

Port Huron District Board of Church Location and Building  
**CHURCH BUILDING AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROCEDURE**  
All references to paragraphs (§) are in The Book of Discipline - 2008. (§§2535-2543)  
(revised 2/10/09)

**Bring an updated copy of this checklist to each meeting to place in your file in the District office.**

**Church Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Today's Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

If you are considering any of the following projects, you need to be working with the Port Huron District Board of Church Location and Building (the district board):

- a. Building a new church building, a new educational building, or a new parsonage. (§2543a)
- b. Purchasing a church building, an educational building, or parsonage. (§2543b)
- c. Remodeling an existing church, an existing educational building, or an existing parsonage where the cost of the project even if done in phases, will exceed 25% of the value of the existing structure or require mortgage financing. (§ 2543c)
- d. Remodeling a church or parsonage where the cost of the project, even if done in phases, will exceed 25% of the annual operating budget. (This is an additional requirement of the district board.)

**Steps for a Special Church Conference (§246 - §248)**

1. Consultation with the District Superintendent to set the date of a special church conference.
2. A written request is sent to the District Superintendent stating the purpose and tentative agenda of the special church conference.
3. Written authorization is given by the District Superintendent.
4. Notice of the meeting and its purpose is given to the congregation at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting by two or more of the following methods: from the pulpit of the church, in its weekly bulletin, in a local church publication, by mail.
5. Minutes are sent to the District Superintendent within 10 days of the special church conference.

**Date Special Church Conferences held (Note: Three Church Conferences are required to complete these procedures.)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Church Conference #1 (See steps 1-10)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Church Conference #2 (See steps 11-15)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Church Conference #3 (See steps 16-21)

**Date step was completed.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Consult with the District Superintendent and the Chairperson of the Board on Church Location and Building. Churches are encouraged to meet with the Board early in the process. The district board can offer resources, consultation and help with early definitions of project.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Review available resources including:
  - a. "Architecture Resource Kit," containing manuals. The kit may be borrowed from the Port Huron District office.
  - b. The book *Church Architecture* (by James F. White and Susan J. White. ISBN 1878000934-6) which may be borrowed from the Port Huron District office.
  - c. The website [www.sacredplaces.org](http://www.sacredplaces.org)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Through the church council, establish a study committee to collect and create the following information. Then develop the information into a report (called the “study committee report”) which is the rationale for the project and the initial design concept for the project. The study committee report will be presented to the church council, church conference, district board, and will be used by the building committee, when established.
  - a. Analyze the needs of the local church and community.
  - b. Project the potential membership with average attendance.
  - c. Write up the church’s program of ministry.
  - d. Develop a church accessibility plan including chancel areas.
  - e. Develop a sketch of the current property, including current buildings, parking, well & septic systems, utility locations and other pertinent area descriptions.
  - f. Determine if additional property is be needed. (See 11.b below.)
  - g. Develop a brief written description of the project.
  - h. Develop a financial feasibility plan.
  - i. Determine what local and state permits and approvals are needed.
  - j. Describe the relationship of the proposed project to the present and projected (future) ministry needs of the congregation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Present the study committee report to the church council and request preliminary approval of the project.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Upon approval of the project by the church council one of the following actions is taken:
  - a. A special church conference is held to hear these reports and act upon them when one of the following is true:
    - i. The projected cost of the project is over 25% of the value of the existing structure
    - ii. The projected cost of the project is over 25% of annual operating budget.
    - iii. Financing beyond the local church is needed to complete the project.
  - b. If none of the above is true, the church council may proceed with the project on its own; however, it is recommended that this procedure be followed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Receive written consent of the pastor for the project.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Present the completed report to the district board for review. (Contact the chairperson to arrange for a meeting with the district board.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Receive written consent of the district superintendent for the project.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Hold church conference #1 with the following minimal agenda:
  - a. Presentation of the study committee report.
  - b. Request for preliminary authorization to proceed with the project.
  - c. Election of a building committee with no less than three members and with authority to hire an architect.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Send a copy of the minutes of the church conference to the district superintendent within 10 days.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. The building committee completes the following major planning tasks:
- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Defines the project including needed building facilities and land using the study committee report and other relevant information (including the current *Profile of the Congregation*, budget, number of giving units, indebtedness, demographics of congregation and community.)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. Ascertain the need for and the cost of any property to be purchased. (If additional property is needed, approval to purchase must be given by the district superintendent and the district board of church location and building. See the “Procedures for Purchase of Land” form available at the Port Huron District Office)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. Develops with an architect preliminary architectural plans that:
    - i. Comply with local building, fire, and accessibility codes.
    - ii. Clearly outline the location of the site and all proposed and future construction on the site as well as parking and green areas.
    - iii. Provides adequate facilities for parking, entrance, seating, rest rooms, and accessibility for persons with disabilities.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ d. Secures an estimate of the probable cost of construction with the aid of an architect.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ e. Develops a financial plan for defraying the total cost.  
(Please read in detail ¶2543.11-14.)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ f. Reviews all legal documents in consultation with an attorney, including up-to-date corporation papers, copy of deed (with inclusion of the Trust Clause ¶ 2503).
  - \_\_\_\_\_ g. Obtains title insurance or a title abstract to guarantee good title and ownership of the property with inclusion of the Trust Clause (¶2503).

Note: All legal documents must be reviewed by the church’s lawyer prior to any documents being signed.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Meet with the district board at the project site to review the project and request initial preliminary approval.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Receive written consent of the district superintendent to hold church conference #2.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Hold church conference #2 with at least the following agenda:
  - a. Presentation of the preliminary architectural plans, cost estimate, and financial plan.
  - b. Request for a second preliminary authorization to proceed with the project.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Send a copy of the minutes of the church conference to the district superintendent within 10 days.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. The building committee (with an architect) develops detailed plans and specifications and secures a written, reliable, detailed estimate of construction cost.

\_\_\_\_\_ 17. If loans are necessary, be sure you have WRITTEN commitments of their availability.

Typical requirements of lending agencies:

- a. A mortgage covering the real estate of the church which is to secure the payment of the note.
- b. A mortgage note which states the amount of the loan and the terms of repayment.
- c. A Mortgage Title Insurance Policy insuring the mortgage as a valid lien, subject only to the usual utility easements to service the property.
- d. Recent survey of the property.
- e. A certified duplicate fire insurance policy with extended coverage endorsement containing a proper mortgage clause. Construction insurance is required including Builder' s Risk, Liability, and Workman' s Compensation.
- f. In cases where loan funds are used for construction, the general contractor will be required to supply the original copy of a 100% performance bond.

Note: All legal documents must be reviewed by the church' s lawyer prior to any documents being signed.

\_\_\_\_\_ 18. Receive bids on the detailed plans and specifications.

\_\_\_\_\_ 19. Meet with the district board to present the final drawing and specifications and final financial plan (including a written commitment on loans) and request approval.

\_\_\_\_\_ 20. Hold church conference #3 with at least the following agenda:

- a. Presentation of the final detailed plans and specifications.
- b. Presentation of the final financing plan.
- c. Request for final approval to proceed with the project including approval of any loan(s), and authorization of the trustees to sign loans and contracts.

\_\_\_\_\_ 21. Send a copy of the minutes of the church conference to the district superintendent within 10 days.

\_\_\_\_\_ 22. Begin construction after final approval of the church conference and executing contracts in accordance with the *Book of Discipline* (with special attention to ¶2543.9 - .14).

\_\_\_\_\_ 23. Monitor project progress. If the cost of the project is increased by 10% or more, or if a major modification in the design is proposed from what was approved by the district board and the special church conference, new approval must be gained from both.

\_\_\_\_\_ 24. Complete and celebrate the project and the ministries the project supports.