Greater Detroit District, UMC Church Conference Guidelines

Overview

To better serve the diverse needs of churches across the Greater Detroit District, the District Office has implemented a **hybrid Church Conference model** for the 2026 conference season. Churches will participate in one of two formats:

- **Zoom Cluster Church Conferences (CCCs)** *(the primary format for most churches)*, or
- **In-Person Zone Cluster Church Conferences (CCCs)** are held at designated host churches throughout Southeast Michigan.

This flexible approach provides greater accessibility while accommodating scheduling needs across the district.

Zoom Cluster Church Conferences (CCCs)

Most churches have been assigned to a **Zoom Cluster Church Conference**, where three to six churches will meet on the Zoom platform at a designated date and time.

Because of the district's recent redistricting and expansion, ***Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) meetings with the District Superintendent are optional***.

Pastors will receive an email invitation with instructions for scheduling an optional 30-minute Zoom SPRC meeting with **Rev. Dr. Darryl Totty…coming soon**. Appointments are available on a **first-come, first-served basis** and must be scheduled **before** your church's assigned Church Conference date.

Sunday Church Conferences

For conferences held on Sundays, each church will be assigned to a breakout room led by an elder. The elder will guide the congregation through the required business motions and conference reports.

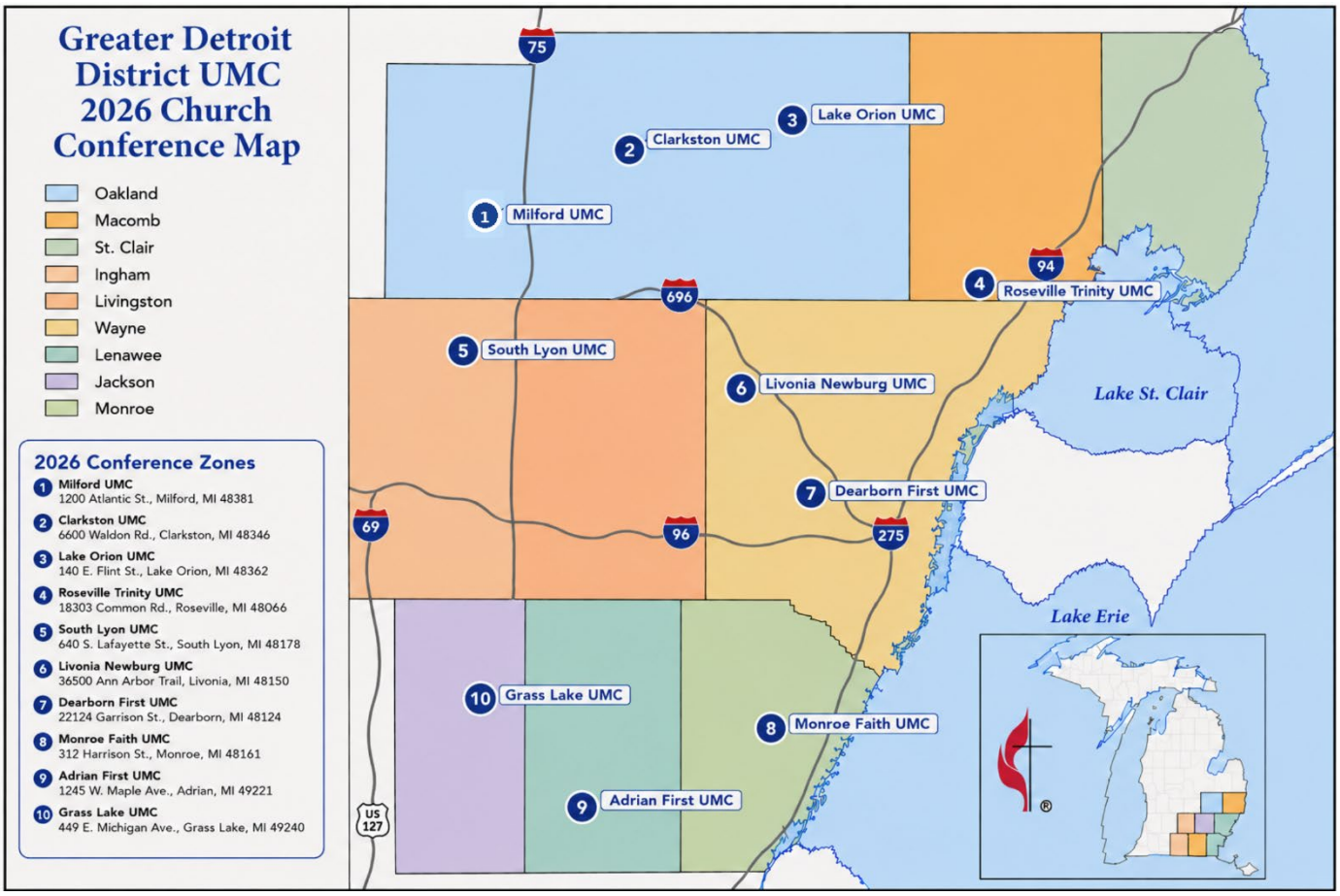
Weekday Church Conferences

For weekday conferences, Rev. Dr. Darryl Totty will preside over each Church Conference in a single Zoom meeting.

In-Person Zone Cluster Church Conferences

Recognizing that scheduling conflicts occasionally arise, the district has established **ten (10) Zone *In-person* Church Conference locations** throughout Southeast Michigan.

If your church is unable to attend its assigned Zoom conference, you may request to attend one of the designated in-person Zone Cluster Church Conferences (see the Zone Map for locations).



To request a venue change:

- The senior pastor or lay leader must notify **Dwanda Hayton, District Executive Admin.**, **at least three (3) weeks before** your scheduled Zoom Cluster Church Conference.
- Approval must be obtained before attending an alternate Zone in-person conference location.

Required Document for In-Person Conferences

The pastor or lay leader should bring a **typed copy** of the **Business of the Church Report** to the conference. This document serves as the official voting document during the Church Conference.

All additional required conference documents listed in the ***'2026 CCCs Document Deadlines'*** table must be uploaded to the church and clergy Dropbox folders ***at least five (5) business days*** **before** ***the scheduled in-person Zone conference.***

Church Conference Document Requirements

Each church is responsible for uploading all required electronic documents to its assigned Dropbox folders **no later than five (5) business days before** its scheduled Church Conference.

2027 Clergy Compensation Recommendation is now submitted online only to the MI UMC Conference.

Only key church leaders may submit the approved 2027 clergy compensation recommendation: Ad Board /Church Council/ Leadership Chair(s)

Please submit it online: HERE

If you experience problems with the link copy and paste into your browser address bar: https://portalmichiganumc.org

Dropbox only accepts PDF files and Microsoft Office files. ***PNG, JPEG, or any other photo files are NOT supported by Dropbox, and you will not be able to upload them to the platform.*** Please submit forms properly: 1) Scan file into computer. 2) Save file to computer with proper file name (samples include in the '*2026 CCCs Doc.Deadlines..*') 3) Upload each doc. to the respective folder. Clergy forms uploaded to the 'Clergy' folder. Everything else should go in the 'Church' folder.

Business of the Church Report

The **Business of the Church Report** must:

- Be reviewed and approved by the Church Council, Administrative Board, or Single Accounting Structure (SAS) Governance Team.
- Receive approval from Church Council/ Governance Team **at least ten (10) days before** the Church Conference.

Mandatory Approval Minutes

The official Church Council, Administrative Board, or Single Accounting Structure (SAS) Governance Team meeting minutes documenting approval of the Business of the Church Report are ***required****.*

These minutes must be uploaded to the church Dropbox folder along with all other required Church Conference forms at least **five (5) business days before** the conference.

Dropbox and Zoom Access

Dropbox Access for SPRC Chairs and Church Representatives

If your SPRC Chair or another designated church representative will be uploading clergy or church conference documents, please email Dwanda Hayton, District Executive Admin., with their name and email address. Once received, Dropbox access will be granted directly to the approved individual.

For security purposes, only email addresses approved by the District Office will be permitted to access the clergy and church Dropbox folders.

Important: Dropbox Two-Step Authentication

Dropbox uses a two-step authentication process for first-time access.

After clicking the Dropbox link, the user will ***NOT*** immediately gain access. Instead, Dropbox will send a notification to the District Admin. requesting approval. Access to the folder will be granted only after the request has been reviewed and approved.

Please inform the individual responsible for uploading your church's documents that they must wait for this approval before attempting to access the folder.

Plan Ahead

Because Dropbox approval requires manual authorization by the District Office, please do not wait until the last minute to upload your Church Conference documents.

If an access request is submitted after regular business hours (4:30 p.m.), approval may not be granted until the next business day. This could delay your ability to upload required documents by the submission deadline.

To avoid delays, we strongly encourage churches to test their Dropbox access and begin uploading documents well in advance of the five (5) business-day submission deadline.

Church Conference Minutes

Following the Church Conference, the approved conference minutes must be submitted to the District Office **within 72 hours**.

Please email the minutes to:

admin@greaterdetroitumc.org

Do **NOT** mail paper copies to the District Office.

Please use the dedicated email address for all Church Conference document submissions. If you're meeting for an in-person Zone Cluster Church Conference, please do ***NOT*** give any documents other than the *'Business of the Church'* to DS, Rev. Totty.

The District office is paperless, and we are not allowed to store any hard copy files on site. All files are now in cloud storage. The *'Business of the Church*' will be used to facilitate the church conference only, it is not used as your official record for your church. It will be shredded and disposed of properly after each Zone in-person church conference.

Mandatory Church Conference Training

(Pastor and whoever are preparing church conference documents, please plan on attending)

A Mandatory Church Conference Training will be held on:

Thursday, August 27 @ 1:00 p.m.

This training will cover:

- Uploading Church Conference documents to Dropbox
- Required electronic forms
- Church Conference submission procedures
- Dropbox and Zoom best practices
- Questions and answers

The training session will be recorded and posted on the Greater Detroit District website for those who are unable to attend live. Churches are encouraged to share the recording with pastors, lay leaders, church administrators, SPRC chairs, and other conference participants.

Church Conference Preparation Checklist

Before your Church Conference, please ensure that you have completed the following:

- 2027 Clergy Compensation Recommendation is now submitted online only to the MI UMC Conference.
- Only key church leaders may submit the approved 2027 clergy compensation recommendation: Ad Board /Church Council/ Leadership Chair(s)

☐ Business of the Church Report approved by Church Council/Administrative Board/SAS Governance Team

☐ Church Council/ SAS/ Ad Board minutes approving the '*Business of the Church*' uploaded to Dropbox (5) days before the church conference

☐ All required Church Conference forms uploaded at least five (5) business days before the conference

☐ Optional SPRC meeting request (*Zoom Scheduler coming soon*)

☐ Typed Business of the Church Report prepared for in-person conferences

☐ Church Conference minutes submitted within 72 hours after the church conference

Thank you for your partnership in helping make the 2026 Greater Detroit District Church Conference season organized, efficient, and successful.

Your cooperation allows us to serve every congregation faithfully while supporting the ministry of the entire district.

- If you have any questions, please contact District Exec. Admin., Dwanda Hayton.
- Email: dhayton@michiganumc.org
- Ph. 313.481.1045