all you say and do.

Continued on Page 2

We personally pray that every pastor would live as if their current appointment were the only appointment they might ever serve, and at the same time help their congregations to be prepared for a change in leadership at any given time. We pray that our commitment to serve as licensed and ordained clergy would be less about “location” and more about “vocation.” We pray that we might hear the voice of God, and the Church, through those who have temporarily been given authority to make such difficult decisions – but to be made none-the-less in a spirit of obedience to simply serve Jesus Christ wherever we might be appointed.

Every church is to complete the Advisory Forms and return to your **District Office** no later than **February 4, 2010**. If you have any questions or concerns, or if you need your superintendent to assist you in the process, please call your District Office as soon as possible to schedule an appointment. Finally, we covet your prayers and your cooperation over these next few months. We recognize that this is a time of some anxiety for many of you, but we also firmly believe that as we trust God to guide us, the best list of appointments will be finalized at Annual Conference.

May God bless you in your work and ministry.