

Resource Guide for Staff Parish Relations Committee

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Dear SPRC:

You have a very important role in the life of your congregation. You are the group that supports the pastor and staff by:

- * Interpreting ministry to the congregation
- * Counseling the pastor/staff in regards to that ministry
- * Evaluating effectiveness of staff in helping congregation meet its ministry goals.
- * Conferring and consulting with the pastor and district superintendent about pastoral changes
- * Enlisting persons to go into ministry

This booklet is being provided as a guide to you in your ministry with your pastor and staff.

May God bless you all in a successful, faithful ministry together.

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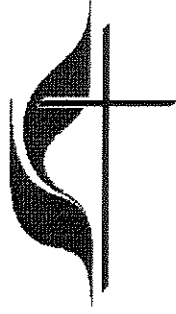
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PART 1

SPRC

THE COMMITTEE TASK

What the Committee Does	With Whom	Content
Interprets	Congregation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Its values for the mission and ministries of the local church . The work of pastor(s)/staff . Open itinerancy
Counsels	Pastor(s)/staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Assessing their gifts and setting priorities for leadership and service . Professional growth including continuing education . Spiritual development and renewal . Sharing ideas
Evaluates	Pastor Other employees Parsonage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Effectiveness . Effectiveness . Once-a-year inspection by chairperson and trustee
Confers and consults	District Superintendent Pastor Church council Finance committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria for pastoral appointment(s) . Pastoral change(s) . Pastoral changes . Pastoral changes . Compensation recommendations
Enlists	Congregation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . To identify and recruit persons into ordained ministry, diaconal ministry, and/or missionary service

Staff-Parish Relations Committee
Duties and Responsibilities
The Book of Discipline, 2004, Paragraph 259.2

"There shall be elected annually by the charge conference in each local church
a committee on pastor□parish relations or staff□parish relations."

- Purpose

- The committee shall identify and clarify its values for ministry.
- It shall engage in biblical and theological reflections on the mission of the church, the primary task, and ministries of the local church.
- The committee shall reflect biblically and theologically on the role and work of the pastor(s) and staff as they carry out their leadership responsibilities.
- The committee shall assist the pastor(s) and staff in assessing their gifts and setting priorities for leadership and service.
- It is the responsibility of the committee to communicate with the committee on lay leadership and/or the church council when there is a need for other leaders or for employed staff to perform in areas where utilization of the gifts of the pastor(s) and staff proves an inappropriate stewardship of time.

- Membership

- Members must be professing members of the local church or charge or associate members (§ 227), except in cases where central conference legislation or local law provides otherwise.
- People serving on this committee must be engaged in and attentive to their Christian spiritual development so as to give proper leadership in the responsibilities with which the committee is entrusted.
- The committee shall be composed of not fewer than five nor more than nine persons representative of the total charge.
- One of the members shall be a young adult and one member may be a youth.
- In addition, the lay leader and a lay member of the annual conference shall be members.
- No staff member or immediate family member of a pastor or staff member may serve on the committee.
- Only one person from an immediate family residing in the same household shall serve on the committee.

- Election

- In order to secure experience and stability, the membership shall be divided into three classes, one of which shall be elected each year for a three□year term.
- Retiring members of the committee shall not succeed themselves.
- The lay member of the annual conference and the lay leader are exempt from the three□year term.
- When vacancies occur during the year, nominees shall be elected at the church council (or alternative church structure).
- In those charges where there is more than one church, the committee shall include at least one representative from each local church.
- The committees on pastor-parish relations of charges that are in cooperative parish ministries shall meet together to consider the professional leadership needs at the cooperative parish ministry as a whole.

- Meetings

- The committee shall meet at least quarterly. It shall meet additionally at the request of the bishop, the district superintendent, the pastor, any other person accountable to the committee, or the chairperson of the committee.

- To fulfill his or her obligation under ordination, his or her connectional responsibility under appointment, and his or her duty as a pastor, the pastor should be present at each meeting of the committee on pastor-parish relations or staff-parish relations except where he or she voluntarily excuses himself or herself.
- The committee shall meet only with the knowledge of the pastor and/or the district superintendent.
- It may meet with the district superintendent without the pastor being present. However, the pastor or any member of the staff under consideration shall be notified prior to such meeting at which a pastor's or clergy staff member's continued appointment or a lay staff member's employment is discussed and be brought into consultation immediately thereafter.
- In the event that only one congregation on a charge containing more than one church has concerns it wishes to share, its member(s) in the committee may meet separately with the pastor or any other person accountable to the committee or the district superintendent, but only with the knowledge of the pastor and/or district superintendent.
- The committee shall meet in closed session, and information shared in the committee shall be confidential.

- Duties

- To encourage, strengthen, nurture, support, and respect the pastor(s) and staff and their family(s).
- To promote unity in the church(es).
- To confer with and counsel the pastor(s) and staff on the matters pertaining to the effectiveness of ministry; relationships with the congregation; conditions that may impede the effectiveness of ministry; and to interpret the nature and function of the ministry.
- To confer with, consult, and counsel the pastor(s) and staff on matters pertaining to priorities in the use of gifts, skills, and time and priorities for the demands and effectiveness of the mission and ministry of the congregation.
- To provide evaluation at least annually for the use of the pastor(s) and staff in an ongoing effective ministry and for identifying continuing educational needs and plans.
- To communicate and interpret to the congregation the nature and function of ministry in The United Methodist Church regarding open itinerancy, the preparation for ordained ministry, and the Ministerial Education Fund.
- To develop and approve written job descriptions and titles for associate pastors and other staff members in cooperation with the senior pastor. The term *associate pastor* is used as a general term to indicate any pastoral appointment in a local church other than the pastor in charge (see ¶ 339). Committees shall be encouraged to develop specific titles for associate pastors that reflect the job descriptions and expectations.
- To consult with the pastor and staff concerning continuing education and spiritual renewal, to arrange with the church council for the necessary time and financial assistance for the attendance of the pastor and/or staff at such continuing education and spiritual renewal events as may serve their professional and spiritual growth, and to encourage staff members to seek professional certification in their fields of specialization.
- To enlist, interview, evaluate, review, and recommend annually to the charge conference lay preachers and persons for candidacy for ordained ministry (see ¶¶ 247.8 and 310), and to enlist and refer to the General Board of Global Ministries persons for candidacy for missionary service, recognizing that The United Methodist Church affirms the biblical and theological support of persons regardless of gender, race, ethnic origin, or disabilities for these ministries. Neither the pastor nor any member of the committee on pastor-parish relations shall be present during the consideration of a candidacy application or renewal for a member of their immediate family. The committee shall provide to the charge conference a list of students from the charge who are preparing for ordained ministry, diaconal ministry, and/or missionary service, and shall maintain contact with these students, supplying the charge conference with a progress report on each student.

- To interpret preparation for ordained ministry and the Ministerial Education Fund to the congregation.
- To confer with the pastor and/or other appointed members of the staff if it should become evident that the best interests of the charge and pastor(s) will be served by a change of pastor(s). The committee shall cooperate with the pastor(s), the district superintendent, and the bishop in securing clergy leadership. Its relationship to the district superintendent and the bishop shall be advisory only. (See ¶¶ 430–433.)
- To recommend to the church council, after consultation with the pastor, the professional and other staff positions (whether employee or contract) needed to carry out the work of the church or charge. The committee and the pastor shall recommend to the church council a written statement of policy and procedures regarding the process for hiring, contracting, evaluating, promoting, retiring, and dismissing staff personnel who are not subject to episcopal appointment as ordained clergy. Until such a policy has been adopted, the committee and the pastor shall have the authority to hire, contract, evaluate, promote, retire, and dismiss nonappointed personnel. When persons are hired or contracted, consideration shall be given to the training qualifications and certification standards set forth by the general Church agency to which such positions are related. The committee shall further recommend to the church council a provision for adequate health and life insurance, pension benefits, and severance pay for all lay employees. In addition, the committee shall recommend that the church council provide, effective on and after January 1, 2006 100 percent vested pension benefits of at least three percent of compensation for lay employees of the local church who work at least 1040 hours per year, are at least 21 years of age, and have at least one year of permanent service. The church council shall have authority to provide such pension benefits through either a denominational pension program administered by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits or another pension program administered by another pension provider.
- To recommend to the charge conference, when the size of the employed staff of the charge makes it desirable, the establishment of a personnel committee. This committee shall be composed of such members of the committee on pastor-parish relations as it may designate and such additional members as the charge conference may determine.
- To educate the church community on the value of diversity of selection in clergy and lay staff and develop a commitment to same.
- Members of the committee on pastor-parish relations (or staff-parish relations) shall keep themselves informed of personnel matters in relationship to the Church's policy, professional standards, liability issues, and civil law. They are responsible for communicating and interpreting such matters to staff. Committee members should make themselves available for educational and training opportunities provided by the conference, district, and/or other arenas that will enable them to be effective in their work.
- To consult on matters pertaining to pulpit supply, proposals for compensation, travel expense, vacation, health and life insurance, pension, housing (which may be a church-owned parsonage or housing allowance in lieu of parsonage if in compliance with the policy of the annual conference), and other practical matters affecting the work and families of the pastor and staff, and to make annual recommendations regarding such matters to the church council, reporting budget items to the committee on finance. The parsonage is to be mutually respected by the pastor's family as the property of the church and by the church as a place of privacy for the pastor's family. 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.

S/PPRC Monthly Agenda

This is a suggested monthly agenda. The order may be changed to fit your local church setting.

- January** · Orient committee members (Read/Review ¶259.2 of the 2004 Book of Discipline)
 - Review Charge Conference Forms A and B
 - Establish/Review priorities with the pastor(s) and staff

- February** · Check out status of pastor/staff expectations.
 - Inquire about and provide support (as needed) for members of pastor/staff's family.

- March** · Review pastor/staff self care, including: days/time off, time for spiritual renewal, vacation plans, continuing education, etc.
 - Consider promoting (co-sponsoring) a church wide emphasis on Spiritual Gifts Inventory

- April** · Develop (or review) plan for identifying, encouraging and supporting persons with gifts for ministry who may serve as lay or ordained ministers.
 - Check out status of pastor/staff expectation

- May** · Conduct annual review of parsonage(s) with Trustees

- June** · Plan and implement an expression of appreciation for pastor/staff

- July** · Check out status of pastor/staff expectations

- August** · Fill out Form B for Charge Conference (Staff/Pastor Parish Ministry Expectations)

- September** · Review and recommend pastor/staff compensation and expense packages for the next calendar year.

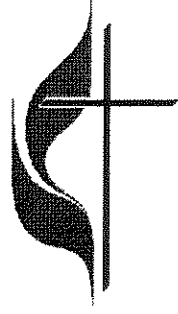
- October** · Conduct annual review of pastor(s)

- November** · Conduct annual review of other ordained staff
 - Update ministry profile to be used for clergy appointment
 - Review and plan for pastor/staff continuing education needs

- December** · Organize and implement an expression of appreciation for pastor/staff
 - Check out status of pastor/staff expectations

**Staff/Parish-Relations Committee
Schedule of Meetings**

Month	Date	Purpose
August		
September		
October		
November		
December		
January		
February		
March		
April		
May		
June		
July		



PART 2

PASTOR

Pastoral Duties & 340 of the 2004 The Book of Discipline

Responsibilities and Duties of Elders and Licensed Pastors

The responsibilities of elders and licensed pastors are derived from the authority given in ordination. Elders have a four-fold ministry of Word, Sacrament, Order and Service within the connection and thus serve in the church and the world. Local pastors share with the elders the responsibilities and duties of a pastor for this four-fold ministry.

1. *Word and ecclesial acts:*

- A) To preach the Word of God, lead in worship, read and teach the Scriptures, and engage the people faithful transmission of the Christian faith
 - (1) To ensure faithful transmission of the Christian faith.
 - (2) To lead people in discipleship and evangelistic outreach that others might come to know Christ and to follow him.
- B) To counsel persons with personal, ethical, or spiritual struggles.
- C) To perform the ecclesial acts of marriage and burial.
 - (1) To perform the marriage ceremony after due counsel with the parties involved and in accordance with the laws of the state and the rules of The United Methodist Church. The decision to perform the ceremony shall be the right and responsibility of the pastor.
 - (2) To conduct funeral and memorial services and provide care and grief counseling.
- D) To visit in the homes of the church and the community, especially among the sick, aged, imprisoned, and others in need.
- E) To maintain all confidences inviolate, including confessional confidences except in the cases of suspected child abuse or neglect, or in cases where mandatory reporting is required by civil law.

2. *Sacrament:*

- A) To administer the sacraments of baptism and the Supper of the Lord according to Christ's ordinance.
 - (1) To prepare the parents and sponsors before baptizing infants or children, and instruct them concerning the significance of baptism and their responsibilities for the Christian training of the baptized child.
 - (2) To encourage reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant and renewal of baptismal vows at different stages of life.
 - (3) To encourage people baptized in infancy or early childhood to make their profession of faith, after instruction, so that they might become professing members of the church.
 - (4) To explain the meaning of the Lord's Supper and to encourage regular participation as a means of grace to grow in faith and holiness.
 - (5) To select and train deacons and lay members to serve the consecrated communion elements.

3. **Order:**

- A) To be the administrative officer of the local church and to assure that the organizational concerns of the congregation are adequately provided for.
 - (1) To give pastoral support, guidance, and training to the lay leadership, equipping them to fulfill the ministry to which they are called.
- B) To administer the temporal affairs of the church in their appointment, the annual conference, and the general church.
 - (1) To administer the provisions of the *Discipline*.
 - (2) To give an account of their pastoral ministries to the charge and annual conference according to the prescribed forms.
 - (3) To provide leadership for the funding ministry of the congregation.
 - (4) To promote faithful, financial stewardship and to encourage giving as a spiritual discipline.
 - (5) To lead the congregation in the fulfillment of its mission through full and faithful payment of all apportioned ministerial support, administrative, and benevolent funds.
 - (6) To care for all church records and local church financial obligations, and certify the accuracy of all financial, membership, and any other reports submitted by the local church to the annual conference for use in apportioning costs back to the church.

4. **Service:**

- A) To embody the teachings of Jesus in servant ministries and servant leadership.
- B) To give diligent pastoral leadership in ordering the life of the congregation for discipleship in the world.
- C) To build the body of Christ as a caring and giving community, extending the ministry of Christ to the world.
- D) To participate in community, ecumenical and inter-religious concerns and to encourage the people to become so involved and to pray and labor for the unity of the Christian community.

Code of Ethics for Professionals in Ministry
(adopted by *Iowa Annual Conference, June 1996*)

A. Personal Responsibility

1. Is conscious of the sacredness of one's high calling.
2. Abides by the covenant and Discipline of the United Methodist Church.
3. Continues to move onward toward perfection through personal and corporate discipline, prayers, study, contemplation, covenant group and scripture reading.
4. Develops through continued education, maintenance of personal growth and competence for ministry.
5. Maintains proper physical care and discipline.
6. Gives attention and service to ministerial duties.
7. Keeps time commitments faithfully and uses time responsibly, acknowledging that ministry cannot fit into arbitrary time slots.
8. Follows high moral standards in speech and conduct.
9. Does not allow manners and self-appearance to hinder providing pastoral care to others.
10. Is above reproach in all business transactions. Is sufficiently free from unnecessary financial debt and has accepted financial responsibility as to not burden one's congregation or the Annual Conference. Does not leave a community to accept a new appointment without arranging for payment of local financial obligations.
11. Is above reproach in integrity, honesty, and faithfulness.
12. Maintains a healthy emotional and social balance and boundaries between pastoral identity and self-identity; private and community life; self and other.
13. Provides for the care of family and spouse and, as a parsonage family, addresses their needs and concerns through appropriate lines of communication.

B. Parish Responsibility

1. Accepts appointment and is willing to be itinerant, faithfully performing duties.
2. Is spiritual leader of all members of the congregation and of those within the community appointed that are unchurched and/or in need of pastoral care.
3. Is above reproach in pastoral performance of responsibilities and duties outlined in the *1992 Book of Discipline* of the United Methodist Church.
4. Service is primary, remuneration is secondary.
5. Gives time and attention to employment outside of service to the appointed charge only with the consent of the local charge and cabinet.
6. Keeps inviolate privileged information and confidence at all times.
7. Represents the policy, mission and program of the Annual conference and the United Methodist General Church fairly and appropriately. Represents the itinerant and connectional process honestly and justly.
8. Is open to service in the community of the charge as opportunity provides in ways that grow the presence and spirit of Jesus Christ.

9. Leave church and parsonage in good condition. Accepts financial responsibilities for damage done to parsonage beyond normal wear and tear or age.
10. Maintain connectional responsibilities which include providing updated records for the next pastor and seeing that apportionments are current.

C. Pastoral Responsibility

1. Respects the parish of another pastor. Provides service only at the pastor's invitation. All inquiring are referred to the resident pastor.
2. Seeks to uphold, enhance and support the work of another professional in ministry and in no way undermines their efforts to serve.
3. Acts with integrity in all matters of references to one's predecessor and one's successor.
4. Endorses programs, agencies and persons that perform duties acceptable by the United Methodist *Book of Discipline*
5. Regards United Methodist curriculum as basic to the educational program of the church.
6. Accepts responsibilities in the greater community as long as they do not interfere with pastoral responsibilities of the charge to which one is appointed.
7. Supports the mission of the United Methodist Church and church universal as revealed through the Scriptures.
8. Does not violate the sacred trust between clergy/parishioner or those in pastoral care by seeking sexual, social or business favors at any time.
9. Refrains from all sexual involvement with those who have sought and/or received pastoral care at any time, regardless of the time lapse from terminating the counseling relationship.
10. Refrains from a date relationship with any parishioner who has received direct/structured counseling by the pastor.
11. Recognizes the need for open access of church staff to SPRC for consultation and evaluation. Open to questions regarding one's leadership and administrative style by SPRC and Cabinet.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE COVENANT EXPECTATIONS

Every United Methodist pastor and local congregation is in a covenant relationship with every other United Methodist pastor and congregation. We sometimes refer to this covenantal relationship as our "connection." Within this relationship, as in all relationships, there are expectations on both sides. Following are some of the covenantal expectations of pastors:

- To be a spiritual leader for the congregation
- To practice spiritual and physical self-care
- To abide by the clergy ethics approved by the clergy of the Iowa Annual Conference
- To complete annual conference continuing education requirements
- To lead congregations in fulfilling their primary task
- To foster mutuality in ministry
- To be itinerant (even though all appointments are reviewed annually, the Cabinet attempts to make appointments which will hold for a minimum of five years and a maximum of twelve years)
- To lead a church to pay its apportionments in full monthly
- To support and interpret connectional ministries
- To adhere to and to teach the United Methodist social principles
- To keep accurate church records
- To complete reports accurately and on time

Standards for Credentialed Ministry
Iowa Annual Conference, UMC

“The mission of the Iowa Annual Conference is to develop leaders who proclaim the gospel and transform the world...so that every United Methodist congregation and faith community in Iowa can fulfill its mission through its primary task of making disciples.” (Iowa annual conference, June 1993)

The following standards are to help us define the parameters of our ordained ministry leaders.

Standards:

Expresses personal faith in God through Jesus Christ.

Nurtures and cultivates spiritual disciplines and patterns of holiness.

Cultivates a pattern of leadership that equips the ministry of all believers.

Understands scripture as foundational to Christian faith and can express its relevancy within the present social and cultural context using reason, tradition, and experience.

Has a deep sense of being called by God to the ministry of Word, Sacrament, Order, and Service, following Jesus’ pattern of love and service.

Conducts worship, fellowship and study that enable participants to experience the presence of God.

Has effective oral and written skills for sharing the Christian faith.

Accepts and maintains the United Methodist Church’s Discipline and its division of authority.

Demonstrates love for all persons through acts of service in the local church, community and world.

Thinks theologically and leads others to theological reflection.

Provides leadership in understanding, using and teaching church history and polity.

Inspires trust and confidence by demonstrating strong moral and iethical behavior in all areas of life.

Demonstrates sound psychological and physical health that enables effective communication of the gospel.

Demonstrates a clear sense of appropriate care while helping persons in crisis events.

Makes a prophetic witness when dissonance exists between the acts of a community and God’s purpose.

Approved by Clergy Session 2007.