



# Michigan Conference

The United Methodist Church

## STAFF MEDIA CALL PROCEDURES

### Handling telephone calls from reporters

- Take a written message (don't transfer to voicemail without taking message)
- Get reporter's name, media outlet, direct phone number and deadline
- Ask for topic of story
- Explain that a spokesperson will return call
- Don't answer questions yourself
- Be polite, but firm
- Keep a log or written record of media calls

### Hold Responses

#### *Telephone*

"I want to make sure we give you the most accurate and up-to-date information. Our \_\_\_\_\_ (appropriate person) can best help you. If you give me your contact information, deadline and topic that you're calling about, I'll have that person return your call as soon as possible."

#### *On Site*

"Our job right now is to keep everyone safe. We understand that the media has a job to do. We're gathering information and our spokesperson will speak to reporters shortly."

### Handling Reporters On-Site

- Refer questions to communications staff
- Don't be hostile
- Don't give your personal opinion
- Don't speak "off the record" – everything you say can be reported
- Don't use the term "no comment"
- Be polite, but firm

### Handling Casual Conversations or Questions about a Crisis

- Don't speculate, repeat unconfirmed information or express personal opinions
- Don't feel like you have to answer questions
- Do respond with a brief, positive, general statement

Contact information for \_\_\_\_\_

Office # \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile # \_\_\_\_\_