



SPPRC  
Staff Pastor Parish  
Relations Committee

# Resource Guide

Revised July 2019

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# IOWA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

## **Strategic Priorities**

- 1. Creating World-Transforming Communities of Faith*
- 2. Equipping Ourselves and Others as Transformational Leaders*
- 3. Directing Our Resources to Our Common Goals*

## **Mission**

*Inspiring, equipping, and connecting communities of faith to cultivate world-changing disciples of Jesus Christ.*

## **Vision**

*God's hope for the world made real through faithful leaders, fruitful communities and fire-filled people.*

## **Wildly Important Goal (WIG)**

*Every church in the Iowa Annual Conference will develop a process for intentionally forming disciples of Jesus Christ by the year 2020.*

# The Mission and Ministry of the Church

*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church: 2016, pp. 93-95*

¶ 120. *The Mission*- The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs.

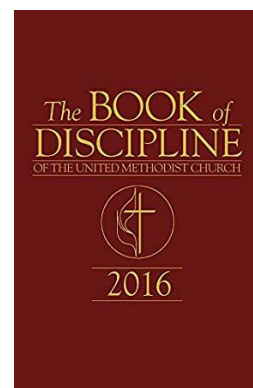
¶ 121. *Rationale for our Mission*- The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by proclaiming the good news of God’s grace and by exemplifying Jesus’ command to love God and neighbor, thus seeking the fulfillment of God’s reign and realm in the world. The fulfillment of God’s reign and realm in the world is the vision Scripture holds before us. The United Methodist Church affirms that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Savior of the world, and the Lord of all. As we make disciples, we respect persons of all religious faiths and we defend religious freedom for all persons. Jesus’ words in Matthew provide the Church with our mission: “Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you” (28:19-20), and “You must love the Lord your god with all your heart, with all your being,\* and with all your mind.... You must love your neighbor as yourself”† (22:37, 39).

This mission is our grace-filled response to the Reign of God in the world announced by Jesus. God’s grace is active everywhere, at all times, carrying out this purpose as revealed in the Bible. It is expressed in God’s covenant with Abraham and Sarah, in the Exodus of Israel from Egypt, and in the ministry of the prophets. It is fully embodied in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is experienced in the ongoing creation of a new people by the Holy Spirit.

John Wesley, Phillip Otterbein, Jacob Albright, and our other spiritual forebears understood this mission in this way. Whenever United Methodism has had a clear sense of mission, God has used our Church to save persons, heal relationships, transform social structures, and spread scriptural holiness, thereby changing the world. In order to be truly alive, we embrace Jesus’ mandate to love God and to love our neighbor and to make disciples of all peoples.

¶ 122. *The Process for Carrying Out Our Mission*- We make disciples as we:

- proclaim the gospel, seek, welcome and gather persons into the body of Christ;
- lead persons to commit their lives to God through baptism by water and the spirit and profession of faith in Jesus Christ.
- nurture persons in Christian living through worship, the sacraments, spiritual disciplines, and other means of grace, such as Wesley’s Christian conferencing;
- send persons into the world to live lovingly and justly as servants of Christ by healing the sick, feeding the hungry, caring for the stranger, freeing the oppressed, being and becoming a compassionate, caring presence, and working to develop social structures that are consistent with the gospel; and
- continue the mission of seeking, welcoming and gathering persons into the community of the body of Christ.



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\*Deuteronomy 6:5

†Leviticus 19:18

¶ 123. *The Global Nature of Our Mission*- The Church seeks to fulfill its global mission through the Spirit-given servant ministries of all Christians, both lay and clergy. Faithfulness and effectiveness demand that all ministries in the Church be shaped by the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ.

¶ 124. *Our Mission in the World*- God's self-revelation in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ summons the church to ministry in the world through witness by word and deed in light of the church's mission. The visible church of Christ as a faithful community of persons affirms the worth of all humanity and the value of interrelationship in all of God's creation.

In the midst of a sinful world, through the grace of God, we are brought to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. We become aware of the presence and life-giving power of God's Holy Spirit. We live in confident expectation of the ultimate fulfillment of God's purpose.

We are called together for worship and fellowship and for the up building of the Christian community. We advocate and work for the unity of the Christian church. We call all persons into discipleship under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

As servants of Christ we are sent into the world to engage in the struggle for justice and reconciliation. We seek to reveal the love of God for men, women, and children of all ethnic, racial, cultural, and national backgrounds and to demonstrate the healing power of the gospel with those who suffer.

# Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations

*Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations* by Robert Schnase

## RADICAL HOSPITALITY

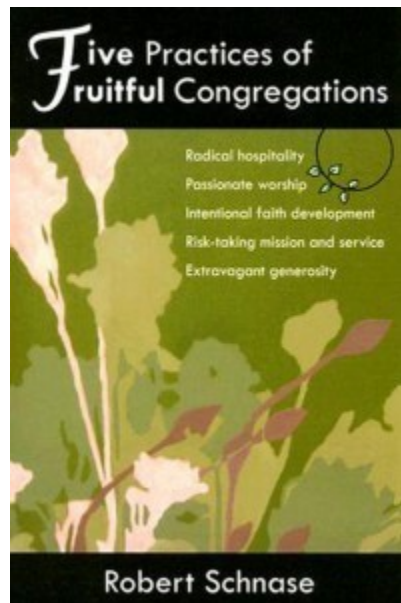
*Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God (Romans 15:7).*

Vibrant, fruitful, growing congregations practice Radical Hospitality. Out of genuine love for Christ and for others, their laity and pastors take the initiative to invite, welcome, include, and support newcomers and help them grow in faith as they become part of the Body of Christ (Schnase, p. 11).

## PASSIONATE WORSHIP

*How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts! My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the LORD (Psalm 84:1-2).*

Vital, fruitful, growing churches offer Passionate Worship that connects people to God and to one another. People gather consciously as the Body of Christ with eagerness and expectancy; encounter Christ through singing, prayer, Scripture, preaching, and Holy Communion; and response by allowing God's Spirit to shape their lives (Schnase, p. 33).



## INTENTIONAL FAITH DEVELOPMENT

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers (Acts 2:42).*

Vibrant, fruitful, growing congregations practice Intentional Faith Development. From the first generation of Christians to the earliest Methodists to the youngest generation of faithful members today, the followers of Jesus mature in faith by learning together in community (Schnase, p. 62).

## RISK-TAKING MISSION AND SERVICE

*Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me (Matthew 25:40).*

Vibrant, fruitful, growing congregations practice Risk-Taking Mission and Service. Risk-Taking Mission and Service includes the projects, the efforts, and work people do to make a positive difference in the lives of others for the purposes of Christ, whether or not they will ever be part of the community of faith (Schnase, p. 83).

## EXTRAVAGANT GENEROSITY

*You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity (2 Corinthians 9:11).*

Extravagant Generosity describes practices of sharing and giving that exceed all expectations and extend to unexpected measures....Vibrant, fruitful, growing congregations thrive because of the extraordinary sharing, willing sacrifice, and joyous giving of their members out of love for God and neighbor (Schnase, p. 112).

# Elements of Highly Vital Churches

*Vital: Churches Changing Communities and the World* by Jorge Acevedo

## SPIRITUAL PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

*Pastors of highly vital congregations live, lead, coach, and set vision in accountable community.*

- Developing, coaching, and mentoring laity.
- Influencing the actions and behaviors of others to accomplish change.
- Propelling the local church to set and achieve significant goals.
- Inspiring the congregations through preaching.
- Serving more than three years in a ministry setting.

## LAY LEADERSHIP: UNLEASHING THE BODY OF CHRIST

*Highly vital congregations equip and release laity for Kingdom ministry.*

- Increasing effectiveness of lay leadership.
- Demonstrating a vital personal faith.
- Rotating leadership responsibilities.
- Calling, equipping, using, and supporting more lay leaders.



## A PEOPLE MADE FOR WORSHIP

*Highly vital congregations have worship that is transcendent, relevant, contextual, and excellent.*

- Mixing traditional and contemporary styles of worship.
- Focusing on topical preaching.
- Offering contemporary music.
- Utilizing multi-media resources.

## THE POWER OF SMALL GROUPS

*Highly vital congregations have small groups that build Christian community.*

- Increasing the number of small groups for all ages.
- Expanding programs for children (under 12 years old).
- Expanding programs for youth (12 to 18 years old).

## MISSION: REACHING ACROSS THE STREET AND AROUND THE WORLD

*Highly vital congregations strategically implement outreach and mission that is local and global.*

- Loving God and loving neighbor.
- Training volunteers for both global and local mission work.
- Avoiding “Jerusalem-only” ministry: “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, *and* in Judea *and* Samaria, *and* to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).
- Creating ministries that help people allow the healing power of Jesus to work from skin deep to bone deep.

## The Staff-Parish Relations Committee

*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church: 2016*, pp. 196-201

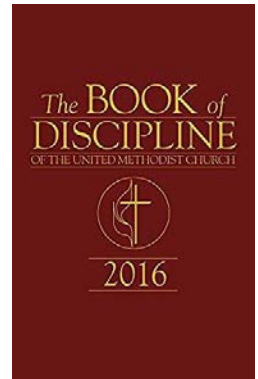
¶ 258.1. There shall be elected annually by the charge conference in each local church a committee on pastor-parish relations or staff-parish relations who are professing members of the local church or charge or associate members (¶ 227), except in cases where central conference legislation or local 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.

In conducting its work, 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.

- a) 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 leaders 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.
- b) 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. The lay member of the annual conference and the lay leader are exempt from the three-year term. To begin the process of rotation where such a process has not been in place, on the first year one class shall be elected for one year, one class for two years, and one class for three years. Members of the committee shall be able to succeed themselves for one three-year term. When vacancies occur during the year, nominees shall be elected at the church council (or alternative church structure).
- c) In those charges where there is more than one church, the committee shall include at least one representative and the lay leader from each local church.
- d) The committees on pastor-parish relations of charges that are in cooperative parish ministries shall meet together to consider the professional leadership needs of the cooperative parish as a whole.
- e) 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. The committee shall meet only with the knowledge of the pastor and/or the district superintendent. The pastor shall 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 may meet with the district superintendent without the pastor or appointed staff under consideration being present. However, the pastor or appointed staff under consideration shall be notified prior to such meeting with the district superintendent and be brought into consultation immediately thereafter.





The committee shall meet in closed session, and information shared in the committee shall be confidential.

- f) 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.
- g) The duties of the committee shall include the following:
  - 1) To encourage, strengthen, nurture, support, and respect the pastor(s) and staff and their family(s).
  - 2) To promote unity in the church(es).
  - 3) To confer with and counsel the pastor(s) and staff on the matters pertaining to the effectiveness of ministry; relationships with the congregation; the pastor's health and self-care; conditions that may impede the effectiveness of ministry; and to interpret the nature and function of the ministry.
  - 4) 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.
  - 5) 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.
  - 6) To communicate and interpret to the congregation the nature and function of ministry in The United Methodist Church regarding open itineracy, the preparation for ordained ministry, and the Ministerial Education Fund.
  - 7) 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.
  - 8) To consult with the pastor and staff concerning continuing education, work-life balance, dimensions of personal health and wholeness, 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, self-care, and spiritual renewal events as may serve their professional and spiritual growth, and to encourage staff members to seek professional certification in their fields or specialization.
  - 9) 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.
  - 10) To interpret preparation for ordained ministry and the Ministerial Education Fund to the congregation.
  - 11) 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 ¶¶ 425-428.)

- 12) 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 non-appointed 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 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.
- 13) 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.
- 14) To educate the church community on the value of diversity of selection in clergy and lay staff and develop a commitment to same.
- 15) 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.
- 16) 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 committee will follow up to assure timely resolution of parsonage problems affecting the health of the pastor or 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 and to give immediate resolution to parsonage issues affecting the family's health and well-being.
- 17) To encourage, monitor, and support clergy and lay staff pursuit of health and wholeness.

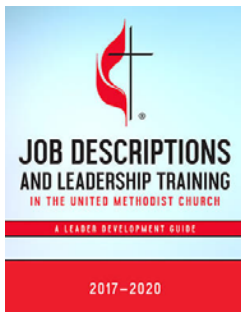
## Additional Resources

### FIVE PRIMARY ROLES OF THE STAFF-PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

- 1) Communicate and interpret to the congregation the nature and function of ministry in the United Methodist Church.
- 2) Counsel and consult with the pastor and staff about their relationship to the congregation's ministry.
- 3) Review and evaluate the effectiveness of the pastor and staff in helping the congregation meet its ministry goals.
- 4) Confer and consult with the pastor and the district superintendent about pastoral changes.
- 5) Enlist and recommend persons to enter into professional ministry.



More information about the roles and responsibilities of the staff-parish relations committee (SPRC) may be found in the "Pastor-Parish Relations: Connecting the Pastor, Staff, and Congregation" booklet in the *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation 2017-2020* series from the General Board of Discipleship.



Another option is *Job Descriptions and Leadership Training in The United Methodist Church 2017-2020: A Leader Development Guide* from Upper Room.

Order these resources from Cokesbury at [www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com) or by calling 1-800-672-1789 (toll-free).

A web-based training program has been made available on the Conference website at [www.iaumc.org/sprc](http://www.iaumc.org/sprc)

## Suggested Monthly Agenda for the Staff-Parish Relations Committee

Month	Date	Purpose
January		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orient committee members of their role and responsibilities</li> <li>• Review the roles of representative ministry as ordained elders and deacons, consecrated diaconal ministers and the ministry of the laity</li> </ul>
February		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review expectations of the pastor, the staff, lay leaders, and church members.</li> <li>• Provide support (as needed) for family members of the pastor and staff.</li> </ul>
March		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review self-caring strategies of the pastor and staff, including days off, time for spiritual renewal, vacation plans, continuing education, etc.</li> </ul>
April		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review your congregation's plan for identifying, encouraging, and supporting persons with gifts for ministry.</li> <li>• Sponsor an opportunity for all church members to complete an inventory of their spiritual gifts.</li> <li>• Conduct an annual review of the pastor using Another Set of Eyes, the assessment tool approved by the Appointive Cabinet and Board of Ordained Ministry</li> </ul>
May		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct an annual review of the parsonage(s) with the trustees.</li> </ul>
June		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan and implement an expression of appreciation for the pastor and staff.</li> </ul>
July		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review ministry expectations of the pastor, staff, lay leaders, and church member.</li> </ul>
August		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan to interpret and promote the Ministerial Education Fund.</li> <li>• Schedule a "Ministry Sunday" to emphasize and interpret the various forms of representative ministry. (The third Sunday in September is suggested.)</li> </ul>
September		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and recommend compensation and expense packages for the pastor and staff for the next calendar year.</li> </ul>
October		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clergy appreciation month</li> </ul>
November		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct an annual review of other ordained staff.</li> <li>• Update the ministry profile of the congregation to be used for clergy appointment.</li> <li>• Review and plan for continuing education needs of the pastor and staff.</li> </ul>
December		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct an annual review of lay staff.</li> <li>• Organize and implement an expression of appreciation for the pastor and staff.</li> </ul>

## Appointment Process

Month	Pastor	Staff-Parish Relations	Appointive Cabinet
September October November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pastor Profile</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Church/Charge Profile</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receives pastor/charge profile and appointment consultation forms</li> <li>Professional interviews</li> </ul>
December January			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Records pastors and churches requesting new appointments</li> <li>Collects profiles</li> <li>Formulates list of open churches and moving pastors</li> </ul>
February March April May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Called by Superintendent and informed of appointment</li> <li>Appointive Introductory Meeting (AIM)</li> <li>Parsonage tour</li> <li>Preparation (personal and congregational) for transition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Called by Superintendent and informed of appointment</li> <li>Appointive Introductory Meeting (AIM)</li> <li>Parsonage tour</li> <li>Preparation (personal and congregational) for transition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointment Making*</li> <li>Consulting pastors</li> <li>Consulting SPRCs</li> <li>Appointive Introductory Meeting (AIM)</li> <li>Provide move information</li> <li>Scheduling moves</li> </ul>
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Packing</li> <li>Celebrating Ministry</li> <li>Preparing congregation for new pastor</li> <li>Communicating with new charge</li> <li>Moving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparing farewell to celebrate ministry of exiting pastor</li> <li>Communicating with incoming pastor</li> <li>Preparing welcome and celebration of new pastor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry Expectation Workshop</li> <li>Pastor and Staff-Parish meet monthly the first 12 months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry Expectation Workshop</li> <li>Pastor and Staff-Parish meet monthly the first 12 months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry Expectations Workshops</li> </ul>

\*Appointment Making begins through a process of prayerful discernment and building consensus.

1. Superintendents read the profiles of the open churches and available pastors.
2. The open churches are listed.
3. The receiving Superintendent presents a description of the charge and its needs, and then requests nominations.
4. Each Superintendent, in turn, nominates prospective appointees based on their gifts and graces and gives rationale for their appointment to this charge.
5. The requesting Superintendent underlines two or three nominees; the Cabinet discusses and recommends a final nominee.
6. If the Bishop concurs with the recommendation, the Bishop “fixes” the appointment (§ 416, *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church: 2016*, p. 341).
7. Requesting Superintendent calls the pastor to inform about the appointment and receive response.
8. Superintendent calls Staff-Parish Chair to schedule Appointive Introductory Meeting (AIM).
9. Announcement date is set by Superintendent.

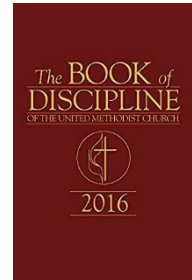
## Pastoral Duties

*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church: 2016, pp. 274-278*

¶ 339. Definition of a Pastor- A pastor is an ordained elder, probationary deacon (according to 1992 *Book of Discipline*) or licensed person approved by vote of the clergy members in full connection and may be appointed by the bishop to be in charge of a station, circuit, cooperative parish, extension ministry, ecumenical shared ministry, or to a church of another denomination, or on the staff of one such appointment.

¶ 340. Responsibilities and Duties of Elders and Licensed Pastors-

1. The responsibilities of elders are derived from the authority given in ordination. Elders have a fourfold ministry of Word, Sacrament, Order, and Service and thus serve in the local church and in extension ministries in witness and service of Christ's love and justice. Elders are authorized to preach and teach the Word, to provide pastoral care and counsel, to administer the sacraments, and to order the life of the church for service in mission and ministry as pastors, superintendents, and bishops.
2. Licensed pastors share with the elders the responsibilities and duties of a pastor for this fourfold ministry, within the context of their appointment.



1. Word and ecclesial acts:

1. To preach the Word of God, lead in worship, read and teach the Scriptures, and engage the people in study and witness.
  - a) To ensure faithful transmission of the Christian faith
  - b) To lead people in discipleship and evangelistic outreach that others might come to know Christ and to follow him.
2. To counsel persons with personal, ethical, or spiritual struggles.
3. To perform the ecclesial acts of marriage and burial.
  - a) 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.
  - b) To conduct funeral and memorial services and provide care and grief counseling.
4. To visit in the homes of the church and the community, especially among the sick, aged, imprisoned, and others in need.
5. 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 law.

2. Sacrament:

1. To administer the sacraments of baptism and the Supper of the Lord according to Christ's ordinance. 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.
  - a) To encourage reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant and renewal of baptismal vows at different stages of life.
  - b) 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.

- c) To explain the meaning of the Lord's Supper and to encourage regular participation as a means of grace in faith holiness.
  - d) To select and train deacons and lay members to serve the consecrated communion elements.
2. To encourage the private and congregational use of the other means of grace.

3. Order:

- 1. To be the administrative officer of the local church and to assure that the organizational concerns of the congregation are adequately provided for.
  - a) To give pastoral support, guidance, and training to the lay leadership, equipping them to fulfill the ministry to which they are called.
  - b) To give oversight to the educational program of the church and encourage the use United Methodist literature and media.
  - c) To be responsible for organizational faithfulness, goal setting, planning and evaluation.
  - d) To search out and counsel men and women for the ministry of deacons, elders, local pastors and other church related ministries.
- 2. To administer the temporal affairs of the church in their appointment, the annual conference, and the general church.
  - a) To administer the provisions of the *Discipline*.
  - b) To give an account of their pastoral ministries to the charge and annual conference according to the prescribed forms.
  - c) To provide leadership for the funding ministry of the congregation.
  - d) To model and promote faithful financial stewardship and to encourage giving as a spiritual discipline by teaching the biblical principles of giving.
  - e) To lead the congregation in the fulfillment of its mission through full and faithful payment of all apportioned ministerial support, administrative, and benevolent funds.
  - f) 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.
- 3. To participate in denominational and conference programs and training opportunities.
  - a) To seek out opportunities for cooperative ministries with other United Methodist pastors and churches.
  - b) To be willing to assume supervisory responsibilities within the connection.
- 4. To lead the congregation in racial and ethnic inclusiveness.

4. Service:

- 1. To embody the teachings of Jesus in servant ministries and servant leadership.
- 2. To give diligent pastoral leadership in ordering the life of the congregation for discipleship in the world.
- 3. To build the body of Christ as a caring and giving community, extending the ministry of Christ to the world.
- 4. To participate in community, ecumenical and interreligious concerns and to encourage the people to become so involved and to pray and labor for the unity of the Christian community.

## Standards for Credentialed Ministry

*Approved by the Clergy Session 2007, Iowa Annual Conference, United Methodist Church*

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” (1993 Iowa Conference Journal)

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

1. Accepts expresses personal faith in God through Jesus Christ.
2. Nurtures and cultivates spiritual disciplines and patterns of holiness.
3. Cultivates a pattern of leadership that equips the ministry of all believers.
4. Understands scripture as foundational to Christian faith and can express its relevancy within the present social and cultural context using reason, tradition, and experience.
5. 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.
6. Conducts worship, fellowship and study that enable participants to experience the presence of God.
7. Has effective oral and written skills for sharing the Christian faith.
8. Accepts and maintains the United Methodist Church’s Discipline and its division of authority.
9. Demonstrates love for all persons through acts of service in the local church, community, and world.
10. Thinks theologically and leads others to theological reflection.
11. Provides leadership in understanding, using and teaching church history and polity.
12. Inspires trust and confidence by demonstrating strong moral and ethical behavior in all areas of life.
13. Demonstrates sound psychological and physical health that enables effective communication of the gospel.
14. Demonstrates a clear sense of appropriate care while helping persons in crisis events.
15. Makes a prophetic witness when dissonance exists between the acts of a community and God’ purpose.



## Our Covenant Relationship

*2011 Iowa Annual Conference Journal, Action Item #403, pp. 331-333*

We, as ministry professionals, \* recognize and affirm the covenantal relationship we have with each other in the Iowa Annual conference, the obligations we have to God, the people we serve, the world at large, exemplifying and maintaining the highest standards of Christian conduct as set forth in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*. Within that covenant, we understand and agree that each of us shall have . . .

### A. Personal Responsibility to:

1. Be conscious of the sacredness of one's high calling.
2. Abide by the covenant and *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*.
3. Continue to move onward toward perfection through personal and corporate discipline: prayer, study, contemplation, covenant group, and scripture reading.
4. Engage in continuing education for personal growth, spiritual formation, and competence for ministry.
5. Maintain spiritual, intellectual, physical, and emotional fitness.
6. Keep time commitments faithfully and use time responsibly.
7. Follow high moral standards in speech and conduct. Be above reproach in integrity, honesty, and faithfulness.
8. Take care that manners, attire, and grooming do not detract from ministry effectiveness.
9. Be above reproach in all business transactions. Be sufficiently free from unnecessary financial debt and accept 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.
10. Maintain a healthy emotional and social balance and maintain boundaries between pastoral identity and self-identity; private and community life; self and others.
11. Keep faith with loved ones, giving the time and attention needed for a healthy marriage and family.



### B. Parish Responsibility to:

1. Perform the responsibilities in the current *Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* for ministry professionals. \*
2. Accept appointment and serve as pastor, preacher, teacher, and administrator, observing diligent and healthy work habits.
3. Be a spiritual leader of all members of the congregation and those within the community appointed that are un-churched and/or in need of pastoral care.
4. Be in ministry, with the understanding that service is primary, and remuneration is secondary. Seek no gifts, bequests, or material benefits for self or family members from any organization or individual.

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\* The term "ministry professionals" in this document shall include all those who maintain status of Full Member (Elder or Deacon), Provisional Member, Associate Member, Local Pastor, Diaconal, Ministerial Candidate, and others who are accountable to the Bishop and the Iowa Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

5. Affirm that “Full-time Service” means the pastor is not substantially supported in non-pastoral work (job or activities that would hinder the appointment to which they are assigned) without the consent of the District Superintendent and the Staff-Parish Relations Committee.
6. Honor the confidentiality of all persons, unless otherwise required by law to reveal information.
7. Represent and support the policy, mission, and program of the Annual Conference and The United Methodist Church fairly and appropriately.
8. Represent the itinerant and connectional process honestly and justly.
9. Be open to service in the community of the charge as opportunity provides in ways that grow the presence and spirit of Jesus Christ.
10. Leave church and parsonage property in good condition. Accept financial responsibilities for damage to the parsonage beyond normal wear and tear or age.
11. Maintain connectional responsibilities which include providing updated records for the next pastor and seeing that calendared appointments are current.

C. Pastoral Responsibility to:

1. Respect the parish of another pastor. Upon leaving the appointment, including retirement, sever pastoral relationships with the parish, recognizing that all future weddings, baptisms, communions, counseling, visitation, and funerals shall be performed by the current pastor, unless in an unusual circumstance, and then only by the initiation of the current pastor.
2. Seek to uphold, enhance, and support the work of other professionals in ministry, without undermining their efforts to serve.
3. Act with integrity in all matters of references to one’s predecessor and one’s successor.
4. Endorse programs, agencies, and persons that perform duties acceptable by the United Methodist *Book of Discipline* and within the United Methodist “Social Creed.”
5. Promote United Methodist curriculum as basic to the educational program of the church.
6. Accept responsibilities in the greater community as long as they do not interfere with pastoral responsibilities of the charge at which one is appointed.
7. Honor the sacred trust between clergy/parishioner or those in pastoral care and not seek sexual, social, or business favors at any time. Refrain from all sexual involvement with those who have sought and/or received pastoral care at any time. Refrain from a dating relationship with any parishioner who has received direct/structured counseling by the pastor.
8. Maintain the highest standards regarding the use of modern technology, strictly avoiding even the perception of inappropriate use of the internet at work or at home, and understand that email, text, and internet messages are not a private domain and should not be treated as such.
9. Recognize the need for open access of church staff to SPRC for consultation and evaluation. Be open to questions regarding one’s leadership and administrative style by SPRC and Cabinet.

## Annual Conference Covenant Expectations

*Approved by the Clergy Session, Iowa Annual Conference, United Methodist Church*

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:

1. to be a spiritual leader for the congregation
2. to practice spiritual and physical self-care
3. to abide by the clergy ethics approved by the clergy of the Iowa Annual Conference
4. to complete annual conference continuing education requirements
5. to lead congregations in fulfilling their primary task
6. to foster mutuality in ministry
7. 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)
8. to lead a church to pay its apportionments in full monthly
9. to support and interpret connectional ministries
10. to adhere to and to teach the United Methodist social principles
11. to keep accurate church records
12. to complete reports accurately and on time.

# Residency in Ministry Covenant for All First-Time Pastors

*Approved by the Clergy Session, Iowa Annual Conference, United Methodist Church*

Your church has been chosen for a special mission: the development of your pastor's ministry. Similar to the medical field, a pastor's first appointment is like a doctor's residency. In your church, the pastor will develop healthy habits and practices for professional and personal growth. Pastors have a rigorous training process during their first three years in ministry. You have an important role in helping the pastor to develop the gifts that the Iowa United Methodist Church has seen in him or her.

## ROLE OF THE CONGREGATION

1. Pray for your pastor's growth daily.
2. Form a supportive environment for ministry and frequent S/PPRC meetings to discuss growth and development of the pastor.
3. The S/PPRC chairperson and lay leader will meet monthly with the pastor to find ways of giving support to the pastor's growth.
4. Provide the required time-off for educational, covenant groups, and mentoring. (These times are *not* counted as vacation. Every pastor has responsibilities to the conference. Your pastor's *primary* responsibility to the conference is the Residency in Ministry (RIM) program of the conference. Mileage will be reimbursed by the local church for these events.)
5. The congregation in consultation with the pastor will make arrangements for pastoral duties to be covered when the pastor is participating in RIM events.
6. The S/PPRC will interpret this covenant to the congregation and advocate for the pastor's development and growth.

## ROLE OF THE PASTOR

1. Pray for the congregation daily.
2. Participate in the RIM covenant groups, mentoring relationships, and continuing education events.
3. The pastor will participate in the New Professional in Ministry Orientation; Covenant group retreat; School for Ministry; additionally, the pastor will meet six times with a covenant group and six times with a mentor (dates for these meetings will be scheduled during the year.)
4. Insure that the church has adequate pastoral care during time away.
5. Develop habits and practices conducive to healthy ministry.

## ROLE OF THE CONFERENCE

1. The RIM committee will assign a mentor and arrange for continuing education events and a covenant group.
2. The district superintendent will work with the pastor and congregation to foster a healthy relationship during the residency program.
3. The Board of Ordained Ministry will oversee the RIM committee and will be apprised of the pastor's participation in the program.

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(Signature of Pastor)  
(Signature of S/PPRC Chair)  
(Signature of District Superintendent)

## Clergy Vacations and Leaves

*2002 Iowa Conference Journal*, pp. 264-267; *2011 Iowa Conference Journal*, pp. 326-328;  
and *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church: 2016*, pp. 293-312

This policy covers all clergy under appointment to serve churches in the Iowa Annual Conference and persons in extension ministry under ¶ 344.1(a)(1). Vacations may not accumulate from year to year. All leaves shall be planned in consultation with the charge's Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and the district superintendent to determine ministry responsibilities in the pastor's absence and funding sources. In the case of clergy appointed to extension ministry, consultation will be with his/her supervisor.

### VACATIONS

1. The vacation year is from July 1 to June 30. The pastor and the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee or supervisor should discuss the vacation plans of the clergy early in the conference year.
2. Clergy serving full-time or less than full-time shall be given a minimum annual vacation with pay based on total number of years under appointment in The United Methodist Church as follows:
  - a. First year under appointment: two weeks vacation, including two Sundays
  - b. Subsequent years under appointment: four weeks vacation, including four Sundays
  - c. The charge shall make available as necessary the funds for pulpit supply while the clergyperson is on vacation
3. Provision for a balance of time spent between serving the local church and providing for other professional opportunities and responsibilities as a connectional church shall be made, since part of the leadership responsibility for working in district and conference agencies, including the Iowa Conference camping program and other connectional tasks, must be filled by clergy and lay persons. Clergy will consult with the Staff/Pastor-parish Relations Committee and the District Superintendent regarding their connectional involvement and commitments. These connectional responsibilities shall not count as vacation time.

### PAID HOLIDAYS

1. New Year's Day
2. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
3. Memorial Day
4. Independence Day
5. Labor Day
6. Thanksgiving Day
7. Friday following Thanksgiving Day
8. Christmas Day
9. When a holiday falls on a Sunday or the clergy's day off, it is to be observed on an alternate day within seven days of the holiday.
10. Good Friday and Christmas Eve
  - a) These days are part of the Church's sacred days, and most clergy have major local church responsibilities on these days.
  - b) Clergy are to select another day within a seven-day period of these days for their observance.

## SICK LEAVE

Clergy shall be granted up to two weeks, including two Sundays, of sick leave during the conference year (July 1-June 30); this shall not accumulate from year to year.

1. Sick leave is for periods of incapacity which are beyond the clergypersons' control and which are not work related. The leave should be taken in consultation with the Staff/Pastor-Relations Committee. If a clergyperson's illness extends beyond the allocated sick time, the pastor may take an Extended Sick Leave (see below)
2. Sick leave also may be taken by the clergyperson to care for an immediate family member during an illness, upon approval of the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee. Immediate family includes spouse, child, daughter/son-in-law, step-child, grandchild, parent, parent-in-law, and step-parent. In certain situations, a leave may be granted for the illness of another relative or close friend.

EXTENDED SICK LEAVE (*Editor's Note: The original title of this paragraph in the 2015 Standing Items Text is "Family/Medical Leave". Only the title and location of the paragraph within the item have been changed. All content of the paragraph is the same as found in the 2015 text.*)

1. Each clergyperson is eligible for extended sick leave, provided s/he has served under appointment in the Iowa Annual Conference at least one-half time for the twelve months preceding the leave. The status of the clergyperson's appointment is not affected during the leave.
2. A leave may be taken for the following reasons:
  - a) The placement of a child with the clergyperson for foster care,
  - b) To care for the spouse, child, or parent of the clergyperson who has a serious health condition, or
  - c) Because of a serious health condition that makes the clergyperson unable to perform the functions of his/her position. If a leave is taken because of a serious health condition, a doctor's certification must be provided if requested by the district superintendent or the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee.
3. The leave shall be limited to twelve weeks in any conference year; however, the leave may immediately follow or precede vacation time. The leave may be taken
  - a) In a single block,
  - b) Intermittently, or
  - c) By working a reduced number of hours.
4. The leave may be a paid leave, if this request is approved by the district superintendent, the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and the church council(s), or the leave may be an unpaid leave. However, if the leave is taken because of the clergyperson's own serious health condition, at least the first month of the leave shall be at full pay. Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) contributions made by the charge will be adjusted if compensation is reduced. No MPP contributions can be made if no salary is paid.
5. If the clergyperson's salary is reduced or eliminated during the leave, the clergyperson may appeal to the Cabinet for assistance from the Sustentation Fund. The Cabinet will consider each request on a case by case basis.
6. During the leave the charge and the clergyperson shall continue to pay their respective shares of health insurance. The conference shall continue to pay for Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP).
7. The Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and the district superintendent shall consult and determine in advance how pastoral responsibility for the church(es) will be handled during the leave. Compensating supply clergypersons shall be the responsibility of the charge, not the clergyperson.

## BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

1. Clergy shall be granted up to five days of bereavement leave if there is death in the immediate family. Immediate family includes spouse, child, daughter/son-in-law, step-child, grandchild, parent, parent-in-law, step-parent, grandparent, and sibling. In certain situations, bereavement leave may be granted for the death of another relative or close friend.
2. The clergy/person shall consult with the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee when taking bereavement leave. With the approval of the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, sick leave may be used to extend bereavement leave.

### ¶ 351. *Continuing Education and Spiritual Growth*

- 1) Throughout their careers, clergy shall engage in continuing education for ministry, professional development, and spiritual formation and growth in order to lead the church in fulfilling the mission of making disciples for Jesus Christ. They shall include carefully developed personal programs of study augmented periodically by involvement in organized educational and spiritual growth activities.
- 2) Per the 2014 Iowa Annual Conference Journal Standing Items, Page 8:
  - a. The Iowa Conference requires that clergypersons earn two continuing education units each year, July 1 to June 30.
  - b. Clergypersons shall be allowed two weeks each year (including two Sundays) and one month (including Sundays) each quadrennium for continuing education and spiritual growth, for a total of ten weeks per quadrennium.
  - c. The education and spiritual growth opportunities need to be scheduled through consultation with the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee or agencies to which they are appointed.
- 3) A clergy member may request a formational and spiritual growth leave of up to six months while continuing to hold an appointment in the local church. Such leaves are available to clergy members who have held full-time appointments for at least six years. Such a leave shall be with the approval of the committee on pastor-parish relations, the church council, and the district superintendent. Annual conferences are encouraged to assist with pulpit supply and other temporary support for such leaves.
- 4) Financial arrangements for continuing education as part of one's professional development, formation, and spiritual growth shall be negotiated in the following manner:
  - a. for elders and local pastors, it shall be done in consultation with the district superintendent and the committee on pastor-parish relations;
  - b. for deacons, with an appropriate supervisory body;
  - c. for district superintendents, with the district committee on superintendency;
  - d. for conference staff, with the appropriate supervisory body;
  - e. for others in extension ministries, with the appropriate persons in their agency.

### ¶352. *Sabbatical Leave*

A sabbatical leave should be allowed for a program of study or travel approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry. Associate members or clergy members in full connection who have been serving in a full-time appointment for six consecutive years, or in less than full-time appointment equivalent to six consecutive full-time years, from the time of their reception into full or associate membership may be granted a sabbatical leave for up to one year. Whenever possible, the compensation made at the termination of the leave. The appointment to sabbatical leave is to be made by the bishop holding the conference, upon the vote of the annual conference after recommendation by the Board of Ordained Ministry. Associate

members and clergy members in full connection shall submit a written request for a sabbatical leave, including plans for study or travel, to the Board of Ordained Ministry, with copies to the bishop and district superintendent, ordinarily six months before the opening session of the annual conference. To be eligible for an additional sabbatical leave, associate members and clergy members in full connection shall have served six consecutive years under full-term appointment, or in less than full-time appointment equivalent to six consecutive full-time years, following the previous sabbatical leave. After consultation and with the written consent of the pastor in charge, and with the approval of the district superintendent, clergy members granted sabbatical leave shall designate a charge conference within the bounds of the annual conference in which they shall hold membership and to which they shall submit an annual report.

#### ¶ 353. *Voluntary Leave of Absence*

1. Provisional, associate, or members in full connection of the annual conference who for sufficient reason choose to temporarily take leave from their ministerial appointment may request in writing with a copy to the bishop and their district superintendent a voluntary leave through the Board of Ordained Ministry. This leave is granted or renewed by vote of the clergy members in full connection upon recommendation by the Board of Ordained Ministry.
2. A voluntary leave of absence may be taken for a variety of reasons;
  - a. *Personal Leave*- a relationship that is granted to clergy who self-determine for personal reasons that they are temporarily unable or unwilling to continue in a ministry appointment
  - b. *Family Leave*- a relationship that is granted to clergy who, because of an immediate family member's need for full-time care, are temporarily unable to continue in ministry setting.
  - c. *Transitional Leave*- a leave granted for up to twelve months with approval of the bishop and the Board of Ordained Ministry Executive Committee to provisional and associate members and full clergy members in good standing who are temporarily between appointments. A transitional leave may be granted for the following reasons:
    - 1) A provisional or full deacon needs to seek and secure an appropriate primary position-compensated or non-salaried
    - 2) A provisional member, associate member, or full member elder needs to transition from an extension ministry to another appointment.During transitional leave, the clergyperson shall provide quarterly substantiation of his or her effort to obtain such an appointable position to the bishop and to the Board of Ordained Ministry Executive Committee.
3. Written request for a voluntary leave of absence should be made at least ninety days prior to the annual conference session giving specific reasons for the request. Representatives of the annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry may interview the clergy member to determine sufficient cause. This relationship shall be approved annually upon written request of the clergy member and personal or family leave shall not be granted for more than five years in succession, except by a two-thirds vote of the clergy members in full connection. The leave shall be counted as a part of the eight-year limit for provisional members (¶ 327).
4. Between sessions of the annual conference, voluntary leave of absence may be granted or terminated, with the approval of the bishop and district superintendents, by the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry. This interim action shall be subject to the



approval of the clergy session of members in full connection with the annual conference at its next session.

5. Should there be active complaints or charges, a request for voluntary leave of absence shall not be permitted until those complaints or charges have been resolved.
6. Clergy on voluntary leave of absence shall have no claim on the conference funds. Notwithstanding the foregoing, where the conference has made certain elections under applicable benefit plans that require continued participation by clergy on voluntary leaves of absence, the clergy shall continue to participate in such plans. They may participate in the conference health program through their own contributions, if applicable. However, in exceptional circumstances, on recommendation of the bishop and district superintendents, salary and/or other benefits, subject to the terms of the applicable benefit plans, may be granted to a clergy member, if applicable, by vote of the clergy session of members in full connection with the annual conference. In an interim between sessions of the annual conference, by vote of the bishop, cabinet, and executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry, salary and/or benefits, subject to the terms of the applicable benefit plans, may be granted, if applicable.
7. Clergypersons on voluntary leave shall be eligible for membership on annual conference committees, commissions, or boards. They may vote for other clergy delegates to general or jurisdictional conferences and may be elected to serve as delegates themselves.
8. After consultation and with the written consent of the pastor in charge, and with the approval of the district superintendent and the staff-parish relations committee of a local church, clergy members shall designate a charge conference within the bounds of the annual conference to which they shall relate and submit an annual report. They shall report all marriages performed, baptisms administered, funerals conducted and other ministerial activities to the charge conference, pastor in charge, and Board of Ordained Ministry. The exercise of this ministry shall be limited to the charge conference in which their membership is held and with the written permission of the pastor in charge unless special permission is granted by the bishop of the conference where membership is held. With the permission of the bishop of the conference where membership is held, under the supervision of the district superintendent, the clergy member may preach, teach, perform marriages, and, if holding sacramental privileges, administer the sacraments outside of the charge where membership is held.
9. Those on voluntary leave of absence shall be held amenable to the annual conference for their conduct and the performance of their ministry. In case of failure to report to the Board of Ordained Ministry, the complaint procedures may be invoked (§ 359).
10. Clergy members of voluntary leave of absence may, with the permission of the bishop and with the approval of the United Methodist Endorsing Agency, continue to hold an existing reserve commission as an armed forces chaplain, but may not voluntarily serve on extended active duty.
11. When an end to voluntary leave of absence is requested, it shall be by written request at least six months prior to the session of annual conference. The Board of Ordained Ministry shall review the circumstances surrounding the granting of the leave for the purpose of determining whether those circumstances have been alleviated or resolved. When the board has determined that the circumstances of the voluntary leave have not been alleviated or resolved and the request is denied, the board will inform the person of the remaining options, which include:
  - a. remaining on voluntary leave of absence;
  - b. taking honorable location;

- c. being recommended to the bishop and district superintendents to be placed on involuntary leave, administrative location, or involuntary retirement, using the fair process of ¶ 361.2; or
  - d. such other action as deemed appropriate.
12. When clergy members on voluntary leave of absence do not request an annual extension of the leave of absence during the five-year period or do not indicate willingness to receive an appointment at the end of the five-year period, following documented efforts to make contact with the clergyperson, the provisions of *administrative location* (¶ 359 may be invoked).

¶ 354. *Involuntary Leave of Absence-*

1. The bishop and the district superintendents may request an involuntary leave of absence without the consent of the provisional, associate, or full member. They shall give to the clergy member and the Board of Ordained Ministry in writing specific reasons for the request. The fair, process for administrative hearings as set forth in ¶361.2 shall be followed in any involuntary leave of absence procedure.
2. An involuntary leave may be requested by the bishop and the district superintendent. The request shall be referred to the Board of Ordained Ministry and follow procedures for a fair process hearing as set forth in ¶ 361.2 when:
  - a. A written and signed complaint is not resolved through the supervisory (¶ 362.1b, c), complaint (¶ 362.1e) or trial process within 90 days, or clearly cannot be resolved within 90 days.
  - b. Action pursuant to ¶ 363 (Involuntary Status Change) is required to address allegations of incompetence, ineffectiveness, or unwillingness or inability to perform ministerial duties.
3. Should there be complaints or charges pending at the time of a request for involuntary leave of absence, they should be placed in the personnel file of the clergyperson. All subsequent actions concerning such entries should be duly noted and placed in the file.
4. Involuntary leave of absence shall be approved by two-thirds vote of the clergy session of members in full connection with the annual conference. Involuntary leave shall be approved annually upon written request of the district superintendents and shall not be approved for more than three years in succession.
5. Between sessions of the annual conference, an involuntary leave of absence may be granted or terminated, with the approval of the bishop and cabinet, by the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry. This interim action shall be subject to the approval of the clergy session of members in full connection with the annual conference at its next session.
6. Clergy on involuntary leave shall have no claim on the annual conference funds. The annual conference assumes no financial responsibility for salary, pension, or other benefits for clergy on involuntary leave of absence. Notwithstanding the foregoing, where the conference has made certain elections under applicable benefit plans that require continued participation by clergy on involuntary leaves of absence, the clergy shall continue to participate in such plans. They may participate in the conference health plan through their own contributions, if applicable. In exceptional circumstances, with the recommendation of the bishop and cabinet, salary and/or other benefits, subject to the terms of the applicable benefit plans, may be granted by vote of the clergy session of the annual conference. Between sessions of the annual conference, in unusual circumstances, the bishop and cabinet may recommend, and the executive committee of the Board of

Ordained Ministry may approve funding of pensions and other benefits, subject to the terms of the applicable benefit plans, pending approval by the annual conference.

7. Clergy placed on involuntary leave shall designate a charge conference within the bounds of the annual conference. Ministerial service shall be limited to that charge and shall only be provided with the written consent of the pastor in charge and with the approvals of the district superintendent, bishop, and pastor/staff parish relations committee.
8. Clergy on involuntary leave shall not participate in the boards and agencies of the annual conference, be delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences, or vote on other clergy delegates.
9. When an end to the involuntary leave of absence is requested by the bishop and the district superintendents, it shall be by written request at least six months prior to the session of the annual conference. The Board of Ordained Ministry shall review the circumstances surrounding the granting of the relationship for the purpose of determining whether the conditions of the leave have been met. If the board determines that the conditions of the involuntary leave have not been resolved, it may continue involuntary leave of absence for up to the three-year limit or it shall pursue administrative location (see #2 above).
10. If the district superintendents and bishop do not intend to appoint a person after three (1) years on involuntary leave, they shall notify both the Board of Ordained Ministry and the clergyperson at least six months prior to the session of the annual conference and pursue administrative location or initiate the complaint process, if it has not already been initiated.
11. The administrative review committee (§ 636) shall ensure that the disciplinary procedures for involuntary leave of absence were properly followed. The entire process leading to the recommendation for involuntary leave of absence and its resolution shall be reviewed by the administrative review committee, and it shall report its findings to the clergy session of members in full connection with the annual conference.

*MATERNITY or PATERNITY LEAVE* (See also § 355)

1. Maternity or paternity leaves of up to one quarter of a year are available to clergy at the birth or arrival of a child into the home for the purposes of adoption. The status of the clergyperson's appointment is not affected during the leave.
2. During the leave the charge and the clergyperson shall continue to pay their respective shares of health insurance. The conference shall continue to pay for the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP).
3. At least the first eight weeks of the leave shall be at full pay. The remainder may be a paid leave, if this request is approved by the supervisor or the district superintendent, the Staff/Pastor-parish Relations Committee and the church council(s), or it may be an unpaid leave. Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) contributions made by the charge will be adjusted if compensation is reduced. No CRSP contributions can be made if no salary is paid. During the leave, the clergy member's annual conference relations will remain unchanged, and the health and welfare benefit plans will remain in force.
4. The Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and the district superintendent shall consult and determine in advance how pastoral responsibility for the church(es) will be handled during the leave. Compensating supply clergypersons shall be the responsibility of the charge, not the clergyperson.

## MEDICAL LEAVE

1. Each clergyperson is eligible for a family/medical leave, provided s/he has served under appointment in the Iowa Conference at least one-half time for the twelve months preceding the leave. The status of the clergyperson's appointment is not affected during the leave. A leave may be taken because of a serious health condition that makes the clergyperson unable to perform the functions of his/her position. If a leave is taken because of a serious health condition, a doctor's certification must be provided if requested by the district superintendent or the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee.
2. The leave shall be limited to twelve weeks in any conference year; however, the leave may immediately follow or precede vacation time. The leave may be taken
  - a. in a single block,
  - b. intermittently, or
  - c. by working a reduced number of hours
3. At least the first month of the leave shall be at full pay. The leave may be a paid leave, if this request is approved by the district superintendent, the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and the church council(s), or the leave may be an unpaid leave. However, if the leave is taken because of the clergyperson's own serious health condition, at least the first month of the leave shall be at full pay. Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) contributions made by the charge will be adjusted if compensation is reduced. No MPP contributions can be made if no salary is paid.
4. CRSP contributions made by the charge will be adjusted if compensation is reduced. No CRSP contributions can be made if no salary is paid. (The District Superintendent shall notify the Conference Benefits Office if the compensation ceases during the medical leave period to ensure accurate billing of CRSP.)
5. If the clergyperson's salary is reduced or eliminated during the leave, the clergyperson may appeal to the Cabinet for assistance from the Sustentation Fund. The Cabinet will consider each request on a case by case basis.
6. During the leave the charge and the clergyperson shall continue to pay their respective shares of health insurance.
7. The Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and the district superintendent shall consult and determine in advance how pastoral responsibility for the church(3s) will be handled during the leave. Compensating supply clergypersons shall be responsibility of the charge, not the clergyperson.

## *MEDICAL LEAVE DUE TO MEDICAL AND DISABLING CONDITIONS THAT PREVENT PERFORMANCE OF MINISTERIAL DUTIES (See also ¶ 356)*

1. When clergy who are members of an annual conference are unable to perform their ministerial work because of incapacity due to health matters and disabling conditions, upon recommendations of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry and the Conference Board of Pensions, and by a majority vote of the executive session of the clergy members in full connection with the annual conference who are present and voting, they may be granted annual incapacity leave without losing their relationship to the annual conference.
2. When clergy who are members of an annual conference are unable to perform their ministerial work between sessions of the annual conference on account of health matters and disabling conditions, with the approval of a majority of the district superintendents, after consultation with the executive committee of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry and the executive committee of the conference board of pensions, an incapacity leave may be granted by the bishop for the remainder of the conference year.

3. If and when incapacity leave is granted by the General Board of Pensions the clergyperson will repay any salary received from the local church or the Cabinet's sustentation fund starting from the date the incapacity leave is effective until the date of receiving written communication of the incapacity leave approval.

#### *INCAPACITATION OF SENIOR PASTOR*

1. The associate pastor will be responsible for pastoral duties on a temporary basis.
2. The superintendent, SPPRC and associate pastor will negotiate for additional help for church ministry and programming to continue uninterrupted.
3. The associate pastor shall not assume the senior pastor position. As appropriate, the associate pastor will be in consultation with the senior pastor regarding the ministry and programming of the church.

#### *MOBILIZATION OF MILITARY CHAPLAINS* (from "Guidance for Bishops, Cabinets, Chaplains, and Congregations in case of Mobilization/Deployment," General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, [www.gbhem.org](http://www.gbhem.org))

1. Mobilization does not change the active relationship of the pastor/chaplain to the annual conference. In an extended mobilization, the chaplain moves to an extension ministry appointment under the United Methodist Endorsing Agency, Division of Ordained Ministry (§ 344.1b, *the Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church: 2016*). Neither leave of absence nor sabbatical are appropriate options.
2. If a pastor/chaplain must be absent from the pulpit, the chaplain is responsible to work with the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee in relation to pulpit supply. The pastor/chaplain must share with the SPRC the possibility of mobilization and have a plan prepared for such an eventuality.
3. If it appears the mobilization may be long term, it may be appropriate to assign a new permanent pastor. The chaplain stays within the itinerant system and has the assurance of appropriate appointment upon return to the annual conference. Recommended guidelines in the event of mobilization are
  - a. For 1-89 days, no change in appointment unless it is already a part of the appointment process.
  - b. For 90-179 days, an appointment change may be in order.
  - c. Form more than 180 days and appointment change is likely to occur, but is determined by the projected length of the deployment and the appointment process.

#### *INTERNATIONAL PULPIT EXCHANGES*

1. When a charge or its pastor is contemplating an international pulpit exchange, they shall first consult the superintendent and the bishop to receive approval. After tentative plans are made, and before a public announcement is made or firm commitments entered into by the several parties, the superintendent shall present the plan to the Cabinet for approval.
2. A charge should not have more than one such international pulpit exchange in a period of five years.
3. One hundred twenty (120) days before the beginning of a pulpit exchange, a ministerial member of the conference shall have:
  - a. Secured the written approval of his/her superintendent and the bishop.
  - b. Visited with the local SPRC about the exchange.

# Guidelines Concerning Clergy-Spouse Divorce

2006 Iowa Conference Journal, pp. 319-324

## AREAS OF CONCERN

The United Methodist church is concerned for person in marriage and in families.

We believe the family to be the basic human community through which persons are nurtured and sustained in mutual love, responsibility, respect and fidelity. We affirm the importance of both fathers and mothers for all children. We also understand the family is encompassing a wider range of options than that of the two-generational unit of parents and children (the nuclear family, including the extended family, families with adopted children, single parents, step-families, and couples without children). We affirm shared responsibility for parenting by men and women and encourage social, economic, and religious efforts to maintain and strengthen relationships within families in order that every member may be assisted toward complete personhood (§ 161.B., 2016 Book of Discipline, The United Methodist Church).

This basic human community is an adventure in companionship and means commitment to a relationship in which people covenant to value, nurture and appreciate each other through a process of growing and changing, the outcome of which they cannot foresee.

We need to offer growth opportunities which will help people prepare for marriage. And for those who are married we must emphasize their need for spiritual foundation and growth. When marriages are alive, the persons will nurture each other and their family. There is a need for all people to appreciate the power of our traditional Christian standard of permanence and fidelity and of the role of Christian faith and commitment as men and women attempt to achieve lasting love. Never before have so many men and women looked for so much from their marital relationships.

When a relationship comes to a point, however, where it is marked more by death than life, more by hurt than healing, and when genuine efforts to renew and revitalize it have failed, it is important to bring that relationship to as redemptive an end as possible.

The United Methodist Church does recognize the possibility of divorce as a legitimate option for a Christian.

God's plan is for lifelong, faithful marriage. The church must be on the forefront of premarital and post-marital counseling in order to create and preserve strong marriages. However, when a married couple is estranged beyond reconciliation, even after thoughtful consideration and counsel, divorce is a regrettable alternative in the midst of brokenness. We grieve over the devastating emotional, spiritual, and economic consequences of divorce for all involved and are concerned about high divorce rates (§ 161.C., 2008 Book of Discipline, The United Methodist Church).

The Church sees itself in cases of divorce - clergy or lay - as involved more in ministry than in judgment. The Church is not so much a court, attempting to clarify who has been at fault, as it is a hospital, saying to each member of the distressed family unit, "You hurt, and we care." Any concerned person can do this kind of ministry.

Divorce among the clergy, while always present, appears to be more tolerated in the Church in this generation, and increasing. "To be sure, parsonage families are among the most stable in American society today. Exact figures are not available, but some observers estimate that not more than one in twenty-five clergy marriages end in divorce" (*Handbook on Clergy Divorce*, Council of Bishops, The United Methodist church, 1978, p. 1). There may be new and increasing areas of stress for parsonage families, and divorce may be more easily chosen in this generation as the solution to this stress than in earlier generations.

The Church is examining its ministries to the married and to the divorced. Guidelines are needed on how persons in the Church can be helped and how the Christian standards for permanency and fidelity in marriage can be upheld. There is also a need for guidelines for church administrators,

pastors, and Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations committees as they minister to and relate to clergy, married and/or divorced. The traditional models of administrative-pastoral relationship to persons can be effective. Additional models which bring new ways of ministering are also needed.

In case of divorce of clergy, there is a need on the part of Administrative Leaders' Bishops, District Superintendents, Boards of Ordained Ministry for a pastoral style of administration. But it is frequently hard to reconcile the pastoral and the administrative roles. The authority and power of the appointment system is inevitably present. This does not mean that persons in positions of authority cannot be pastors, too. Many of them are seen as pastors by those who work under their supervision. Nevertheless, the officers of the Annual Conference might remember that there are other persons who also serve in the pastoral role for each of the clergy. Among them may be the Director of Pastoral Care and Counseling, other pastors, and lay members of the Church.

Pastoral supervision on the part of Bishops and District Superintendents is neither wholly an administrative function nor wholly a pastoral function. "Shepherding (caring about the person) and overseeing (organizing, evaluation, calling to the task, confronting) cannot be separated in the ministry of Jesus Christ" (*Handbook on Divorce*, Council of Bishops, The United Methodist Church, 1978, p. 5).

One of the messages of the Bible is that people are always given a new opportunity. Out of the difficulties of life – the tragic and all the hurt that comes – redemption and reconciliation through love can still heal. God can bring newness and hope, even in the aftermath of divorce. As seen earlier in the paper, divorce is "recognized" by the Church – that is, permitted. We need to consider how the Church can permit divorce without advocating it; ow in a particular case it may be seen as the "circumstantial will of God" though not the "intentional will of God." (Leslie D. Weatherhead, in *the Will of God*, distinguishes between (1) the intentional will of God, (2) the circumstantial will of God, and (3) the ultimate will of God.)

When a couple enters into the covenant relationship of marriage, it is God's will that they will grow together in mutual acceptance, love, and understanding. Surely this is God's intentional will for the relationship we call marriage. Within the dynamics of marriage, the love that exists is either growing and deepening, or it begins to wither and may die. It does not stand still; either it is expanding or diminishing. Sometimes, in a marriage, something will happen to destroy this wonderful, but fragile, relationship we call marriage. After the couple has sought to be reconciled but that reconciliation does not come about, then the relationship is ruptured, and it may be that the legal contract is about the only factor that is keeping them together. In these kinds of human settings, it may be that divorce is "the circumstantial will of God," to use Weatherhead's phrase.

What is God's ultimate will for this couple whose marriage has been terminated by divorce? Divorce is probably the most powerful and shaking experience of personal change that persons can undergo. Drs. Thomas H. Holmes and Richard Rahe, who are psychiatrist on the faculty of the Washington University School of Medicine, have created a rating scale to determine the degree of stress that people experience in these life-changing events. Divorce and marital separation rank *second* and *third* after the death of one's spouse. Persons who are working through the experience of being divorced will likely know and feel grief, shame, guilt, and low self-esteem. If the experience of falling in love means experiencing one's self as chosen, then the trauma of divorce leaves one to experience what it means to be *unchosen*. Henry T. Close speaks of the process of creatively becoming unmarried, and the steps of the process may suggest something of God's ultimate will for these persons who have consciously decided to be *unchosen*. As they need to be able to forgive each other for feelings of pain and resentment, so God would will that they might be able to free themselves from carrying about the destructive feelings of bitterness towards each other, and that they may know that God's mercy and forgiveness is offered to them. God wills that they might be able to forgive themselves (often times persons are able to forgive each other but find it exceedingly difficult to forgive themselves for their part in the death of the relationship); that they grieve the disruption and loss of the relationship and be

able to accept the loss, to finish the work of grieving, and to face what lies ahead; that they learn from the death of the marriage that what persons expect from themselves, from each other, and from the marriage may be unattainable and beyond all rational expectation; and that they will be able to reach out and love again. There is a deep hunger within people to reach out to others, to touch and be touched, to love and to be loved.

What is God's ultimate will? That out of the pain of divorce, the shame and grief, the guilt and low self-esteem, there may be a re-birth. That out of death new life might emerge, and that love and healing and wholeness will be experienced by the "un-chosen."

The Church can open her arms to lives hurt by the broken marriage relationship. It is possible that the Church could bring loving healing to these persons. In fact, persons experiencing divorce may be unable to find full healing without that love. Divorced persons need the Church as a healing community. The community can be instrumental in helping the person realize his/her self-worth. The people of God can be an instrument bring God's forgiveness to bear in the lives of those who have been divorced. Strength may be found by the divorced in an intentional worship experience at some time in their journey. Such a worship experience might be in the privacy of a counselor-pastor's office, or it may be in a gathering some close friends. In an empathetic understanding and caring way, a service can express the hurts of the person involved in divorce and invite hope into the drama of brokenness. It can celebrate forgiveness and the hope of a new beginning. The invitation to forgive one another, to forgive and affirm oneself, to grieve, to find oneself and to love again, is worthy of inclusion in guidelines for caring for the divorced person.

To show love, care, and concern for the divorced person in no way denies the Biblical teaching that marriage is a sacred, lifetime covenant. This call can be held up before the Church, without at the same time condemning or rejecting those who have not realized it in their marriage. The Christian faith has *other* ideals which many have failed to achieve, and they are still a part of the Church.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING CLERGY-SPOUSE MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

After looking at ministry, the Church, marriage and divorce in general terms, we now turn specifically to the concern of this Task Force as far as divorce among clergy is concerned.

While the United Methodist Church sets no standard for clergy in the matter of divorce which is different from that set for all its members, it is to be hoped that covenant ministers do set high standards for themselves. Divorce among clergy and/or laity causes hurt, suffering, and loneliness whenever it occurs. When clergy are divorced, the hurt is compounded because of their position of leadership in the community of faith. As leaders of the people of God, the clergy are rightfully expected to be in the vanguard in expressing a responsible Christian life style and in restoring broken relationships. Those who have the greater influence quite naturally bear the greater relationships. Therefore, clergy need to be very careful that every possibility of reconciliation is tried before dissolution of the relationship is accepted.

Any recommendation concerning divorce needs to reflect two essential ingredients of our Christian faith. First, faithfulness to the Biblical concept of marriage, which emphasizes a lifelong commitment of fidelity, love, and mutual support between husband and wife is important. Divorce, when granted at all, is viewed as a failure to fulfill that promised trust. We should carefully guard against diminishing the "sanctity of the marriage covenant" (§ 161.D., *The 2016 Book of Discipline, The United Methodist Church*).

Second, there are marriages where "even after thoughtful consideration and counsel, divorce is a regrettable alternative in the midst of brokenness" (§ 161.D., *The 2016 Book of Discipline, The United Methodist Church*). There are instances in which dissolution of marriage is more Christian than the continued crushing tyranny of a dead relationship. Certainly, God's grace and forgiveness offer such persons on new life.



These two foci will always be in tension within the Christian community, and they make it imperative that any conference recommendations be responsible, compassionate, and negotiable in the particular circumstances of each divorce situation.

It is expected that whenever symptoms of marital difficulties in the life of a clergy and his/her spouse are volunteered, or observed by other clergy, the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, or the District Superintendent, the clergyperson will be expected (and spouses encouraged) to seek professional help before the marriage relationship is broken. How the clergy family might be contacted and by whom will depend on circumstances revolving around each situation.

We expect counseling with a reputable marriage counselor who understands and appreciates the Christian faith and professional ministry. The counselor would meet with both partners in the marriage, but where that is impossible, with at least the clergyperson. One means of such counseling is the Iowa Annual Conference Office of Pastoral Care and Counseling. Counseling needs to be in sufficient depth that the responsible clergy member and spouse will try to resolve marriage problems in every way possible.

Clergypersons and spouses are also reminded that ministry is a covenant ministry. Other sources of concern, care, and support are clergy colleagues and "spouse colleagues." Each is encouraged to offer their friendship and skills to hurting clergy families.

#### THE PROCESS WHEN SEPARATION

The dynamics surrounding each divorce and the impact on professional status will be evaluated case-by-case by the Cabinet and Board of Ordained Ministry. To provide constancy and fairness, each person entering a period of separation/divorce will be expected to proceed according to the following steps:

1. The clergyperson will inform her/his own District Superintendent and together they will determine the best way to share this information with the Bishop.
2. The District Superintendent will initiate contact with the non-clergy spouse, emphasizing pastoral care and indicating ongoing support and counsel.
3. Together, the clergyperson and the District Superintendent will contact the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee chairperson to discuss the clergyperson's and spouse's impending separation/divorce and the strategy or announcing this to the local congregation.
4. The clergyperson, District Superintendent, and chairperson of the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee will inform the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, and establish ongoing support and counsel with the couple involved.
5. The clergyperson, with the support of the District Superintendent and the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, will inform the local congregation with intent toward enabling all parties to begin to deal with grief, anger, hurt, and other feelings.
6. In a continuing consultation, the District Superintendent and clergyperson will discuss the clergyperson's plan of action and consider options for the clergyperson's appointive relationship to the Annual Conference. These options include: (1) retaining the current appointment; (2) appointment to another parish; (3) appointment Beyond the Local Church; (4) leave of absence; (5) sabbatical leave; (6) honorable location; (7) retirement; (8) withdrawal; (9) termination; (10) transfer to another conference.

Report of these discussions shall be made a matter of consultation with the Appointive Cabinet and, when appropriate, with the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, who by the *Discipline* have authority in matters of appointability (Cabinet) and conference relationship (Board of Ordained Ministry).

7. The District Superintendent shall continue to inquire into the needs of the clergy family after determination and implementation of decisions on appointment and conference relationship have taken place. When it is necessary to relocate, provisions should be made for loans or grants from available resources as needed. When the clergyperson moves to another chare and the spouse relocates in a separate community, the Cabinet should remain in contact with the family until they are settled, and their basic needs are met, assisting with whatever resources are available.

To facilitate the process outlined above, a Consultation Team *may* be convened, at the request of the clergyperson or spouse, the Bishop and Cabinet, the Board of Ordained Ministry, or the local church. The team is in no way intended to function as a committee of investigation, but rather to express mutual care and concern for each other as members of the community of faith.

The team may serve any or all of the following purposes:

1. Provide understanding and support to the marriage partners in their crisis.
2. Seek to identify and clarify the basic issues that must be resolved.
3. Discover and explore the options available to the clergyperson, spouse, local church, Cabinet, and Board of Ordained Ministry.
4. Assure that all available channels of help are being used.
5. Ensure that all parties involved in the situation are acting on adequate and accurate information and are in communication with one another.

The Consultation Team shall be composed as follows:

1. One person chosen by the clergyperson
2. One person chosen by the spouse
3. One person representing the Cabinet
4. One person representing the Board of Ordained ministry.
5. The Bishop, or someone chosen by the Bishop, who will convene the team.
6. As an option, one person may be chosen to represent the local church.
7. One divorced clergy member and one divorced spouse chosen by the Office of Pastoral Care and Counseling.

A future consideration has to do with the issue of remarriage. Any dating during a time of separation, during the formal filing of an intent to divorce, and before the finalization of a divorce may place the clergyperson involved under the sanctions of ¶ 2702.1(1) or (i) of *The 2016 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*. It is recommended that a divorced clergyperson should not remarry without adequate counsel of self and his/her prospective spouse either through the Office of Pastoral Care and Counseling or another counselor recommended by that office. In such counseling, it is hoped that the clergyperson may become aware of the factors leading to the failure of the previous marriage, and also allow sufficient time to elapse between the divorce and contemplated marriage for adequate preparation. We recommend a minimum time of two years be considered before a clergyperson would remarry. It is expected that early in the process of the consideration of remarriage the clergyperson's own District Superintendent be informed.

## FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Task Force further recommends to the Annual Conference the following:

1. The scheduling of workshops for clergy couples in which models of clergy marital and family growth shall be studied.
2. That the local Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee be diligent in urging the clergyperson to observe a “free day – day off” each week for his/her own personal pursuit of activities and family life.
3. That Saturday meetings, which both clergy and lay persons find necessary to attend, be kept to a minimum so that time might be spent with one’s family.
4. That the establishment of support groups for divorced persons be encouraged.
5. The continued support of legislation in the Church and in the civil government which will grant a clergyperson’s divorced spouse a portion of that clergyperson’s retirement benefits in proportion to the number of years spent as his/her spouse.
6. That its churches set higher standards of time and work in preparation for marriage. This could mean an intensive course of study before marriage, teaching a concept of Christian marriage, how to communicate, how to fight fair, how to share the body sexually, etc. We would urge that such an intensive course be led only by those who have been *adequately* trained.
7. That opportunities be provided for clergy to have training and retraining in how to help people prepare in their youth and in the pre-wedding period for marriage.
8. That additional funds to the budget of the Office of Pastoral Care and Counseling for mileage expenses be provided when needed for clergy and their spouses and families who come to the Office for counseling.
9. That Marriage Enrichment-Growth-Communication or some other programs for marriage and personal growth be offered each year for clergypersons and spouses and that attendance be encouraged.

We hope it is obvious that members of the Cabinet, Board of Ordained Ministry, other clergy, and all lay persons need to become sensitized to all that is involved in the process of divorce. The Church needs to help leaders realize that divorce is a devastatingly painful experience. When people are aware of this, they will seek ways to deal with each situation on an individual basis. Persons need to be helped to cope with a new way of life that has already begun with much pain and uneasiness. They need to hear a word of affirmation that they can love again.

# Parsonage Policy

2013 Iowa Conference Journal, pp. 287-296

## THE PARSONAGE SYSTEM

Compensation for full-time clergy appointments (3/4 time or more) in The United Methodist Church includes cash salary, benefits and housing provision of either a parsonage or a housing allowance. Itinerancy is at the heart of the deployment of United Methodist clergy in full-time ministry. Historically this mode of pastoral assignment has benefited from the use of the parsonage system, and it has been the expectation that pastors shall reside in a parsonage provided by the local charge. If an exception to living in a parsonage is considered, approval for such must be given by the local charge conference and the cabinet.

According to the *2016 Book of Discipline*, “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” (§ 258.2g (16), p. 201). While parsonage families are expected to abide by parsonage inspection procedures and the Safe Sanctuary Policy, they maintain the authority to determine who may have access to their parsonage and at what times.

A parsonage or housing allowance is not compensation for the work of the pastor, but it is compensation to provide for the housing needs of clergy family. Where there are two clergy in one family (i.e., a clergy couple), they are not to receive both a parsonage and a housing allowance, unless unique circumstances, such as distance between appointments, require two residences.

Each parsonage should meet the standards of the conference and in cases where these standards are not met, it is the responsibility of the pastor, the charge, and the district superintendent to work together to move toward these standards. “There shall be elected annually by the charge conference in each local church a committee on pastor-parish relations. . . . To consult on matters pertaining to . . . 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)” (§ 258.2g (16)).

## PARSONAGE AND STUDY/OFFICE STANDARDS

### 1. *Annual Parsonage Review*

The *2016 Book of Discipline*, § 258.2g (16), states: “The chairperson of the Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations, the chairperson on the Board of Trustees, and the pastor shall make an annual review of the church-owned parsonage to assure proper maintenance and to give immediate resolution to parsonage issues affecting the family’s health and well-being.” The parsonage and study/office shall be inspected annually and at the time a pastoral change is announced. Forms are provided for the “Annual Review” and “Parsonage Inspection When a Pastor Moves.” A report shall be made to the Church Council of any deviations from the standards as set forth below. The trustees within the following three months shall bring a recommendation to the Church Council regarding 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 timetable shall be established for such change or correction as must be made and reported back to the next Charge Conference. If it is not resolved, the District Superintendent may be consulted. The parsonage family shall be encouraged to make a list of things needing attention.

If the annual tour reveals excessive wear or damage, the S/PPRC shall visit with the pastor regarding these matters. If it is not resolved, the District Superintendent shall be consulted. 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 valuation shall be done by the District Board of Church Location and Building. (See "Parsonage Damage Procedures" in the *2006 Iowa Conference Journal*, p. 325)

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 District Superintendent shall ask for the Parsonage Report at the annual Charge Conference meeting. The PARSONAGE INSPECTION FORM must be included in the Charge Conference Reports. Failure to return this form may result in not being able to claim damage.

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.

## 2. *Pastor's Study/Office and Church Office*

The church should provide study/office space for the pastor in the church building wherever feasible. The office should be no less than 150 square feet of floor space and should be as easily accessible as possible to an outside entrance. It should contain adequate office furnishings and equipment including phone, computer and internet access. Additional space (preferably a separate room) should be provided for the administrative work of the church, whether done by paid staff or volunteers, with appropriate equipment provided. Adequate heating and cooling should be provided, as well as security and safety measures (doorbell, emergency exits and lights, etc.). In multiple point charges, the churches may wish to designate one church in the charge as the location for the pastor's office and church office. A detailed checklist of recommended equipment and furnishings for these areas can be provided by the District Superintendent.

The pastor may also choose to have a study at the parsonage. If, in select cases, this home study also functions as the pastor's only primary office, it should be removed as far as possible from the rooms most used by the family and be easily accessible to an outside entrance.

## 3. *Parsonage: General Standards*

In the Iowa Conference, the following division of parsonage responsibilities between the local church/charge and the pastor is generally observed: The local church/charge is responsible for health and safety features, overall upkeep and large repairs of the parsonage and lot. From the church operating budget, it is recommended that 2% of the replacement value of the parsonage be maintained in a parsonage repair reserve account to deal with both anticipated and unexpected repairs. The pastor is responsible for routing maintenance and cleaning, and the parsonage family is expected to keep the parsonage clean and attractive. In terms of furnishings, the local church provides light fixtures, floor and window coverings and major appliances, while the pastor provides the furniture. The church is responsible for landscaping, tree and bush trimming, while the pastor is responsible for lawn care and snow removal. While the church provides access to all utilities and updates for energy efficiency, the pastor pays for the utilities.

A. ACCESSIBILITY. For all newly constructed or newly purchase parsonages, the following guidelines shall apply. The first three are mandated in *The Book of Discipline*, ¶12544.5(d), while the last two are recommended by the Iowa Conference.

1. At least one fully accessible bathroom on the ground floor.
2. At least one fully accessible bedroom on the ground floor.
3. Fully accessible 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 level with no steps is, ramped or able to be ramped.

While the first three 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 as much as possible. Routine maintenance and upkeep should continue to be done while moving toward accessibility one room or step at a time as feasible. Should a pastor and family require accessibility features not available in the current parsonage, it shall be the responsibility of the local church working with the pastor and the District Superintendent to provide appropriate housing or housing allowance alternative.

- 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.
- C. YARD. Appropriate drainage, landscaping, sidewalks in good repair (where available) must be provided. Space for gardening is also recommended. It is the responsibility of the church to care for major landscape maintenance such as tree trimming or removal. It is the responsibility of the pastor to be sure regular mowing and snow removal is taken care of.
- D. PLUMBING. All plumbing must be in good condition. There must be adequate water pressure and a safe drinking water supply. A sump pump and water softener should be provided when needed.
- 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.
- 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.
- G. HEALTH AND SAFETY. (See *The 2016 Book of Discipline*.) the Committee on Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations “will follow up to assure timely resolution of parsonage problems affecting health of the pastor or the pastor’s family” (§258.2g (16), p. 201) and “comply with the local building, fire, and accessibility codes” (§2544.4c, p. 765).

We recommend the following items will be included in the parsonages and maintained:

1. Smoke, fire and carbon monoxide detectors should be installed in appropriate locations.
2. A Parsonage Radon Report should be completed as outlined in *2009 Iowa Annual Conference Book of Resolutions* (Item #9711, p. 47) and reported each year on the Charge Conference Report of the Board of Trustees.
3. A dry chemical fire extinguisher (Underwriter’s Laboratory approved, five-pound ABC type) should be installed and tested according to manufacturer’s recommendations.
4. 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 re-keyed with each pastoral change. Keys shall be distributed at the discretion of the pastor.
5. Railings provide don all indoor and outdoor stairways.
6. Windows shall be securable and equipped with locks if possible.
7. Between each pastoral move professional services should be used to check for, and if necessary, to remove all molds, pest related allergens, and/or other toxic compounds in all areas of the parsonage – including vents and ducts.

- H. TELEPHONE/INTERNET/TELEVISION. Communication capability access will be made available. At minimum, one private telephone line and one telephone with one extension outlet, and internet access is required. Pastors will decide whether to use the provided land line or personal cellular phones. Access for television reception must be provided (EX: antenna, cable, or satellite dependent upon location and needs of church/pastor). Pastors are responsible for paying for chosen services.
- I. FURNISHINGS. Appropriate floor coverings in good condition must be provided. Shades, curtains, or drapes providing privacy must be provided. Painting and redecorating is required as needed.
- J. INSURANCE. Adequate coverage on the house and church-owned building/furnishings is required. Renters insurance for the personal furnishings of the pastor is the pastor's responsibility and encouraged.
- K. ENERGY CONSERVATION. An energy audit is recommended every five years, with a detailed plan for bringing the house up to the current energy efficiency standards. If efficiency needs are neglected or not attended to, and if the pastor incurs unreasonable utility bills as a result, the pastor may go to the District superintendent who will work with the local church toward correcting or helping subsidize the utility bills.
- L. SHARED LIVING AND DINING SPACE. It should be large enough to be used for entertaining small groups.
- M. KITCHEN. The kitchen or adjacent dining room should have adequate eating space, adequate countertop space and easily cleaned floor covering. Required energy-efficient appliances in good working condition include: a range, a refrigerator with a freezer compartment, and adequate appliance outlets. Recommended energy efficient items include dishwasher, garbage disposal, exhaust fan, and microwave oven.
- 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 water softening shall be provided as needed.
- O. BATHROOMS. One bathroom with both tub and shower including medicine cabinet and adequate storage space for linens, plus an additional half-bath shall be provided. At least one bathroom will be available on the main level. (See Accessibility Guidelines.)
- 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.)
- Q. STORAGE. Space in dry basement, attic or other room for storage of seasonal clothing, Christmas decorations, etc. shall be provided.
- R. PEST CONTROL. Each parsonage should be regularly checked for household pests and necessary control measures adopted.
- 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. Bins for garbage and recycling provided.
- T. PETS. If the parsonage family has a pet or pets, the family is responsible for any property damage caused by the pet(s). The pet owner must conform to all state and local ordinances. The pet owner is responsible for liability for any injury caused by the pet(s). The pet owner is responsible for professional pest extermination and any additional cleaning costs for the parsonage when moving.

*This document in checklist form, and a document regarding suggested steps for considering a housing allowance, will be available at a later date to the Cabinet and local church.*

### WHEN A MOVE IS MADE

At the time of a pastoral change, a tour will be done within two or three weeks of the announcement to evaluate what items need to be corrected before the new pastor arrives. The Trustees and S/PPRC will use the Annual Review Form (in the yearly Charge Conference packet) as a point of reference as well as the "Parsonage Inspection Form Upon A Mover" as they prepare for the change in pastoral families. Repairs that were needed on the Charge Conference Report shall be prepared for and damage, if there is any, will be addressed. The "Parsonage Inspection Form Upon A Move" will be sent to the District Superintendent. It is the responsibility of the parsonage family to leave the parsonage clean and in good condition when they move to another charge. Any damage beyond normal wear and tear is to be repaired at the expense of the parsonage family. A written report of such damage shall be signed by the members of the parsonage committee and the pastor. A copy of this report shall be sent to the District Superintendent, a copy to the parsonage family and a copy kept in the church files. In the case of damage, a second tour will be conducted PRIOR to the move out date. (See Parsonage Damage Policy.)

When a move is made, the church will clean all carpets, drapes, windows and duct work. (Refer to Parsonage Standards and Moving checklists for other items to be completed.) Pastors will be certain to have all utility bills paid up to date with forwarding address provided to utility companies for final bills. On the day of the move, when all furniture is removed, there will be a final walk through of the parsonage and the "Parsonage Inspection Form Upon A Move" is once again completed. This second parsonage tour protects the church and the pastor by noting any damages/repairs that were made. This form is filled out, signed by pastor and S/PPRC chairperson or chair of trustees, and returned to the District Superintendent.

### PARSONAGE DAMAGE POLICY – Revised 2013

¶ 258.2g (16) of the *2016 The Book of Discipline* 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 retreat 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 even 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:

1. 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 total \$2,000. This will be deducted by the local church treasurer from the pastor'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 Iowa Annual Conference. 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 \$2,000 damage account by paying \$500 per year until the \$2,000 is fully replenished.
2. If the parsonage damage exceeds \$2,000 the local church will withhold the pastor's final paycheck to cover the balance of the repair cost. If the repair costs exceed the \$2,000 damage deposit plus the pastor's final paycheck, 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 Iowa Annual Conference. The treasure 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 \$2,000 damage deposit is replenished.

3. At such time as the pastor leaves ministry, retires or leaves the Iowa Conference the balance of the \$2,000 damage deposit held on account for the pastor shall be returned to him/her if there is no damage to the parsonage, or the damage to such parsonage(s) is less than \$2,000. In the event such damage exceeds \$2,000 when the pastor leaves or retires, the same policy repayment as stated above in paragraph 2 shall apply.

*Parsonage Damage Procedures:*

A representative from the S/PPRC and trustees shall tour the parsonage sometime within the first three weeks after the announcement of the pastor's new appointment to determine what needs to be done in preparation for the new clergy family and if there is any damage.

If it appears there is damage that exceeds normal wear and tear, the District Superintendent shall be notified immediately in order that s/he and the District Board of Church Location and Building can make a further inspection before any repairs are begun. The S/PPRC, local church trustees, District Board of Church Location and Building and the District Superintendent 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. 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.

The pastor and the chairperson of the S/PPRC and trustees will make a final inspection of the parsonage on the day of the move once the furniture is removed. This allows for them to verify the house is in good repair, or to access if there is still damage to be taken care of. The pastor's final paycheck 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.

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.*



## Annual Parsonage Inspection Form

This form is due in the District Office by November 1<sup>st</sup>. Complete one inspection form for each parsonage owned by the church/charge. Please DO NOT include copies in your charge conference packets.

Church/Charge Name \_\_\_\_\_

Full Address of Parsonage \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Inspection \_\_\_\_\_

Who lives in the parsonage:

Senior/Lead Pastor

Associate Pastor

Tenant

Other, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Names of people present for the inspection;

**Please check one of the following as to the condition of the parsonage.**

We found the parsonage to be in good condition and find no improvements needed.

We found normal wear and are planning the improvements described below.

We found damage beyond normal wear and are planning the improvements described below.

Planned improvements:

**Please check one of the following if damage beyond normal wear was found.**

The S/PPRC and Trustees chairpersons have met with the pastor and the issue has been settled as stated; \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

We request assistance in resolving the issue. Please contact your District Superintendent immediately.

What improvements were made over the past year to address the issues identified?

**Handicapped Accessibility**

1. What improvements were made over the past year to make your parsonage fully accessible?

2. What are the plans for the upcoming year to make the parsonage fully accessible?

To Be Signed at Inspection:

S/PPRC Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor or Tenant \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to your District Superintendent within one week of the inspection.

*Please use the parsonage damage policy as a reference. It is located on pages 295-296 of the 2013 Iowa Annual Conference Journal or online at <http://www.iaumc.org/bishoplauriehaller> and then click on this year's move packet.*



**Clergy  
Housing  
Frequently  
Asked  
Questions  
(FAQs)  
prepared for  
Iowa United  
Methodist  
Churches and  
their Pastors**

*Prepared by the 2013 Iowa Annual Conference Parsonage Task Force.*

## Clergy Housing Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

### *A Guide for Iowa United Methodist Churches and Pastors*

#### 1. Must United Methodist churches provide for the housing of their pastors?

Yes - Churches/charges with a full-time pastor (3/4 time or more) must provide housing for their pastor in addition to salary and benefits. Housing may be in the form of a parsonage or a housing allowance. A parsonage or housing allowance is not compensation for the work of the pastor, but it is compensation to provide for the housing needs of clergy family.

#### 2. How is this housing compensation considered as far as clergy taxes are concerned?

Clergy may deduct the cost of housing from their taxable income for IRS purposes, but must consider the fair market rental price of the house as income in computing Social Security contributions.

#### 3. If the church/charge provides a parsonage, what standards must be met?

Standards are established by both the General Conference and the Annual Conference. Denominational guidelines are found in the 2012 Book of Discipline in these paragraphs: 258.2g(16), 2521, 2522, 2542, 2543, 2544. The Iowa Annual Conference Parsonage Standards will be found in the 2013 Iowa Annual Conference Journal and are available from the District Superintendent. The best tool for maintaining these standards is the annual parsonage tour by the S/PPRC and Trustees.

#### 4. If the church/charge makes routine improvements on their parsonage, must they also make it handicapped accessible?

The 2012 Book of Discipline, paragraph 2544, requires that **any new parsonage constructed or purchased by a local church/charge** shall meet certain handicapped accessible standards, but providing for such facilities need not apply in the case of regular upkeep or a remodeling project of an existing parsonage. While accessibility is an important goal for clergy housing going forward, it should not be seen as an obstacle to completing routine maintenance and updating to existing parsonages.

#### 5. How are parsonage costs handled in multi-point charge?

Repairs and equipment costs should be divided among churches on a multiple point charge by percentage of ownership. When no interest is owned in a parsonage on a multiple point charge by one or more churches, each church having no ownership should pay its proated share of the fair rental value of the parsonage. This money should be placed in a saving account to be used for repairs and equipment. The church or churches which own the parson- age should repair and equip the parsonage. (See 2012 Book of Discipline, paragraph 247.18)

6. If a multi-point charge has more than one parsonage, how is the decision made where the pastoral family will live?

When there is more than one parsonage available, the district superintendent, in consultation with the clergy family and the churches, shall determine which parsonage is utilized.

7. What are the divisions of responsibility between the church and the clergy for parsonage upkeep and repair?

The local church/charge is responsible for health and safety features, structural upkeep and large repairs of the parsonage and lot. The pastor is responsible for regular maintenance and cleaning. In terms of furnishings, the local church provides light fixtures, floor and window coverings and major appliances, while the pastor provides the furniture. The church is responsible for landscaping, tree and bush trimming, while the pastor is responsible for lawn care and snow removal. While the church provides access to all utilities and is responsible for energy efficiency, the pastor pays for the utilities.

8. How are churches to plan for funding parsonage maintenance and repair?

From the church operating budget, it is recommended that at least 2% of the replacement value of the parsonage be maintained in a parsonage repair reserve account to deal with both anticipated and unexpected repairs.

9. If there are disputes between a church and a pastoral family over parsonage issues (including damage to the parsonage), how are these to be handled?

Issues regarding housing should be resolved between the clergy family and the local church. If housing issues can- not be resolved to the satisfaction of both parties, the district superintendent should be invited for mediation by the S/PPRC or the pastor. The district superintendent may invite the District Church Building and Location Commit- tee to assist in the arbitration.

Recommendations and solutions shall be consistent with current Parsonage Standards and the Parsonage Damage Policy of the Iowa Annual Conference. (Both will be available in the 2013 Annual Conference Journal and from a district superintendent.)

10. Can a pastoral family have pets in the parsonage?

Yes, under the following conditions: If the parsonage family has a pet or pets, the family is responsible for any property damage caused by the pet(s). The pet owner must conform to all state and local ordinances. The pet owner is responsible for liability for any injury caused by the pet(s). The pet owner is responsible for professional pest extermination and any additional cleaning costs of the parsonage when moving.

### 11. What if a parsonage is available, but the clergy family prefers a housing allowance?

If the clergy family has an appropriate parsonage available to them (one which meets Conference Parsonage Standards) and chooses instead to live in a different place, the church/charge is not obligated to offer a housing allowance and is not obligated to offer a down payment or other loan for the pastor to purchase a home.

### 12. What matters need to be considered when renting a church parsonage?

A local church paying a housing allowance to the pastor(s) may retain the existing parsonage and rent it to a third party. Unless there are compelling missional reasons, rental to a third party should be at an amount equal to the fair market rental value of the house. Rental income can be used to help provide the agreed upon housing allowance for the pastor. When not used for clergy housing and rented to others, the house must be returned to property tax rolls. The church, as landlord, maintains responsibility for maintenance and repair of the property in keeping with parsonage standards, and Trustees continue to require an annual tour of the house. Any leasing agreements should allow for the parsonage to be available for future appointment needs.

### 13. If a parsonage is to be sold, how may the proceeds be used?

In keeping with the 2012 Book of Discipline, paragraph 2543, “The principal proceeds of a sale of any such property shall not be used for the current budget or operating expense of a local church. Provided that provisions are made for the current and future missional needs of the congregation, and the current and future housing needs of a pastor, the principal may be used for capital improvements beyond the regular operating budget when written approval is granted by the district superintendent and pastor.”

### 14. If the church/charge provides a housing allowance, what standards must be met?

The annual housing allowance shall be figured between 25%- 40% of the CAC (Conference Average Compensation). In determining the appropriate percentage, the following factors are to be considered in this order: (1) The radius around the church where the pastor will live; (2) The average cost of homes in that area that meet the Annual Conference standards; (3) The property taxes and insurance costs in that housing area; (4) The current standard interest rate for a 15 year mortgage. The amount of a housing allowance should cover the fair market rental cost of a home in that community that meets Annual Conference standards. For pastors of local churches, the housing allowance must be set annually by the church/charge conference.

## 15. What is a recommended process for a church to use when considering moving from a parsonage to a housing allowance?

- A. The pastor or Administrative Board/ Council chairperson speaks with the district superintendent regarding the desire for the church to consider a housing allowance and receives guidelines for the process.
- B. The Administrative Board/Council forms a study team of 5-7 persons from the congregation and pastor including representatives from S/PPRC, Trustees and the Finance Committee. They consider the following:
  - I. The pros and cons of moving from a parsonage to housing allowance.
  - II. The projected tenure of the pastor's appointment. Housing allowances may be less appropriate for shorter appointments (2-4 years).
  - III. The ability of the pastor to make a down payment to purchase a home. In the cases where the church has no parsonage for the pastor, and no appropriate rental options are available, the pastor may request that the church consider assisting in providing a low or no interest loan.
  - IV. The availability and monthly cost of renting or purchasing a home that meets Annual Conference Parsonage Standards within reasonable distance of the church. The team should identify at least three examples of appropriate homes within the desired radius.
  - V. The cost to the church budget (annually and over time) if the church adopts a housing allowance instead of owning and maintaining a parsonage. (Since the housing allowance is considered part of the pastor's paid compensation, it is included with other compensation in the calculation of apportionments.)
  - VI. In cases of multiple pastors on staff, the implications of providing housing allowance to some pastors and not others.
  - VII. The pros and cons of renting versus selling the parsonage, including how the funds from the sale could be used in keeping with the 2012 Book of Discipline.
- C. Based on this research the study team may then propose a housing allowance to the Administrative Board/ Council. A church/charge conference is called to vote on the proposed housing allowance. If the proposal includes selling the church parsonage, the process to be followed is found in the 2012 Book of Discipline paragraph 2542-2543.



## 16. What are some of the pros and cons of a parsonage as compared to a housing allowance?

### A. Parsonage pros and cons

**Pros:** In most cases, a parsonage which meets Annual Conference Standards provides the most efficient housing option in an itinerant system. Over time, it is generally most economical for the local church and allows the pastor to relocate more easily. It provides a comfortable residence for the pastor, close to the workplace, and without the distractions of property maintenance.

**Cons:** A particular parsonage may not “fit” the parsonage family – it may be too small or too large. The clergy family may feel like “renters” and somewhat limited in customizing the house to make it feel like a home. The church may be limited in its financial abilities to make needed repairs on the parsonage in a timely manner or may place the parsonage at the bottom of the list of building improvements.

### B. Housing allowance pros and cons

**Pros:** A housing allowance allows the pastor to select housing which best meets the needs of the family; the pastor has the opportunity to build up financial equity in a house; the church is free of the responsibility of owning/ maintaining a parsonage.

**Cons:** Over time, a housing allowance is more expensive for a local church than parsonage ownership; in some communities, housing which meets parsonage standards is not available or not in the price range which clergy can afford; some clergy are not able to afford a down payment for a home; at the time of a move, it may be difficult for the clergy to sell a home; time spent on home maintenance may reduce time available to spend on ministry.

## 17. What are the unique issues regarding clergy couple housing?

Because a parsonage or housing allowance is not compensation for the work of the pastor, but it is compensation to provide for the housing needs of clergy family, where there are two clergy in one family, they are not to receive both a parsonage and a housing allowance, unless unique circumstances, such as distance between appointments, require two residences. When a clergy couple is appointed to serve two separate appointments with two parsonages, the Bishop and Appointive Cabinet make the decision as to where they will live or oversee the negotiation by the churches involved. Where no parsonage is provided by either charge, the two charges shall share equitably in the payment of an adequate one single housing allowance using the 25%-40% of CAC formula. For pension calculation, Charge Conference FORM I is to be marked in such a way so as not to penalize the pension of either member of the clergy couple.

## 18. What if your clergy housing concern is not addressed here?

If you have further questions relating to housing issues for United Methodist clergy, please contact your district superintendent.

## Another Set of Eyes

Relationship Strengthening and Feedback Tool

Date of Report: \_\_\_\_\_

Clergy Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Charge: \_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) filling this out: \_\_\_\_\_

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### *Overview:*

Relationships are everything. The purpose of this tool is to strengthen the relationship between Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee members and clergy to help clergy identify ways that they can change to grow and improve their ministry. The United Methodist congregations of Iowa are invited to help develop a process of accountability and support that is Spirit led, focused, integrated and adaptable. This tool is offered as a resource. You may modify this tool as you deem necessary to serve the mission of your congregation(s). Please identify any changes you have made and the rationale for making those changes. A signed composite copy of pages 1-5 of this tool are to be turned in to your District Office by **May 1<sup>st</sup>**.

Feedback is most effective when it is **specific, recent** and **hopeful**. It is also more effective to give a higher ratio of positive comments to negative ones. All comments should be attributed to their maker. Anonymous feedback doesn't support healthy relationships marked by truth and love. Examples and specific feedback should be given to explain a perspective.

While this form is completed annually, the identified goals should be a guide for ongoing feedback and support throughout the year. If you have any questions, please contact your District Office.

### *Instructions for SPRC and Clergy Person:*

1. Schedule an initial meeting to distribute and review this form, to clarify what are the clergy person's "current year goals" to be considered at page 5 of the form and, as appropriate, to review available resources about offering feedback.
2. Every member of the committee and the clergy person are asked to complete this form. Allow enough time for completing the form prior to the next meeting.
3. Meet and discuss the results with the whole committee and the clergy person. The "Questions to Help the Discussion" are offered as suggestions for fruitful conversation and do not all need to be addressed. At the conclusion of the meeting, agree upon the personal goals for the clergy person for the coming year.
4. Create a composite copy of this form that includes feedback from SPRC members and comments from the clergy person.
5. Give signed copies to the clergy person, SPRC, and the District Office.

Please remember, this is a tool to use to give honest feedback to promote growth in our lives. It will open the lines of communication, strengthen relationships and help us to look at ourselves through another set of eyes. This basic format can be adapted to any position by substituting the elements of the specific job description into the "Contribution to the Mission: Job Responsibilities" section.

## Relationship with God

*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul,  
and with all your mind, and with all your strength. –Mark 12.30*

***This section is to be filled out BY EACH PARTICIPANT ABOUT HIS OR HER OWN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.  
The focus IN THE MEETING will be the clergy person's reflections on these questions.***

Significant Changes Needed	Minor Changes Needed	Meets Expectations
----------------------------	----------------------	--------------------

**Heart and Soul:**

- Prayer
- Spending time in Scripture
- Spiritual practices (fasting, journaling, etc.)
- Taking Sabbath time
- Tithing and financial stability


**Mind:**

- Continuing education
- Reading, study and reflection
- Mental health/stress management


**Strength:**

- Exercise
- Diet
- Rest


**Share a story of how your relationship with God has affected your life. How do you feel God may want you to improve in any area?**



## Contribution to the Mission: Job Responsibilities

*The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.*

--Ephesians 4.11-13

**This section should be completed regarding THE CLERGY PERSON'S EFFECTIVENESS in the areas listed below.**

	Significant Changes Needed to be Fruitful	Minor Changes Needed to be more Fruitful	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Not Applicable or Not Known
Leadership					
Vision for the future					
Preaching					
Worship leadership					
Pastoral care					
Teaching					
Recruiting & equipping lay people					
Community visibility and involvement outside the church					
Missions and social justice					
Staff/volunteer management					
Administration					
Communication					

**Contribution to the Mission: Job Responsibilities** - Please give explanations for why you marked these items as you did. Specific examples are most helpful.

## Goals

**The Wildly Important Goal of the Iowa Conference of  
The United Methodist Church is that:**

**Every church in the Iowa Annual Conference will develop a process for intentionally  
forming disciples of Jesus Christ by the year 2020.**

What leadership has your pastor provided to the leaders and congregation for this goal?

How are the SPRC and key leaders supporting your pastor in accomplishing this goal?

**What steps have been implemented to develop an intentional discipleship pathway?**

**What steps are being planned? Give specific examples.**

**The 2018 Charge Conference forms will have specific questions on the Mission and Ministry Form to help churches reflect on their efforts.**

**List the personal goals agreed upon for the clergy person for this past year and progress made on each.**

**List personal goals for the clergy person for the coming year that reflect the changes that we feel God may be wanting to bring for his or her improvement. These goals should also connect to the church's annual goals to bring about positive change.**



How can the SPRC/group support the clergy person in making these changes?

**Signatures:**

SPRC Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Clergy Person \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**The last two pages, “Suggested Questions to Help the Discussion” are for your use only. Please do not include them when submitting the completed Another Set of Eyes to your District Office. As always, refer any questions to your District Office. Thank you.**

## Suggested Questions to Help the Discussion

The relationship is more important than this form and in many ways the conversation is the relationship. This tool is meant to help conversation, not be an end in itself. The hope is for clergy to be able to identify ways that they want to change, grow and improve in the coming year. *Below are suggested questions that can be used to aid the conversation. They do not all have to be asked.* The SPRC members and the clergy person can choose among them as they feel led by the Spirit. These questions are directed to the clergy person, but SPRC members are welcomed into the discussion when their personal observations relate to the question.

### **Relationship with God (heart, soul, mind and strength):**

- Share an insight you have gained from reading the Bible recently.
- What are you hearing from God?
- How have you been struggling with God?
- How are you growing in faith?
- Have you had an annual physical?
- Are you getting enough sleep at night?
- Do you take at least one day off every week?
- Have you taken your allowed vacation and renewal time (including a four-week renewal leave every four years)?
- What outside hobbies or interests do you pursue?
- Are you satisfied with the balance between your professional and personal life?

### **Relationship with Others:**

- Are you able to say “no” when that is called for?
- Do you readily ask for help?
- Do you help people grow in faith? Can you name one or more persons that you have brought to faith this year? Whom are you mentoring to become a stronger disciple of Jesus Christ?
- What spiritual mentor or guide is helping you become a stronger disciple of Jesus Christ?

### **Contribution to the Mission/job responsibilities:**

- In preaching and teaching, how do you help people connect the Bible to everyday life?
- How are you discerning God’s vision for the future of the congregation, and helping that vision become reality?

- Have you encouraged the implementation of a program for faith development that guides people in various stages into “the next step” of faith?
- Are you making time to get outside the church building and do ministry in your community that is sensitive to your context?
- How are you equipping the laity to be the church?
- In what ways are you living out the covenant to be in connection with other clergy in the Iowa Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church? (i.e., clergy gatherings, a covenant group, collaboration in shared ministries, district and/or conference committees)

**Summary questions:**

- What did you learn from the conversation?
- What will you do now with what you learned?
- What do you feel called to change?
- With whom will you share these goals to help you be accountable for working on them?

## **Additional Resources for Providing Meaningful Feedback**

Theological Foundations for Evaluation:

[http://www.churchleadership.com/pdfs/pastorevaluation/SPRC-Theological Foundations for Evaluation.pdf](http://www.churchleadership.com/pdfs/pastorevaluation/SPRC-Theological_Foundations_for_Evaluation.pdf)

Types of Evaluation:

[http://www.churchleadership.com/pdfs/pastorevaluation/SPRC-Types of Evaluation.pdf](http://www.churchleadership.com/pdfs/pastorevaluation/SPRC-Types_of_Evaluation.pdf)

Giving and Receiving Feedback:

[http://www.churchleadership.com/pdfs/pastorevaluation/SPRC-Giving and Receiving Feedback.pdf](http://www.churchleadership.com/pdfs/pastorevaluation/SPRC-Giving_and_Receiving_Feedback.pdf)

Effective and Ineffective Staff-Parish Relations Committees:

[http://www.churchleadership.com/pdfs/pastorevaluation/SPRC-Effective and %20Ineffective.pdf](http://www.churchleadership.com/pdfs/pastorevaluation/SPRC-Effective_and_%20Ineffective.pdf)