

Working from Nine to Five



Conference to Reduce Number of Districts from Nine to Five Over Next Two Years

Rev. Lynn Dyke, chair of the redistricting task force, introduced the task force and their charge in examining the districts in Missouri.

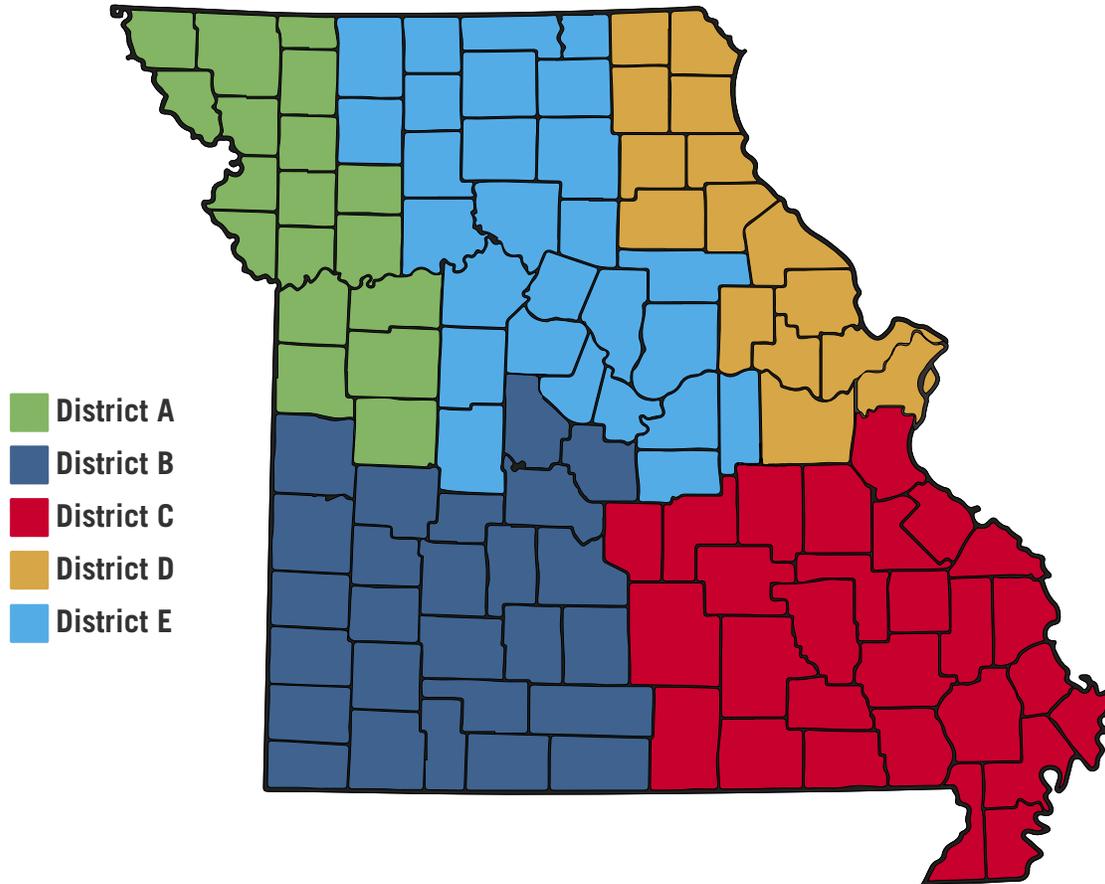
After meeting eight times in five months last year they developed a proposal that was approved by the Mission Council in January. It was made public in the March issue of this magazine and is available online at www.moumethodist.org/redistricting.

During March, seven public town hall events were conducted online. The events were conducted by District Superintendents and members of the task force to discuss the proposal and answer questions.

The proposal has district apportionments ending at the close of 2022. The Conference budget would fund district ministries. The recommendations will save more than \$850,000 in apportioned funds.

“That’s \$850,000 back into the hands of local churches for kingdom work in your mission field,” Dyke said. There are 691 churches in the Missouri Conference. This year 24 churches closed or disaffiliated. Since 2014, 135 churches have closed or disaffiliated, about 17 churches per year.

United Methodist Women in Missouri would align to new districts in January 2023. The Conference Finance and Administration team, the Missouri Conference Board of Trustees, Missouri Conference Director of Finance and Administrative Services Nate Berneking, Bishop Farr and the Cabinet will work together to assign churches to the new district configuration.



“There will be changes, and probably some pain in these changes,” said Southeast District Superintendent Bruce Baxter. “Yet much does not change. Priority is for more money to stay in the local church for ministry.”

The location of the district offices will be determined later. Baxter reminded the Conference that all five directors on Conference staff are also on the Cabinet

and are available to work directly with local churches on the same issues that district superintendents address.

The proposal was passed without amendment on Sunday afternoon. The vote was taken online, with 600 people (93%) voting yes and 44 voting no.