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EXPECTATIONS OF PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

Sixth Edition

*Under 2008 Book of
Discipline*

A REFERENCE
FOR PASTORS
AND
STAFF/PASTOR PARISH
RELATIONS COMMITTEES

This booklet contains guidelines which reflect traditions and practices of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference. This booklet has been approved by the Bishop and Cabinet of The Illinois Great Rivers Conference of The United Methodist Church for use in local churches. Additional booklets may be obtained from your district office, or may be photocopied.

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Note: page numbers relate to booklet publication

This booklet refers frequently to paragraphs in ***The Book of Discipline*** and sections in ***The Standing Rules***. ***The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*** may be ordered from Cokesbury for \$20.00 plus shipping and handling by calling 1-800-672-1789.

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The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ by proclaiming the good news of God's grace. Local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs.

The Book of Discipline, ¶ 120 & 121

1. **A Mutual Ministry:** A pastor is one of *many* leaders in the church, which is the Body of Christ. *All* baptized Christians are expected to exercise leadership according to the spiritual gifts they have been given. A pastor's gifts include the abilities of preaching and teaching the word of God, nurturing Christians in their faith, leading congregations in visioning and goal setting, and equipping members of the local congregation to fulfill the vision and mission. Beyond those particular gifts, a pastor will have other specific gifts which are unique to their own faith and journey.
2. **A New Testament Model:** Congregations need to recognize that changing times have called forth a "new" model of pastoral leadership which focuses on equipping *laity* to do the work of ministry as opposed to a pastor-centered, pastor-dependent church life. Based on practices of the New Testament church, this model of pastoral leadership involves:
 - Teaching disciples how to reach out in the name of Jesus Christ,
 - Nurturing disciples in their journey of discipleship,
 - Sending disciples into the world to be the church.
3. **Four Essential Leadership Functions:** The new model of spiritual leadership includes four essential leadership functions. Fulfilling these functions must be the pastor's highest priority.
 - ◆ Helping people discover and name the current reality in which they live. With the pastor's leadership we answer the question, "What are we in the here and now?"
 - ◆ Discerning, naming and casting the shared vision. Together we reflect on the question, "What is the **positive** future to which God is calling this church, this community, and God's world?"
 - ◆ Developing bridges. Pastoral leadership is called to help the congregation plan actions and develop systems that enable the church to cross the bridge between the current reality and shared vision.

- ◆ Monitoring the journey. Pastoral leadership keeps an eye on the whole of the faith journey of the congregation, stepping back from the “busy-ness” of constant doing to pay attention to the big picture.

Fulfilling these four tasks, in addition to leading worship, will be a full-time job for a pastor. Expecting a pastor to do all the relational and administrative work of the church (shut-in calling, hospital visits, evangelism, etc) limits the ministry of the entire congregation, for God has called the laity, not just the clergy, to perform these ministries every day as representatives of Christ and the Church. It is reasonable to expect, however that pastors will give personal leadership in the development of congregational systems which provide a full range of ministries employing the gifts of each disciple/member.

4. **“Job Descriptions”**: The *“Responsibilities and Duties of a Pastor”* is set forth in paragraph 340 of ***The Discipline***, so it is inappropriate for local churches to present their pastors with job descriptions or any form of contract. Paragraph 340 can be summarized as: The pastor(s) shall oversee the total ministry of the local church in its nurturing ministries and in fulfilling its mission of witness and service in the world by:
- (1) giving pastoral support, guidance, and training to the lay leadership in the church, equipping them to fulfill the ministry to which they are sent as servants under the Lordship of Christ;
 - (2) providing ministry within the congregation and to the world;
 - (3) ensuring faithful transmission of the Christian faith; and
 - (4) administering the temporal affairs of the congregation.

It is appropriate and desirable in charges with multiple pastoral staff for a document to be drawn which details division of responsibility between the pastors, and it is also appropriate for local churches to name, in consultation with the pastor(s), priorities for the pastors’ use of time.

5. **Division of Hours in Multiple Point Charges**: Usually a covenant is made at the time of a pastor’s appointment about the division of ministry hours between congregations. The covenant usually uses the ratio of salary support as a guide, but this cannot be absolute since many ministry tasks are dependent upon needs which arise or are tasks which “straddle” congregational lines (such as preparation of worship, some Bible studies, hospital calling, etc.). Conflicts over hours often have more to do with relational issues between the pastor and congregations or between the congregations themselves, and probably should be dealt with as relational issues. Focusing on numbers seldom yields a satisfactory or reasonable result.

6. **“Working” Hours**: It is reasonable to expect full-time pastors to be engaged in ministry tasks related to the local church, ecumenical community, district, or conference for what is considered “full-time” by the labor laws and norms of our culture. Church work is highly seasonal, however, often requiring more hours some weeks. Pastors should exercise initiative in quieter seasons to compensate for additional hours worked, listening continually to their bodies and spirits to monitor burn-out and spiritual dryness, and allow time for refreshment as needed.

The Book of Discipline states (§338.1) that "Full time service shall mean that the person's entire vocational time, as defined by the district superintendent in consultation with the pastor and the committee on PPR is devoted to the work of ministry in the field of labor to which one is appointed by the bishop."

This provision prohibits full-time pastors from 1) engaging in **any** employment outside the local church which a) in **any** way limits the pastor's availability and b) has not been approved by the District Superintendent, followed by consultation with the local church S/PPRC; and 2) charging church members for church-related services (i.e., counseling, marriages, baptisms, youth or secretarial work, music ministry, etc.)

The S/PPRC is encouraged to consult regularly with the pastor about priorities, office hours, Sabbath time, family issues, and scheduling matters, and consider how the pastor's use of time serves the vision and mission of the church.

Effective preaching requires time in spiritual, theological, and biblical preparation and being in tune with the context in which the sermon is preached. This task alone may require anywhere from 10-15 hours each week, and sometimes more depending upon the priorities of the S/PPRC.

Doing secretarial or janitorial tasks is generally considered to be misdirected use of a pastor's calling, gifts, and time.

7. Worship and Sacramental Leadership: While the pastor is encouraged to share worship leadership and decisions with laity, it is ultimately the pastor's right and responsibility to direct the worship life of the congregation. Lay persons may assist with baptism and communion during worship with the pastor present and presiding, and the pastor may select and train lay members to immediately deliver the consecrated communion elements to shut-ins. (§340.2.a.5.) Lay speakers who are "supply" status may not administer communion or baptism or officiate at weddings, although they may assist on these occasions and give leadership at funerals.

8. Weddings and Funerals: Christian marriage is an act of worship, so the appointed pastor has the right and responsibility to make decisions about how, when, where, and by whom a marriage ceremony is performed in and by the church. Pastors are required by ***The Book of Discipline*** to have "due counsel" with the parties involved prior to the marriage, and may opt at any time to decline to preside (§340.A.3.a.).

Pastors are encouraged to work with the couples' preferences around the type of wedding service, wording, music, photography, video, processions, and symbolic acts in the service, but the pastor is responsible for making final decisions about the event.

Pastors may not charge for a member's wedding or funeral (§338.1 and #6, "Working Hours), but may accept honorariums. The S/PPRC is encouraged to consult with and support the pastor in relation to wedding policies and charges, if any, for nonmembers.

9. Supervision: United Methodist pastors, ordained and licensed, are accountable to expectations, roles, and responsibilities defined in ***The Book of Discipline***. It is the responsibility of the Bishop, Cabinet, and Board of Ordained Ministry, to interpret the

Discipline and along with the Orders, hold pastors accountable to these expectations (§307.2 and §333). While the pastor is expected to consult with members of the local church, S/PPRC regarding priorities and other issues, the district superintendent is to be considered the pastor's immediate supervisor. Pastors experience ongoing supervision through annual and other scheduled meetings and consultations with the superintendent.

Sometimes a more focused supervision occurs when specific issues arise. If serious moral, legal, or effectiveness issues occur which cannot be justly resolved through focused supervision, a more formal process involving the filing of a complaint may be used (§362).

10. **Sabbath:** All Christians are called to follow the example of Christ, who sought time away for his spiritual health and renewal, taking seriously the ancient command to "Remember the Sabbath, and keep it holy." Pastors are expected to set an example for their congregations by taking a Sabbath day each week. It is a day of spiritual and physical rest and renewal. This Sabbath day is negotiated with the S/PPRC and respected by all. Only when an emergency arises on the pastor's Sabbath day, should the pastor be called and another Sabbath may be taken day in its place. Churches should expect pastors to use another day for domestic chores or other "oughts" in a pastor's life.
11. **Accessible for Emergencies:** Except for days approved for a pastor's absence (vacation, continuing education, etc.), a pastor is expected to be accessible for emergencies. Pastors who are away from office and home phones (even on vacation or at continuing education) should leave contact information with an identified member of the congregation (i.e., secretary or S/PPRC chair). Churches should be prepared to provide pastoral care in the absence of the appointed pastor [see 3.D.]. We encourage churches and pastors to devise a plan for emergencies.
12. **Clergy Self-care:** Pastors are required by scripture, tradition, and covenant with The United Methodist Church to love and care for themselves by practicing habits which are conducive to physical, emotional, spiritual, and social health. Pastors are expected to practice on a regular basis spiritual disciplines which are a means of grace in their lives. These disciplines include scripture reading, prayer and devotional time, communion, fasting, accountability groups, and acts of mercy. Exercise and healthy patterns of eating and resting are expected. Local congregations should encourage pastors to exercise self-care in these ways when it appears that such care is not given priority.
13. **Clergy Family Care:** Pastors are required by scripture and tradition to care for their families. I Timothy 3:4 is unequivocal about this, in fact, stating that attentiveness to and orderliness in family life is a precondition to effective leadership in the church. Many pastors struggle balancing the dual covenants of family and vocation and need the support of their local church at the point they make difficult decisions about priorities.

14. **The Pastor's Family:** Congregations contribute to a pastor's health and effectiveness by treating the pastor's family members as individuals rather than extensions of the pastor or employees of the church. Decision-making about their church membership, attendance, and involvement belong *exclusively* to them.

15. **The Parsonage:** Every church or charge is required to provide housing for their full-time pastor and is encouraged to provide a parsonage as opposed to a housing allowance. **The Standing Rules**, VI.C.1-6, describe standards for such parsonages, along with maintenance and safety information. A parsonage is owned by the local church, but is held in trust for The United Methodist Church. This simply means that the denomination can count on 1) being able to use that building as a parsonage for UM pastors, and 2) certain agreements between the local church and conference which allow for smooth transitions of pastors between appointments. **The Standing Rules** of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference (VI.C.1-6) describe these agreements, including standards for such parsonages, along with maintenance, care, and safety information.

While it is owned by the local church, the parsonage is the home of the pastoral family and a private residence. The church is required to provide for the long-term maintenance of the house, walk through it at least annually to inspect for maintenance and repair issues, and ensure that it is clean and in good repair for the arrival of a new pastor at the time of a change. Pastoral families are required to be good stewards of the property which has been entrusted to them, which includes proper and timely attention to household tasks and routines and the repair of any damage caused by children, pets, or hobbies that goes beyond normal wear and tear. Pastors strengthen the clergy covenant and their own relationship with the local church when they personally invest in the home and leave it in better condition than they found it. Working in cooperation with the church's parsonage committee, the family leaves the parsonage clean and in good repair when the house is vacated. The morale of the pastoral family can be raised or diminished by the care given to the parsonage by the church. Neglect of the parsonage is normally viewed by the pastor as neglect of the pastor and his/her family. Timely attention to the parsonage, on the other hand, has a very positive impact on the pastor and family. The morale of the pastoral family is raised when they are invited to assist in decisions about refurbishing and repair. Having walls and carpet that match furniture, for instance, helps the family feel proud of their home. The morale of the pastoral family is raised when their pets are welcomed. The pastoral family is responsible, however, to replace any church-owned furnishings which are damaged by the pets, with consideration given to the age and condition of the furnishings when the pastor arrived.

Housing Allowance: While the norm is that local churches/charges own the house provided as a parsonage, it is permissible for churches/charges to rent or lease a residence that meets conference standards listed in the Standing Rules. It may be necessary or desirable for a local church to request that their pastor purchase or rent his/her own home to be used as their parsonage. The local church shall provide a housing allowance in an amount that would be sufficient to rent a house that meets

the parsonage standards as stated in the Conference Standing Rules. In the case of a new appointment, the parsonage provisions shall be clearly defined by the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and the District Superintendent at a time of consultation prior to an appointment introduction.

16. **Financial Matters:** Pastors are asked at the time of ordination if they have indebtedness which might prove embarrassing. The assumption behind the question is that pastors must be content with the compensation they receive and will not be tempted to take additional work, leave behind unpaid bills, and ask their churches or church members for advances and loans, or resort to other desperate measures to stay afloat financially. In situations of financial distress, the pastor should be encouraged to contact the District Superintendent.
- A. **Paychecks:** Pastors should never be put in the position of having to ask for their paychecks or accept less than the amount approved by charge conference action. While the pay periods may vary among churches, your Superintendents recommend that pastor be paid twice per month, suggesting the 15th and the 30th of each month as imbursement for work completed.
- B. **Loans:** Churches that make low-interest or no-interest loans to ministers or lay employees may be violating state nonprofit corporation law and generating taxable income. It is recommended, that a pastor borrow money only from public lending institutions.
- C. **Salary-Setting:** The S/PPRC must use the Financial Worksheet to recommend annually the pastor's salary. The Church Council receives the recommendation from the S/PPRC (§252.4.d) and includes it in the church budget. If the Church Council believes a change is necessary, it is urged to review thoroughly the recommendation. The charge conference sets the salary of the pastor (§247.13). Salary-setting should be done apart from the annual assessment of the church and pastor.
17. **Mileage:** The UM standards for reimbursement is the same as the IRS standards. A pastor is reimbursed at the IRS rate for miles driven in relation to church or connectional work (calls, visits, meetings, and travel between churches on a charge). The point of origin is the location of the church office. The IRS lists this rule as part of an accountability plan: *"Your expenses must have a business connection— that is, you must have paid or incurred deductible expenses while performing services as an employee of your employer."* [IRS Publication 463, p.39]
- For purposes of accountability to the IRS, the pastor is required to keep a mileage log, which includes date, destination, beginning and ending mileage. The total miles are turned in regularly to the church/charge treasurer for reimbursement.. Upon request of the S/PPRC, the log is to be made available to them for accountability. For more information on business miles, check the IRS website at <http://www.irs.gov>. The standard business mileage rate is published each year in a letter received by the S/PPRC in preparation for salary setting in the fall.
18. **Consulting on Vacation Dates:** Full-time pastors are allowed 31 calendar days of paid vacation each conference year (July 1 to June 30), including four Sundays and excluding holidays (see Standing Rules, V.B.3, and #19). All pastors are expected to arrange vacation times and dates in consultation with the S/PPRC and to help locate

pulpit supply. The number of paid vacation days for less-than full-time pastors is usually negotiable, but generally does not exceed that of a full-time pastor. The church pays the cost of providing pastoral service during vacation periods. **The Standing Rules** also state (V.B.1), “The effective date of new appointments and salaries will normally be July 1 unless another effective date of appointment is set by the Bishop. Vacation days not used in any single appointment year are lost and do not accrue, nor shall the charge be obligated to pay additional compensation for any such unused days.”

19. **Holidays:** Holidays for pastors should be agreed upon at the beginning of an appointment in conversation with the S/PPR Committees. Generally, pastors would include federal holidays and Christian holidays, with compensatory days for holidays worked (such as a holiday falling on Sunday to be compensated with a Monday off). For pastors with school aged children, consideration could be made for school holidays.

20. **Educational Requirements:** All pastors are required to fulfill certain educational requirements for the practice of licensed or ordained ministry and to engage in ongoing continuing education. Most new pastors are initially required to complete Licensing School, and after that, either seminary (year round) or a five-year “Course of Study” (usually held in July for full-time local pastors or over a series of weekends for some part-time local pastors).

The congregation needs to support and encourage pastors in their educational requirements and should pay for pulpit supply on the Sundays the pastor must be gone (1-2 Sundays for Licensing School, and 3-4 Sundays for four weeks of Course of Study). A full-time licensed pastor has 8 years to finish the 5-year Course of Study; a part-time local pastor is given 12 years to finish. Some courses may be taken by correspondence and some must be taken on campus. Extensive reading and writing is required of pastors prior to Licensing School and Course of Study, and the congregation should avoid making *additional* demands on the pastor during those preparation times. Pastors who have finished with Licensing School or Seminary are still required to undertake continuing education which benefits the disciple-making ministry of the local congregation. They must be allowed a minimum of one week (including one Sunday) each year (**Standing Rules**, V.B.7), and over the course of a quadrennium, an additional four weeks (§351). The pastor should always consult with the S/PPRC in advance about the type and timing of any educational plans.

21. **Camping and Evangelistic Responsibilities:** The Standing Rules (V.B.4 & 5) allow pastors who have completed their educational requirements and appointed full-time to assist up to two (2) weeks (to include up to two Sundays) of evangelistic meetings, assisting at Conference camps and other ministry activities e.g. School of Christian Missions, Mission trips, Academy for Spiritual Formation) per year. None of these activities shall be counted against vacation time, but shall be accountable for the use of their time away in ministry when requested.

22. **Connectional Responsibilities:** Pastors are not members of local churches, but of

the Annual Conference, and so have responsibilities to United Methodism beyond the local church. Pastors are often called upon to serve on one or more conference or district boards, commissions, committees, or task forces. It is expected that the church will be supportive of this connectional work. Pastors are expected to limit their own involvement. While the conference and district sometimes offer reimbursement for mileage, it is generally the local church's responsibility to reimburse for conference and district miles.

23. **Pulpit Supply:** Pulpit Supply might include District or Conference staff, or a representative from a UM agency, camp, or Wesley Foundation, as well as Local Church Lay speakers from the church and Certified Lay Speakers from other churches may also be used. While lay speakers from other congregations may decline an honorarium, *at least* \$75 (and an additional \$25 for each additional church on the charge) should be offered, as well as mileage reimbursement.
24. **Sick Days:** When pastors become ill, they need to be given time and space to recover. There is no official Disciplinary or Conference policy on sick days, although the District Superintendent is always willing to step in to supply pastoral oversight, care, and support if the pastor is experiencing a prolonged (more than one Sunday) illness. The *Book of Discipline* allows eight weeks for paid maternity/paternity leave (§1356), and it is expected that a pastor's illness will be given the same latitude. The Superintendent should always be notified when a pastor is not fulfilling full-time duties because of chronic or acute illness/es. Under certain circumstances there is financial help available to congregations during a lengthy illness or convalescence.
25. **Family and Personal Days:** Congregations need to allow pastors occasional absences due to family crises, such as illness or death. Celebrations such as reunions and weddings are generally coordinated with vacation Sundays. When a family crisis interferes with full-time ministry, the Superintendent should be notified.
26. **Annual Conference:** A pastor is required to attend the *entire session* of the annual conference, so local congregations need to provide for pulpit supply whenever annual conference is held on a Sunday.
27. **Former Pastors:** When pastors move, the covenant of ordination and licensing instructs that they sever pastoral ties with the church or charge they are leaving. This is for the benefit of the church the pastor is leaving, as well as for the church the pastor is going to serve. When a former pastor returns to provide pastoral care, weddings, funerals, or other pastoral acts, the current pastor is denied key opportunities to be involved in the important events in his/her parishioners' lives and in ongoing ministry to them. In addition, the church or charge to which a former pastor is appointed needs and deserves their full-time attention, so it is detrimental to the pastor's effectiveness in their new setting to continue being a pastor in the old. Pastors are often willing to invite former pastors back to assist with rituals and sacraments, but the invitation needs to be initiated by *the appointed pastor*, not by the parishioner or another pastor.

If a pastor is approached by a former member to do a pastoral service, the pastor must simply answer “no.” To say, “I am willing to officiate if your present pastor gives permission” compromises the appointed pastor’s ability to freely exercise choice in relation to the invitation. In The United Methodist Church, it is a serious breach of ¶341.4 and ¶2702.1.g).

PROBLEM-SOLVING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Wherever two or three (or more) are gathered, there is always the potential for misunderstanding, disappointment, and conflict. Jesus assures us in Matthew 18, however, that “Where two or three are gathered in my name ‘I am there among them.’” Scriptural (and therefore S/PPRC) goals around problem-solving and conflict resolution include, but are not limited to:

1. Reconciliation between offended parties,
2. Building a strong mutual ministry,
3. Growth for all parties, and
4. Learning how to live together in Christian community, when the people who make up the community are diverse and imperfect.

Listen to Jesus on the matter of resolving conflicts (Matthew 18:15-20):

15“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. 16But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. 18Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. 19Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. 20For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

Reconciliation and problem-solving are not always easy, but the following process is scriptural and very workable for those who have reconciliation and restoration as goals. By handling conflict in the following way, the church sets a Christian example for people to use in their families, work places, and community relationships.

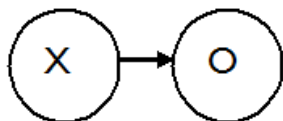
These are intended to be guidelines, and not hard-and-fast rules. The main point is to bring about reconciliation and to involve as few people as necessary in the problem-solving process.

NOTE: The S/PPRC cannot meet without the pastor’s or District Superintendent’s knowledge.

The superintendent is always available to the S/PPRC to answer questions and offer guidance. It is expected, however, that an effort has already been made to follow steps 1-3 when the D.S. is summoned to attend a S/S/PPRC meeting in the midst of conflict.

S/PPRC meetings are closed for discussion around personnel issues. They may be opened long enough for an individual with a concern or a complaint to be heard by the group, however.

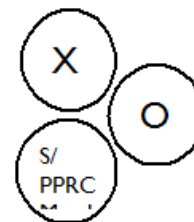
STEP ONE: (verse 15). If the offended person is unable to let a hurt go, he/she (X) speaks privately, in love with the one who has offended (O). Jesus knew that the potential for resolution increases when fewer, rather than more, people are involved. He wants people to avoid “building an army” at the outset, involving more than the immediate parties involved in the conversation. He also wants us to avoid “triangulation” which happens when the offended party wishes to remain anonymous and recruits someone else to do the difficult work of confrontation for them. (See page 23 for more on the dynamics of triangulation.)



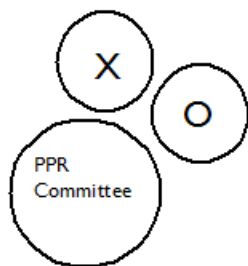
Reconciliation cannot happen when the offender does not know the identity of the one who has been offended. Second or third-hand remarks or anonymous communications on the whole should be treated as gossip and disregarded by the S/PPRC. (An exception to the one-on-one step would occur when a person alleges they have been physically threatened or abused by the offending party. If there is substance to the allegation and the allegation involves the pastor, the D.S. needs to be notified immediately.

Responsible follow-through inevitably requires the offended party, however, to make a formal, signed complaint.)

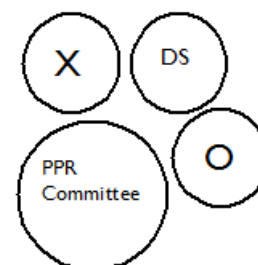
STEP TWO: (verse 16). If the problem is not solved by Step One, the offended person (X) brings a witness with them. In United Methodist Churches, S/PPRC members are elected to be reconciling agents and interpreters. The offended person may ask for a S/PPRC member to go with him/her to assist with the conversation or ask another party. Before matters come to the S/PPRC as a whole, however, the offended party must include a S/PPRC member in a two (or three)-on-one conversation.



STEP THREE: (verse 17a). At this point the S/PPRC as a whole (representing the church) is involved. The offended party needs to be present at the meeting with the one who has offended long enough to state the concern and summarize the efforts to resolve the problem on his/her own. To do otherwise is for the S/PPRC to risk “triangulation” with committee members trying to speak for the offended party and often second-guessing what the real issues are. In the event there is more than one offended party, each may meet for a time with the S/PPRC in the presence of the one who has offended, one by one. The goals of all involved at this point still remain reconciliation, building up the church, personal growth, and learning to live with less than perfect coworkers in Christian community.



STEP FOUR: (verse 17a continued). If the pastor is involved, the next step is to once again broaden the base of those who help the offender hear the concern by involving a denominational representative— the District Superintendent. The DS can arrange to visit with the S/PPRC and parties involved. Goals of the work remain the same.



NOTE: It is not the practice or polity of UMs to hold all-church meetings for problem-solving, or to pass petitions for support of a particular cause.

STEP FIVE: (verse 17b). Someone who does not know about the life and teachings of Christ may assume that letting someone be “as a Gentile or tax-collector” means ending the relationship. Christians know, however, that these are precisely the persons that Jesus was most intentional about seeking. What this verse does suggest is that there may come a time when the offending party needs a clear statement from the church that certain behaviors cannot be tolerated and that they may need to remove themselves from the gathered community until their behavior is in greater compliance with Christian community values.

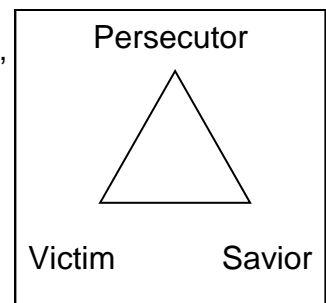
The Drama of Triangulation

Triangulation is a destructive pattern of relating to others in which a person identifies with one of three roles and invites others to play the other two. There are multiple payoffs for playing any one of the roles, but the main one for each is *avoidance of one's own issues*. We have all unknowingly played each part at one time or another, although one role may feel most comfortable to us. A mature person in Christ, however, is able to identify when he/she is playing one of these roles and take ownership and control of the issues that rightly belong to him or herself and no one else.

The **victim** in the drama is seen by self and/or others to be weak, injured, or suffering injustice. The **savior** is seen by self and/or others as the “hero” who intervenes to rescue the “victim” from the real or imagined problem. The **persecutor** is the one seen by self and/or others to be “the heavy,” harassing or oppressing the “victim” with real or perceived ill treatment. These 3 roles work together to sustain any drama of triangulation.

S/PPRCs are often enlisted as “saviors” by church folk who see themselves as powerless (i.e., unable to confront or be honest with a staff member) or by pastors and staff who see themselves as victimized by supervisors or unreasonable people around them. The response of the S/PPRC to such situations is to encourage and expect the “persecutor” and the “victim” to deal face-to-face with each other, participating in the direct resolution of their issues, and thereby ending triangulation.

S/PPRCs sometimes play the role of “victim” by asking their superintendent (“savior”) to intervene in conflict before they have worked Steps 1-3, described in the previous section. The Superintendent is willing to help counsel the S/PPRC about conflict management if called, but will ask what steps have already been taken in the local church by the parties involved.



Helpful Hints for Problem-Solving



- ♥ Be yourself
- ♥ Speak only for yourself (Use “I” statements)
- ♥ Be honest
- ♥ Speak the truth *in love*
- ♥ Address behavior, not the person
- ♥ Let the other finish his/her thought before you speak.
- ♥ Remember that conflicts are problems to be solved, not contests to be won.
- ♥ Remember that a person is usually a part of the problem if they’re not a part of the solution.
- ♥ Remember that no one is perfect and that we’re all doing the best we can with what we have been given.

¹⁴Do all things without murmuring and arguing, ¹⁵so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world. ¹⁶It is by your holding fast to the word of life that I can boast on the day of Christ that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. (Philippians 2:14-16)

Respectful Communication Guidelines

By Eric Law

- R** Take **RESPONSIBILITY** for what you say and feel without blaming other people
- E** Use **EMPATHETIC** listening (put oneself in the other's shoes)
- S** Be **SENSITIVE** to differences in communication styles
- P** **PONDER** on what you hear and feel before you speak
- E** **EXAMINE** your own assumptions and perceptions
- C** Keep **CONFIDENTIALITY**
- T** **TRUST/TOLERATE** ambiguity because we are NOT here to debate who is right or wrong.

Understanding Pastoral Changes

An Itinerant System

The United Methodist system of itinerant ministry is rooted in John Wesley's vision of spreading scriptural holiness across the land and utilizing both clergy and laity in the fulfillment of this mission. Itinerant ministry in the earliest days required pastors to travel continually on horseback around defined circuits, and then after a year or two be assigned to a different circuit.

The itinerant system has undergone many changes in the last 200 years, but several things remain the same:

- The resident Bishop decides when and where preachers are appointed.
- The "circuit rider's" task is to spread the Word of God, administer the Sacraments, and give oversight to the life and mission of the faith community.
- Strong resident (lay) leadership plays a vital role in maintaining continuity and the health of the church.
- Pastors are members of the connectional body (conference), not a local church.
- Pastors, while paid by the local church, are accountable to the Discipline of The United Methodist Church and to those who have been elected or appointed to oversee their ministry.

Some denominations acquire their pastors through a "call system." In this system, the congregation conducts a search for a pastor, calls the pastor, and decides when the pastor's tenure ends. No system of placing pastors is perfect. We eagerly await God's perfect reign on earth, but in the meantime, United Methodists choose itinerant ministry.

How Itinerancy Works

COVENANT

Early in the process of candidacy for pastoral ministry, United Methodist pastors are asked to reflect on the implications of itinerant ministry for their lives and families. No pastor is licensed for ministry without an agreement to serve where the resident Bishop appoints. Those who choose ordination agree to keep the General Rules of The United Methodist Church and support and maintain the government and polity of the church (§ 330). In the ordination service they are asked if they will be loyal to The United Methodist Church, accept its order, liturgy, doctrine, and discipline, and accept the authority of those who are appointed to supervise their ministry. Each ordinand answers, "I will, with the help of God." The United Methodist Church has chosen to care for these itinerating pastors and their families through a system of parsonages (held to certain standards), health insurance coverage, and retirement benefits, all of which release the clergy to give full attention to their spiritual leadership responsibilities. Superintendents, who counsel the Bishop in relation to appointment-making, attempt to stay current with the needs and concerns of parsonage families and share relevant information with the Bishop as a new appointment is discerned.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND GRACES

Every licensed and ordained pastor has been examined in relation to their fitness for ministry and their call, and may be expected to have:

- a vital relationship with Christ,
- an ability to relate to people,
- an ability to communicate their faith in preaching and teaching,
- an ability to lead and give oversight to the local church and its connectional relationships,
- a willingness to model a Christian lifestyle, and

- a dedication to lifelong learning and growth.

God has given to each pastor differing measures of these gifts, and other gifts, as well. Some pastors are gifted to bring healing to hurting congregations; some are specialists in “spiritual CPR”; some have gifts in youth or older adult ministries; some are top-notch administrators. Some pastors like to start new churches and others to transform existing ones. There are as many different gifts as there are pastors! We are blessed to be diverse! The needs of churches and the gifts of the pastors lie at the very heart of appointment-making in the Illinois Great Rivers Conference.

CONSULTATION

While the Bishop is ultimately responsible for appointing pastors to churches, the episcopal decision relies heavily on 1) counsel from conference superintendents who are in regular communication with both churches and pastors about the missional fit of the church and pastor and 2) a process of conversation and prayer involving the Bishop and all superintendents.

The 2008 Book of Discipline says that consultation is the process whereby the Bishop and/or district superintendent confer with the pastor and the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, taking into consideration 1) the unique needs of a charge, the community context, and also the gifts and evidence of God’s grace of a particular pastor, 2) an annual pastor and church assessment, and 3) the mission of the whole Church. (see ¶ 431).

PROFILES

Ongoing consultation enables the superintendent to create profiles on both pastors and churches, which are shared with the Bishop and other superintendents. Church profiles include data about location, demographics, local history, membership, convictional stances, ministries, strengths, growing edges, and needs in future pastoral leadership. Clergy profiles include data about the pastor’s service history, family, spiritual gifts and passions, growing edges, and special needs or interests.

These profiles enable superintendents to prepare in an informed way for the discernment process which ultimately determines who will be appointed.

WHY PASTORS MOVE

The most common reasons pastors move include:

- Church, pastor, and/or superintendent articulate missional need for new leadership
- Retirement
- Disability or death
- Church closing or change in alignment of churches in a charge

DISCERNMENT

Discernment begins as the Bishop and superintendents prayerfully explore possible missional matches between open churches and pastors. This exploration includes:

- Nominations for open churches
- “Challenging off” those who do not fit the church profile or who are missionally needed in their present appointment
- Detailed discussion about the missional appropriateness of those remaining on the list
- Prayer and consensus-building among all 10 district superintendents.
- Recommendation of the name to the Bishop and Bishop’s discernment
- Appointment by the Bishop

The Change of Pastors

INTRODUCTIONS

The pastor is the first one to hear about the new appointment, usually in a meeting with his/her present (“sending”) and future (“receiving”) superintendent. In that conversation the superintendents explain the missional match and share other details. The pastor is urged to ask questions and to give feedback. If the pastor has concerns about match, he/she may ask for reconsideration of the appointment. The Pastor Parish Relations Committee (S/PPRC) of the *receiving* church is the next to learn about the appointment. At a S/PPRC meeting scheduled by the superintendent, the new pastor is introduced. Discussion focuses on the missional needs articulated by the church and the ways the incoming pastor meets those needs. While the meeting is not an interview, there is time for sharing, for questions, and for working out the “nuts and bolts” of the move. If the S/PPRC or pastor at that point has reservations about the missional appropriateness of the move, either party or the superintendent may request reconsideration of the appointment.

The entire process-- from consultation to the day of public disclosure-- is a confidential process, involving *only* the Bishop, superintendents, pastor, and the *receiving* S/PPRC. Confidentiality protects congregations and pastors from damage which may result if information is shared prematurely or inaccurately.

ANNOUNCING THE CHANGE

Protocol for announcing the change simultaneously involves:

1. Announcement of the change to the pastor’s *present* congregation. This may be done through a letter or through an announcement from the pulpit. (A courtesy call to the pastor’s present S/PPRC chair is in order before the appointment change is announced to the whole church.)
2. Announcement of the change to the pastor’s *future* congregation. This is usually done by the S/PPRC chair or through a letter.

The appointment may be announced to those outside the involved congregations any time thereafter.

GRIEF AND HOSPITALITY

Pastoral changes are difficult even in the best of circumstances, requiring churches and pastors to name and address the difficult mix of sadness, joy, and fear that accompany a change of pastoral leadership. A farewell party or recognition for the departing pastor helps bring closure, as do sermons or newsletter articles on the nature of grief. The departing pastor helps support the incoming pastor by clearly defining the boundaries of the changed relationship.

The incoming pastor feels most welcomed when:

- The parsonage is clean and in good repair when he/she arrives.
- The new parsonage family is invited to make decisions about paint, wallpaper, floor coverings, and other accoutrements.
- A member of the S/PPRC is personally *on site* when the pastor’s family arrives.
- Meals are offered and/or provided for the first week or two.
- The congregation is able to view change as positive and as an adventure and extend a warm welcome.

Open Itineracy

“Open itineracy means appointments are made without regard to race, ethnic origin, gender, color, disability, marital status, or age, except for the provisions of mandatory retirement. The concept of itineracy is important, and sensitive attention should be

given in appointing clergy with physical challenges to responsibilities and duties that meet their gifts and graces.” (§ 430) S/PPRCs are responsible for helping interpret open itineracy and to help prepare their congregations to welcome all pastors who are appointed.

Other Resources for S/PPRCs

The 2008 Book of Discipline (§259.2, page 173) describes the purpose, function, and responsibilities of the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee in the Local Church.

Guidelines 2008-2012 Pastor Parish Relations, available for \$2.75 plus shipping and handling from Cokesbury by calling 1-800-672-1789.