

2022 District Leadership Training Event
Pastor-Parish/Staff-Parish Relations Committee
Saturday, 02.12.22 You and Dr. Joe Scheets

Greetings and Introductions

557 *Blest Be the Tie That Binds*, verse 3

556 *Litany for Christian Unity*

750 **Psalm 19**, especially verses 12-14

Thinking Together about Scripture

558 *We Are the Church*, verses 2 & 4

564 *Prayer For the Unity of Christ's Body*

So! We're the PP/SPRC amid (More) Uncertainty...

What's changed?

What's the same?

And most importantly...

So what?

So what do we do now?

Two extra Handouts available today

Committee Basics from ¶258.2

Duties of the Committee from ¶258.2g

Where are we?

Informal online survey responses

Effective and Ineffective PP/SPRCs

When Folks Complain

Who do we want to be?

Effective and Ineffective Staff-Parish Relations Committees

Characteristics of Effective and Ineffective SPRCs

Effective

Meet regularly and often

Prepare for meetings

- Have an agenda
- Stay focused on agenda and identify topics for future meetings
- Allow adequate time

Establish partnership with pastor

- Keep pastor informed
- Take pastor into confidence
- Maintain "We are in this together" attitude
- Provide support and understanding

Ineffective

Conduct annual evaluations only

- Withhold regular feedback
- Allow issues to build too long
- Related to salary and appointment decisions more than to growth

Allow too little time and care

- Insufficient time to do task well
- Insufficient care in getting input and preparing for evaluation

Behave unfairly

- Bringing unevaluated complaints
- Bringing anonymous complaints
- Giving all sources equal credibility
- Not putting issues in perspective

What SPRCs and Clergy Most Need from Each Other

SPRCs Most Need from Clergy

Cooperation and receptivity

- Willing to listen with open mind
- Attempt to understand members' needs and concerns
- Attempt to make some changes
- Openness to improvement ideas

Clear and open communication

- Pastor's vision for ministry
- Candid assessment of what is going on in the church
- Information about issues and needs

Clergy Most Need from SPRCs

Honest feedback

- Balanced, objective, thoughtful, and candid feedback
- Treated as adults who can take criticism

Personal concern and support

- Advocate for pastor

Communication with the congregation

- Education of congregation
- Feedback from and to congregation

Based on a comparison of staff-parish relations committees deemed effective by both the SPRC chair and the pastor and those deemed ineffective by the chair and pastor

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Committee Basics from ¶258.2

Purpose of the Staff-Pastor Parish Relations Committee

The Staff-Pastor Relations Committee is the administrative unit in the local church where staff and congregational interests are integrated to focus on the mission of the church.

- The SPRC serves the “governing board” in an advisory capacity related to personnel administration.
- It does not exist to provide managerial or leadership oversight to the staff team (that is the work of the senior pastor).

Membership

- Between 5 and 9 persons (one shall be a young adult and one may be a youth)
- Must be professing members
- Divided into three year classes
- Members shall be able to succeed themselves for one three-year term
- Oversees the work to all staff
- Pastor should be present, unless s/he excuses self or if D.S. is in attendance
- The Annual Conference lay delegate and lay leader are members and have voice and vote
- On charges, a representative & Lay Leader from each church
- Relates to and works with all staff (paid and non-salaried)
- People engaged and attentive to their own Christian spiritual development

Who we cannot be

- Staff members
- No more than one immediate family member from the same household
- Immediate family members of the pastor or staff

Meetings

- At least quarterly
- Written “minutes” of decisions/actions
- Pastor present, unless s/he excuses self
- Only with knowledge of pastor or district superintendent
- May meet with the district superintendent without pastor or appointed staff
 - *With due notice before and sharing immediately after*
- Shall meet in closed session (BOD ¶258.2e)
- Multi-church Charge: if just a church issue –S/PPRC members from that church can meet

Confidentiality

- Issues are discussed during meeting, not between meetings
- All matters under discussion are kept in strict confidence, i.e., a “safe” place
- All input brought to the meeting is held in confidence, but is “owned” input
- If you cannot keep a confidence, then have the integrity to resign from the Committee.
- Joint statements owned & shared by all members
- Careful reporting to Council of each meeting

Duties of Committee (§258.2g)

QUICK LOOK

Communication

- Confer and counsel with pastor & staff, advising them of ministry conditions
- Continually interpret to people the nature and function of ministry
- Counsel pastor & staff on relationships with congregation, priorities, skills, goals
- Interpret to congregation: preparation for ordained ministry, Ministerial Education Fund

Personnel Issues

- Develop and recommend to Council staff positions and job descriptions for staff other than pastor
- Recommend to Council personnel policies and monitor compliance
- Consult: pulpit supply, compensation, vacation, insurances, pension, housing -- making recommendations to Council.
- Enlist, interview, evaluate, review, recommend: Lay Preachers, Candidates for Ministry and missionary service
- Consult: continuing education, renewal
- “To encourage, monitor, and support clergy and lay staff pursuit of health and wholeness.” (§258.2g(17))

Parsonage Issues

- With Trustee and Pastor, make annual review of parsonage
- “The committee will follow up to assure timely resolution of parsonage problems affecting the health of the pastor or pastor’s family.” (§258.2g(16))

Annual Evaluation

- Provide annual evaluations for pastor & staff to encourage effective ministry (April to June)

Appointment Issues

- Confer with pastor & cooperate with pastor, DS, and bishop in securing clergy leadership when it becomes evident that the best interests of the church and pastor will be served by a change.
- Such conferring and cooperating with DS and bishop are advisory only.

When Folks Are Complaining

When a church member voices a concern to you about the pastor or paid staff:

1. Encourage him/her to speak to the pastor (or staffer) directly.
 - a. If they have already done so but are dissatisfied, you may encourage them to further direct conversation or reflection upon other positive responses and forgiveness.
 - b. If the person can't or won't speak to the pastor AND the issue seems important, then...
2. Have the person write down their concern, date and sign it.
 - a. If they decline, tell them that you cannot carry verbal concerns to the committee.
3. Convey the written concern to the chair of the S/PPRC.
 - a. The chair or secretary should write an acknowledgment: 'We received your concern and will discuss it at our next meeting.'
4. The chair should inform the pastor &/or staff person of the written concern.
5. At the next regular or called S/PPRC meeting, the whole committee decides if:
 - a. The concern has merit and deserves further attention, or
 - b. The concern has no merit and deserves no action. If not, then write a note thanking the person for their input and informing him/her that the Committee will remain aware.
6. The Committee discusses legitimate concerns with the pastor/staff person for a full understanding of situation. Together, decide on a course of action and follow up.
7. The whole committee decides if a joint statement is needed to the church or the individual who initiated the concern. All members are obliged to share only the approved, joint statement without additions or deletions.
8. The S/PPRC may receive individual's letters only, not petitions from groups. When trying to gain a sense of the entire congregation, S/PPRC should not conduct polls, but should make known (via newsletter, bulletin) who the S/PPRC members are so the general membership can approach them. Each S/PPRC member should keep a discreet list of who approaches them and give it to the Chair. The Chair can then determine if a few individuals are unduly influencing S/PPRC opinions.
9. S/PPRC is responsible for addressing situations with the pastor and any paid staff. The Lay Leadership/Nominating Committee is responsible for addressing situations with elected members of the congregation.

Who does our Lord want us to be?

Psalm 19:14

John 15:12

Acts 2:42

Matthew 28:16-20

409 Closing Prayer *For Grace to Labor*

The things, good Lord, that we pray for,

Give us the grace to labor for.

Amen.

The two inside pages here and the two extra handouts and 43 more helpful pages are freely available and can be yours at www.easternshoredistrictumc.org/uploads/4/7/2/4/47247553/spp_rc_training_manual_may_2019.pdf

“It’s an honor to be with you this morning, and I thank you for your time, attention, and participation.

“Stop by my *Fresh-Brewed Daily* devotional blog at **JoeScheets.com**. Email me at JoeScheets3@gmail.com. Enjoy my devotional videos on my FB page (*Joe Scheets*), currently Mondays through Thursdays. Text/call me at **217.377.8049**. I’d love to hear from you anytime!” --- Joe.

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