Prairie Star District Annual Conference
Local Arrangements Committee Timeline

Revised 6-10

12-24 months out

Secure conference hotel site:

1.   Receive the conference space usage list from the Site Selection committee and look at Conference Archive web sites.
2.   Determine which local hotels have sufficient space based on usage list and are available for proposed conference dates.
3.   Contact hotels about availability for conference dates and get preliminary costs for:
    - room rates (double/double, up to four per room) for Friday block and Saturday block (# based on past reservation numbers in the archive information). Rooms for the PSD Board and Friday workshop attendees will be needed for Thursday night as well.
    - meals
    - room usage fees
    - display space and bookstore
    - audiovisual setups
    - Internet access
    - space for non-conference events such as preconference workshops, PSD Board sponsored receptions (check with PSD Office concerning what events are planned for this year)
4.   Invite a member of the Site Selection committee to tour the one or two hotels best suited for the conference based on facilities and costs.
5.   Consult with Site Selection committee to make final decision.
6.   Assist PSD staff and committees with arrangements for additional meeting space at the conference site and at the church (e.g. Board meeting, preconference workshops, Friends reception, other Board sponsored receptions). Be prepared for additional requests for meeting space in January/February.
7.   Reserve space at the church for events to take place there.
8.   Request contract from final hotel/conference center choice. Negotiate details. Date for releasing unreserved rooms in hotel block should be no sooner that one month before the conference and/or should correspond to your registration deadline.
9.   Request a cash advance from District if needed for deposit on hotel or other startup expenses. Cash advances of more than $2,000 will require approval from District Board. Allow time to request and receive that approval.
10.   Send contract to Site Selection for approval.

Begin publicity

1.   Design a conference logo promoting the theme and/or location. Consult District guidelines on conference logos before starting the design process. Incorporate the logo into all publicity materials as soon as it is finalized.
2.   Get all publicity materials approved by District office before making public
3.   Reserve a display table at previous year's conference and create a display to promote your location
4.   Design and create stickers, buttons, fliers (if desired) promoting your location and theme to hand out at previous conference
5.   Submit all information about the Conference to District office to post on web site as soon as it becomes available. Not everything has to be available before posting begins.

Additional

1.   Send representatives to as many meetings as possible of the Annual Conference Program Planning Committee.
2.   Send as many congregation members as possible to the conference before the one you are hosting to observe and learn.

8-12 months out (April –August)

Create conference budget:

1.   Start from budget categories of previous year available in web archives.
2.   Replace hotel costs with new figures (meal choices will have to be made to estimate this cost).

3. Receive travel and speaker costs from Program Planning committee.
4. Begin planning infant and toddler care, child programming, youth activities. Recruit people; estimate costs of the activities so cost for child care and programming can be set and reflected in budget and registration materials.
5. Begin planning entertainment and estimate costs
6. Begin planning opening ceremony and worship events and estimate costs
7. Begin planning bookstore (if you will have one) and estimate income and expense
8. Estimate costs for exhibit tables and what you will charge for tables (if anything)
9. Begin planning for audio and video recording, live streaming, and still photography and estimate costs.
10. Estimate costs for remaining expenses on budget and add any not already present for circumstances unique to your location or programming.
11. Estimate operating funds needed by your committee
12. Determine expenses for Annual Conference Program Area Committees in consultation with Program Coordinator and include in budget.
13. Estimate registration numbers based on past years to determine registration income needed to cover projected costs. Budget must be self-supporting, i.e. a balanced budget.
14. Work with Program Coordinator and District Administrator to ensure preliminary budget includes every anticipated expense.
15. Program Coordinator must submit a budget that s/he recommends to the PSD Office by mid October for approval by the PSD Board at their November meeting.

Work on publicity:
1. Consult with PSD office on current types of District publications and guidelines for submissions.
2. Get all publicity materials approved by District office before making public
3. Write articles for fall District newsletters, email post cards, etc.
4. Prepare printable fliers in the summer for the District office to post on web site and send to congregations

6-9 months out (August- October)

Continue planning
1. Continue planning infant and toddler care, child programming, youth activities. Determine specific activities, make arrangements for field trips, determine what information will be needed at registration
2. Continue planning entertainment; finalize arrangements with entertainers, sign contracts if needed.
3. Continue planning opening ceremony and worship events. Use the conference theme in planning all aspects of the conference to the extent possible. Determine who will lead each event. Some events are traditionally led by District Board/Program Planning Committee, others by the minister and members of your congregation. Arrangements include providing space, programming and speakers, music (musicians and instruments), chalice, flowers and/or other decorations, printed handouts such as orders or service and/or words to hymns.
4. Continue planning bookstore (if you will have one). Recruit volunteers to organize. Determine which books to order, check with speakers and workshop leaders for suggestions. Order books. Arrange for space at hotel. Recruit volunteers to staff. Determine how payments will be handled.
5. Continue planning for audio and video recording, live streaming, and still photography. Arrange for needed equipment and recruit volunteers.

Prepare publicity and registration materials for conference pages of District web site
1. Set deadlines for registering at early rate, applying for display space, requesting child care, registering as a youth, registering by mail, etc.
2. Set registration deadline to avoid paying full price in accordance with date for releasing unreserved rooms in the conference hotel block.
3. Set conference schedule in consultation with Program Planning
4. Write descriptions of infant and toddler care, child programming, special activities for youth
5. Write descriptions of entertainment and gather photos
6. Write descriptions of opening ceremony and worship events
7. Write descriptions of local attractions to encourage attendance
8. Write description of exhibit table availability and determine information needed for exhibit table application.
9. Send materials for web site to Annual Conference Program Coordinator for review
10. Send materials for web site to District Office for review and approval before posting.
11. Check to ensure that all information about conference has been prepared for posting on District web site including information about registration costs, hotel reservation information, parking information, solicitation for table topics, the Conference choir (if any), contact person for questions, and anything else registrants need to know

about the weekend or site. See information posted on web site for past conferences for examples.
12. Prepare printable fliers with more detail than previous fliers for District Office to post on web site and send to congregations
13. Remember material can be posted on the web site as it is ready and approved. Not everything has to be done before posting begins.

Start setting up registration
1.   Set up process for receiving registrations. Designate a registrar who will receive all registration money and record choices for hotel meals and workshops. Depositing money through the local congregation is an easy way to handle registration fees.
2.   Work with District Web Coordinator to set up online registration

Recruit a volunteer to be liaison for PSD Board meeting and make arrangements for the meals, childcare, and other assistance needed by the PSD Board.

4-5 months out (November-December)

Prepare for opening registration
1.   Review all material posted on web site for completeness
2.   Write copy for an electronic post card to be sent by District office announcing opening of registration.

Continue publicity efforts

3 months out (January)

1.   Line up possible hosts for home hospitality (if you are offering it).

2 months out (February)

Conference planning
1.   Registrar goes to work recording registration information as it comes in. Send confirmation materials (map to hotel or home hospitality host, confirmation of receipt of money and workshop choices).
2.   Plan welcome/banner parade for Friday night to include keynote speaker presentation. Recruit someone to speak on behalf of your congregation to welcome everyone, light a chalice and generally help move things along. There could be a reading that you feel encompasses the theme of the weekend or helps strengthen the idea of UUs gathering together, etc. The Program Planning committee will have lined up someone to introduce the keynote speaker.
3.   Plan Sunday morning service (and forum, if you are having one). This is a good opportunity to showcase someone local.
4.   Coordinate requests for exhibit tables. The number of request varies from year to year. The number is usually around 25, plus the bookstore.
5.   Line up volunteers for registration table and delegate check-in table Friday afternoon and evening, and Saturday morning, and possibly some "ask me", people to be strategically placed in hotel to help people find their way around. The PSD Administrator will supply a delegate sign-in book so those presenting delegate credentials can be officially identified. You may also want a youth check-in table depending on the number who've pre-registered. They often like connecting right away with someone from their committee.
6.   Receive ribbons for name badges and list of qualified congregations/ people who receive ribbons from the PSD office
7.   Finalize arrangements for meeting space and food for the PSD Board meeting.

1 month out (March) up to conference dates

Prepare for onsite registration and hotel set-up
1.   Report numbers of meals needed to the hotel and finalize menus.
2.   Assemble registrant packets which include: workshop list and descriptions, speaker names and descriptions, conference schedule with rooms assigned, table topics list, forum description if not announced in brochure, floor plan for hotel meeting rooms, visitor information about host city, submissions from PSD office and/or committees for packet.
3.   Label packets with registrants' names and workshop choices for handing out easily.
4.   Print name tags for registrants with conference dates, location, and person's name and congregation name. Tags that hang or clip are preferred over the pin style. Attach appropriate ribbons along bottom. Put name tags in the

corresponding packets. You may also want to identify those who've paid for a Friday meal (if you have one) or request vegetarian meals. Have blank name tags and packets available for walk-ins.

5. Coordinate with hotel and Awards Committee for the Recognition luncheon. Awards Committee is responsible for the program at the luncheon and will have requirements for the set up and will need reserved tables. District office will provide a printed Program for this event.
6. Create table topic signs once they've been determined.
7. If you get a complimentary hotel room (or two) assign them to the keynote speaker and Judy Lecturer.
8. Assign workshop spaces according to size of rooms and number of registrants who've indicated they plan to attend each one. Anything with music should be as isolated as far as possible from other workshops.
9. Create signage to post around hotel to help people find their way around and identify workshop spaces with the times and topics scheduled there.
10. Confirm conference schedule with hotel staff and provide final list of room arrangements for meals, opening ceremony and keynote, Judy Lecture, business meeting, worship services, and workshop set-ups based on workshop presenters' requests (e.g. circle of chairs, theater-style, audiovisual needs, etc.)

Conference weekend

Keeping track of things

1. Staff registration table and delegate check-in table. Be prepared for walk-in registrations. Have stickers to place on name tags that identify who delegates are for the business meeting. Find out where the PSD Board Secretary can be located when questions come up about delegate credentials.
2. Coordinate room set-ups with hotel staff .
3. Coordinate banner hangings. This has been on walls or over railings depending on the layout of the hotel. This will also include the larger PSD banner. The dimensions are available from the PSD office.
4. Set out table topic signs at each breakfast.
5. Be everywhere all the time. (Just kidding) But have someone assigned to check in with each workshop space just before each begins to make sure the set-up is correct and the facilitator/speaker has what he/she needs.
6. Arrange for someone to introduce the Saturday evening entertainment (if it exists) following the meal.
7. Attend post-mortem meeting with representatives of next year's local arrangements committee and PSD conference program coordinator. Be prepared to cover highlights and lowlights.

After conference

Clean-up

- Prepare reports with tips for the next year and copies of all documents for the conference archives.
- Pay hotel fees from registration account set up through the local congregation.
- Pay all other bills including refunding any cash advance from the District.
- Prepare a complete financial report including all income and expense compared to budget. Send to Program Coordinator and District office. Financial Report is expected within 90 days of end of Conference.
- Settle up financially with PSD office. If there is a budget surplus, half is kept by the congregation, half goes to the PSD office. If there is a deficit, prepare an explanation. PSD will reimburse the congregation.