



The Connection

The United Methodist Association of Church Business Administrators
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Dear Friends:

Greetings fellow administrators. 2009 is off to a blazing start and from all indications, it is going to be a rough ride due to the financial and economic conditions of our world. 2008 proved to be a very difficult year economically with churches and annual conferences adjusting to less than stellar and/or normal December gifts.

I was once told that charities, including churches, typically felt the impact of recessions anywhere from twelve to eighteen months after the start. This recession definitely left its impression early and 2009 will continue to bear the brunt.

I was informed just this week that the United Methodist Publishing House is already down by 10% for income with anticipated staff reductions. The same is true of the General Board of Discipleship with fifteen positions eliminated. The Western North Carolina Annual Conference, of which I am a member, has frozen all new staff hires along with a reduced payout amount of 15% of budget allotments.

I am sure your church is like mine in that we are also reducing budgets in order to prepare for the situation. For us 2008 did end in a positive vein but not at all what we had hoped or budgeted. But does it all have to be doom and gloom? Of course not. Franklin D. Roosevelt's famous quote of "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself" certainly rings true to God's people of faith. It just means we must be proactive and strategic in our financial dealings. People are hurting now — many in our churches. Debt ridden families are struggling more than ever. We must be patient, faithful and I believe intentional to weather through. But if we keep our faith over fear and put feet to our prayers and hopes in the best we can do, that which does not destroy us will make us stronger.

My prayer for 2009 is that we hold together, batten down the hatches and lean on each other. John Wesley, our denominational movement's founder, called it "Christian Conferencing." His argument is that believers are not isolated but rather share in the faith community with mutual support and accountability. I would like to invite you to join our yahoo group if you have not and if you have, or once you do, share with how your church is coping with the economic crisis. We just might learn a thing or two and certainly, share our hopes and woes together.

To join that group, either...

- SEND an e-mail to umacbasubscribe@yahoo.com. You will receive a subscription confirmation message. Simply reply to this message and your subscription will be complete.

-OR-

- Go to www.groups.yahoo.com/invite/umacba and click the "Subscribe" button.

Mark King
Director of Communications

National Institute in Church Finance and Administration



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THEOLOGY

Atlanta, Georgia 2009

SEMINAR I

Session A June 1-5

Session B June 8-12

SEMINAR II

Session A June 15-19

Session B June 22-26

For more information, go to
[www.umacba.org/CERTIFICATION/
Certification.htm](http://www.umacba.org/CERTIFICATION/Certification.htm)

(to be updated upon information from Emory).

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Rev. Paul Clark, Strategic Church Management gave permission to share the following article from his recent blog: Paul serves at Fairhaven Church in Dayton, Ohio, a growing church of 3,500. He and his wife Kay have three sons.

Before Reducing Church Staff

I have a feeling that in the next weeks or months many churches could be discussing the potential for laying off staff in order to reduce personnel expenses and the budget. That's understandable since personnel budgets typically consume around half of the overall budget in most churches. At Fairhaven, personnel costs run 56% of the total.

Before considering downsizing staff, I hope you will first do all you can to reduce operating costs. We found that section of the budget to be fertile ground, so if you haven't read my post on that topic (http://paulclark.typepad.com/my_weblog/2008/11/budgeting-in-difficult-times--attack-operating-costs.html), check it out. Since reductions in force don't always yield the dollars that organizations think they will, I want to offer a list of considerations to help you turn over every rock possible, before you make the decision to hand out pink slips. Termination meetings are painful for everyone involved, and a church executive's nightmare, so I know you want to do everything you can to avoid one. Here goes:

1. Consider reducing hours instead of personnel. Squeezing a handful of positions' hours might create enough resources to offset the need to lose a staff member. Or reduce all positions or all non-exempt positions by some margin. Many staff members would rather make minor concessions spread equally across the board than to see a staff member let go.
2. Freeze existing salaries. Most churches are considering a salary freeze for 2009 given the economic downturn and the potential impact on giving. It won't surprise anyone, especially in light of daily announcements of layoffs. Again, many staff members would willingly forgo a raise rather than see a team member dismissed. In one church, staff members were given several extra days off next year to be used at their discretion as at least some compensation in light of frozen salaries. Of course, salary increase promises must be honored, especially in view of any employment or contractual agreement.
3. Don't fill vacant positions. Obviously one way to reduce personnel costs is to suspend hiring. Clerical, custodial, and ministry support positions (i.e. technology) are some that might be covered through volunteers, at least in the short run.
4. Ask for furloughs. Consider asking employees if any would be willing to take an unpaid furlough for an agreed-upon length of time during a period when ministry is slow. You might be surprised at some who would welcome the break perhaps to care for children, aging parents, or just because the extra income is not a necessity.
5. Shift staff around. Move employees from jobs slated for downsizing to open positions. This assumes you can provide training to give the employee a reasonable chance for success. It helps keep talented people on board, provides the longevity that creates stability within the organization, and retains the potential for expansion if the environment changes in the future.
6. Use job sharing. Allowing two part-time employees to share a full-time position potentially reduces benefit costs and thus, personnel costs. I've done this for both clerical and accounting positions with great success. Additionally, if a position must be cut, inquire as to whether another employee would be willing to share their position, allow-

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UMACBA Membership News

Greeting to fellow members of UMACBA

I hope the New Year finds you and your ministry doing well. I hope you will continue your membership in UMACBA in 2009. We need for all our members including Emeritus to complete the annual renewal form so we will know that we have valid information in our records.

You can now complete your renewal online. Go to www.umacba.org/membership/application.htm and you can link to an online form or to a .pdf form to print out and send in. You can even pay via credit card online if you would like.

A reminder that our annual meeting will be at Long Beach CA on July 17-19, 2009. You can go to the NACBA web site www.nacba.net/2009 and make hotel reservations now to get your choice of hotels. The pricing for the conference registration is not yet complete so you will need to do that part later.

Contact me if you have any questions.
Dixon Moseley, CUMCBA
Membership Coordinator
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Congratulations to Vice-President Dianne Wilkerson who recently took a new position at Benton United Methodist Church in Benton, LA – which is just north of the Shreveport/Bossier area. Dianne's contact info is now:

dianneh.wilkinson@gmail.com

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318-780-1487 (cell)

Home address:

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It is with regret we announce the resignation of Sue Forry from the UMACBA Executive Committee due to health reasons. Sue will continue to be a member of the UMACBA and we wish her the best in all her endeavors.

The purpose of the United Methodist Association of Church Business Administrators shall be to support the ministry of Christ and the Christian Church by providing leadership, training, and encouragement in the areas of church business administration for individuals and organizations of The United Methodist Church.

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MEMBERSHIP

For more information about becoming a member of UMACBA or for a membership application, go to our website www.umacba.org or contact Dixon Moseley at 850-484-2749 or dixon.umacba@cox.net.

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For more information about the United Methodist Association of Church Business Administrators, see the website at www.umacba.org.

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ing the affected employee to at least retain a part-time position. In today's workforce, flexibility is a prime motivator, and so sharing a position can be very attractive.

7. "Lend" your employees out. Inquire as to whether another local church might be willing to share an employee as a means of cutting costs. We are currently sharing one of our graphic designers with a church a mile away. It allows this

person to reach full-time hours, and allows both churches to have the benefits of a talented designer. The same could work for an accountant or treasurer, or a custodian.

8. Restrict overtime. Overtime is mandatory for hourly and non-exempt workers who exceed 40 hours in a week, so manage employees' schedules carefully to avoid those extra costs.

Having worked for General Electric's Aircraft Engine Group for 14 years, I understand the trauma that layoffs cause. Layoffs create fear, which is toxic to any organization. Being creative in trying to identify any solution that can mitigate the need for reducing staff is well worth the effort. Perhaps one of these suggestions might work for you.

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NACBA National Conference

July 17-21, 2009

Long Beach, California

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