

## PARSONAGE AND STUDY/OFFICE STANDARDS

The 2008 Book of Discipline, ¶ 258.2g(16) states: *"The chairperson of the Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations, the chairperson of the Board of Trustees, and the pastor shall make an annual review of the church-owned parsonage to assure proper maintenance."*

1. The parsonage and study/office shall be inspected annually and at the time of pastoral change. A report shall be made to the Administrative Board/Council of any deviations from the standards as set forth below. The trustees within the following three months shall bring a recommendation to the Administrative Board/Council ways the deviations found in the parsonage and study/office will be brought up to standard and have regular maintenance and safety items cared for. A reasonable time table shall be established for such change or correction as must be made, and reported back to the next Charge Conference.
2. The parsonage family shall be encouraged to make a list of things needing attention.
3. If the annual tour reveals excessive wear or damage, the S/PPRC shall visit with the pastor in these matters. If it is not resolved, the superintendent shall be consulted.
4. The trustees shall keep a record of the date of purchase and repair of all appliances including the heating and cooling system; and of all painting and decorating, inside and out. The superintendent shall ask for the Parsonage Report at the annual Charge Conference meeting.
5. Any damage to the parsonage or grounds caused by any household pet shall be repaired or replaced at the expense of the parsonage occupants. Excessive damage, beyond normal wear, to the parsonage caused by the parsonage family shall be repaired, replaced, and/or paid for by the pastor. This evaluation shall be done by the District Board of Church Location and Building.
6. In light of parsonages generally being tax exempt, this status shall be carefully guarded. Parsonage families are cautioned against using parsonage property for any kind of private commercial use.
7. The PARSONAGE INSPECTION FORM (Reference 5, page 31) must be returned to the district superintendent by May 20. Failure to return this form may result in not being able to claim damage.

## PASTOR'S STUDY/OFFICE AND CHURCH OFFICE

### Location

1. The church office (defined as location of office equipment, secretarial/or volunteer work space, etc.) should not be located in the parsonage.
2. A pastor's study/office should be available in the church or in a location other than within the parsonage. If located in the church, it should be as easily accessible as possible to an outside entrance with designating signs posted.
3. Where a parsonage study/office is chosen, it should be removed as far as possible from the rooms most used by the family, preferably on the ground floor.
4. All study/office locations should take into consideration accessibility to the handicapped.

### Condition

The pastor's study/office and the church office each should contain no less than 150 square feet of floor space with adequate heating and lighting facilities. Air conditioning for extremely warm weather is desirable.

- adequate
- minor improvements needed
- major improvements needed

If improvements are needed, please describe:

### Equipment for Pastor's Study/Office

1. An adequate-size desk with drawer space, including one letter-size file drawer.
  2. Desk lamp and swivel-type desk chair
  3. Locks on desk and filing cabinet
  4. At least 42 lineal feet of book shelves
  5. A private-line telephone, especially if pastor study/office is located in the parsonage
  6. A waste paper basket
  7. At least two occasional chairs for visitors
  8. One (1) file cabinet for personal files
  9. Computer and printer with e-mail capability
  10. Answering machine
- adequate
  - minor improvements needed
  - major improvements needed

If improvements are needed, please describe:

### Church Office

An additional room or space should be provided for the office equipment, secretarial/volunteer work space, etc. with the following items:

1. An adequate-size desk with drawer space.
  2. Desk lamp and swivel-type desk chair
  3. Fire-resistant metal filing cabinet for church records
  4. Locks on desk and filing cabinet
  5. Additional storage space for magazines, equipment, and supplies
  6. Duplicating machine and typewriter/computer and printer  
(Pastor and secretary should have separate computers and printers.)
  7. E-mail capability or fax machine is recommended
  8. A waste paper basket
  9. Adequate staplers and access to paper cutter and pencil sharpener
  10. Desk calculator
  11. Answering machine
- adequate
  - minor improvements needed
  - major improvements needed

If improvements are needed, please describe:

**Parsonage - General Standards**

A. **Accessibility.** For all newly constructed or newly purchased parsonages, the following guidelines shall apply:

1. At least one full bathroom on the ground floor.
2. At least one bedroom on the ground floor.
3. Laundry facilities located on the ground floor.
4. Doorways at least 32 inches in width to the above three items.
5. At least one entry to the ground floor from outside which is level with no steps, ramped or able to be ramped.

While these standards will be mandatory for new construction or purchase, the Trustees of each charge are urged to take steps to bring all existing parsonages into compliance with these standards.

B. **Structurally sound.** Foundation, roof, and walls in good condition. No evidence of major cracks or water damage. No evidence of termite damage or activity.

- structure in sound condition
- minor repairs needed
- major repairs needed

If repairs needed, please describe:

C. **Yard.** Appropriate landscaping with sidewalks in good repair must be provided. Space for gardening is also recommended.

- yard in good condition
- minor repairs needed
- major repairs needed

If repairs needed, please describe:

D. **Plumbing.** All plumbing in good condition. Must have adequate water pressure and a safe drinking water supply.

- plumbing in sound condition
- minor repairs needed
- major repairs needed

If repairs needed, please describe:

E. **Electrical System.** Wiring must be in safe condition with adequate grounding and sufficient circuits for handling air conditioning and heavy duty appliances. Circuit breakers replacing fuse boxes are recommended. Switches and outlets should be conveniently located in every room. A permanently installed television antenna and cable access, if available, for TV reception must be provided.

- electrical system in sound condition
- minor repairs needed
- major repairs needed

If repairs needed, please describe:

- F. Heating and Cooling Systems. A thermostatically controlled central heating and cooling system should be provided with ducts for every room in the house. (Also provision to shut off ducts to unused rooms). If central cooling is not possible, at least one individual wall/window unit should be provided. Gas water heater and furnace must be properly vented. Systems should be serviced each year by qualified person to ensure safety and efficiency.
- heating and cooling systems in sound condition
  - minor repairs needed
  - major repairs needed

If repairs needed, please describe:

- G. Safety. Smoke, fire and carbon monoxide detectors should be installed in appropriate locations. A test for presence of radon gas should be done every 5 years. A dry chemical fire extinguisher (Underwriter's Laboratory approved - five pound ABC type) should be installed according to manufacturer's recommendations. There should be a safe exit from each sleeping room; outside steps safe and well lighted, with motion sensitive lights; all outside doors, including garage, equipped with keyed locks and dead bolts that work. Locks should be changed with each pastoral change. Keys shall be distributed at the discretion of the pastor. Windows shall be securable and equipped with locks if possible.
- adequate safety equipment provided
  - minor repairs needed
  - major repairs needed

If repairs needed, please describe:

- H. Telephone. One private telephone line and one telephone with one extension outlet is required.
- Private line and telephone provided
  - telephone service inadequate

If telephone service inadequate, please describe:

- I. Furnishings. Appropriate floor coverings in good condition must be provided. Shades, curtains, or drapes must be provided. Painting and redecorating is required as needed.
- appropriate furnishings provided, in good repair
  - minor repairs needed
  - furnishings nor provided, or major repairs needed

If furnishings inadequate, please describe:

J. Insurance. Adequate coverage on the house and church-owned furnishings is required.

- adequate insurance coverage provided
- insurance coverage not provided or inadequate

If insurance coverage inadequate, please describe:

K. Energy Conservation. The house has been audited for energy efficiency and a detailed plan for bringing the house up to the current energy efficiency standards has been established. (The conservation measure that will be most cost-effective will vary from house-to-house.) In general, the following energy efficiency standards are recommended as minimum requirements: ceiling insulation, 10 inches; wall insulation, wall cavity filled; basement insulation, 12 inches of rigid panel insulation; crawl space insulation, 6 inches; storms on all doors and windows; caulking and weather stripping to fill cracks and crevices.

- energy conservation features meet minimum standards
- minor energy conservation improvements needed
- major energy conservation improvements needed

If energy conservation improvements needed, please describe:

L. Living Room/Dining Room Area. It should be large enough to be used for entertaining small groups.

- adequate
- minor improvements needed
- major improvements needed

If improvements needed, please describe:

M. Kitchen. The kitchen should have adequate eating space, adequate counter tops and easily-cleaned floor covering. It should contain energy-efficient appliances in good working condition: a range; a refrigerator with a freezer compartment; adequate appliance outlets. Recommended items include: dishwasher, garbage disposal, exhaust fan, and microwave oven.

- adequate
- minor improvements needed
- major improvements needed

If improvements needed, please describe:

N. Laundry. Complete automatic laundry facilities conveniently located shall be provided in each parsonage having both washer and dryer as energy efficient as possible. (See accessibility guidelines) Provisions for outside drying is recommended, if possible. Provisions for water softening shall be provided as needed.

- adequate
- minor improvements needed
- major improvements needed

If improvements needed, please describe:

- O. Bathroom. Bathroom with both tub and shower including medicine cabinet and adequate storage space for linens, plus an additional half-bath, shall be provided. An extra shower is recommended. (See Accessibility guidelines)

- adequate
- minor improvements needed
- major improvements needed

If improvements needed, please describe:

- P. Bedrooms. A minimum of three bedrooms, all with adequate closet space, with at least one bedroom located on the main floor shall be provided. (See Accessibility guidelines)

- adequate
- minor improvements needed
- major improvements needed

If improvements needed, please describe:

- Q. Storage. Space in dry basement, attic or other room for storage of seasonal clothing, Christmas decorations, etc shall be provided.

- adequate
- minor improvements needed
- major improvements needed

If improvements needed, please describe:

- R. Pest Control. Each parsonage should be regularly checked for household pests and necessary control measures adopted.

- adequate
- minor improvements needed
- major improvements needed

If improvements needed, please describe:

S. Garage. If possible, a garage shall be provided with sufficient space for two cars. The garage shall have an automatic door opener, adequate lights and electrical outlets, and additional space for gardening and lawn equipment, bicycles, etc.

- adequate
- minor improvements needed
- major improvements needed

If improvements needed, please describe:

T. Damage. Damage to the parsonage or grounds caused by any household pet shall be repaired or replaced at the expense of the parsonage occupants. Excessive damage to the parsonage caused by the parsonage occupants, beyond normal wear, shall be repaired, replaced, or paid for by the pastor. This evaluation shall be done by the District Building and Location Committee. In light of parsonages generally being tax exempt, this status should be guarded carefully. Parsonage families are cautioned against using parsonage property for any private commercial use.

**PARSONAGE DAMAGE POLICY**  
(1-1-2009)

1. ¶258.2g(16) of *The 2008 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* details the responsibility of the local church Board of Trustees to care for all church property. The clergy family also has a responsibility within the connectional covenant to treat the parsonage with respect. **To this end the Board of Trustees shall ensure that there is an annual inspection of the parsonage for proper maintenance.** In the event an inspection reveals damage in excess of normal wear and tear, which is attributable to clergy's willful or intentional disregard of the church's interest, the following policies shall govern future clergy use of parsonages.
2. Clergy who have damaged a parsonage in excess of normal wear and tear shall thereafter pay a \$500 damage deposit per year until such deposit totals \$2,000. This will be deducted by the local church treasurer from the clergy's salary\* on a monthly basis and sent to the Iowa Conference Treasurer to be accounted for and deposited in a Parsonage Damage Fund consisting of all the parsonage damage deposit money paid by clergy in the IAC. Upon proper application to the Conference Treasurer, the deposited funds will be paid out to a local church from a pastor's damage account where the pastor has caused damage to the local church parsonage in excess of normal wear and tear. The pastor shall then replenish his/her \$2000 damage account by year until the \$2000 is fully replenished.
3. If the parsonage damage exceeds \$2000 the local church will withhold the pastor's final pay check to cover the balance of the repair costs. If the repair costs exceed the \$2000 damage deposit plus the pastor's final pay check, the balance will be paid from the Parsonage Damage Fund. Such amount paid from the Parsonage Damage Fund will be considered a loan to the pastor who will sign a note with the IAC. The treasurer of the church or charge where the pastor is next appointed will deduct monthly from the pastor's salary\* an amount agreed upon by the Conference Treasurer, the District Superintendent and the pastor until the loan is repaid and the pastor's \$2000 damage deposit is replenished.
4. At such time as the pastor leaves ministry, retires or leaves the Iowa Conference the balance of the \$2000 damage deposit held on account for the pastor shall be returned to him/her if there is no damage to the parsonage most recently vacated, there is no balance for damage to any other parsonage, or the damage to such parsonage(s) is less than \$2000. In the event such damage exceeds \$2000 when the pastor leaves or retires, the same policy repayment as stated above in paragraph 3 shall apply.
5. Procedures for determining damage in parsonage
  - a. SPRC/Trustees shall tour the parsonage sometime within the first three weeks after the announcement of the pastor's new appointment for the following purposes:
    - i. To determine what needs to be done in preparation for new clergy family and if there is any damage.
    - ii. If it appears there is damage that exceeds normal wear and tear, the district superintendent shall be notified immediately in order that he or she and the District Church Building and Location Committee can make a further inspection before any repairs are begun. The SPRC, local church trustees, the District Church Building

and Location Committee and the DS will determine whether or not excessive damage has occurred. The pastor shall be entitled to be present during all inspections. Pictures shall be taken of the damaged areas.

- b. Assuming there is damage for which the pastor is liable under this policy, the local church trustees will obtain two bids to repair the damage.
  - c. The SPRC/Trustees will make a final inspection of the parsonage on the day of the move as soon as the parsonage is empty and before the pastor has left town. The pastor's final pay check will be withheld\* until this final inspection is conducted to determine if there is any further damage and to confirm the parsonage has been appropriately cleaned by the departing pastor.
6. When a pastor has damaged a parsonage the documentation of such damage (including written description of damage and photographs) will be placed in the pastor's permanent file. A pastor's appointability may be affected if he or she has two documented incidents of parsonage damage. If this occurs the pastor may be required to provide his or her own housing if he or she wants another appointment or to continue in his or her current appointment.

- \* Each clergy person in the Iowa Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church shall sign an authorization with each local church to which he/she is appointed authorizing the local church under the Iowa Wage Payment Collection Law, Iowa Code Chapter 91A, to deduct any amounts owing under this Parsonage Damage Policy from clergy salary and further authorizing the Conference Treasurer to disburse such amounts.

