

SECTION I

ROLE and RESPONSIBILITIES

Job Description for the

COMMITTEE ON PASTOR/STAFF-PARISH RELATIONS

in a United Methodist Congregation

In some congregations this committee is called the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, and in others it is called the Staff-Parish Relations Committee.

The Primary Task of the Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations

To support your pastor(s) and other staff so that these people can work effectively in managing the ministry of your congregation for witness and service.

Opportunities for Your Congregation

As you begin to think about the focus of your work, reflect for a moment on these questions. Your responses will help you think about the people of your community (including your congregation) and how your committee on pastor-parish relations might serve them best. You may want to discuss these questions with others in your congregation and community.

1. What three questions and what three hopes do you believe people have about their community and their faith? How do these relate to living as Christian disciples and good neighbors?
2. What ministries could your church provide to help these people grow in faith?
3. What leadership is needed for the congregation to create and do these ministries?
4. How could the pastor-parish relations committee encourage and support the leadership for developing these ministries?

My vision or hope for the work of the committee on pastor-parish relations:

During this year I will take the following steps toward making my vision a reality:

Responsibilities of the Committee

1. To seek to understand feelings and desires within the congregation about the pastor's leadership and appointment.
2. To work with the district superintendent and/or the bishop in an advisory capacity in matters pertaining to clergy leadership.
3. To recommend staff positions needed and to develop and approve written job descriptions and titles for associate pastors and staff.
4. To discuss regularly with the pastor(s) and staff the personnel conditions that affect the congregation's total ministry.
5. To counsel with the pastor(s) and staff about priorities for the use of gifts, skills, and time.
6. To communicate openly with the pastor(s), staff, and congregation.
7. To make recommendations concerning compensation, travel, housing, and other financial matters to the church council.
8. To recommend, in consultation with the pastor(s), to the church council a written statement of policy and procedures for hiring, evaluating, promoting, retiring, and dismissing staff members who are not subject to episcopal appointment (procedures which must comply with local and state laws).
9. To carry out, through appropriate agencies, proper screening (including background checks) for lay employees and volunteer staff.
10. To inspect the parsonage with the pastor and the trustees annually to ensure proper maintenance.
11. To provide an annual evaluation for use by the pastor(s) and other staff in an ongoing effective ministry.

(continued)

12. To identify the continuing-education needs of the pastor(s) and staff and to support and encourage their continuing education and spiritual renewal.
13. To educate the church community on the value of diversity of selection in clergy and lay staff.
14. To seek, interview, and recommend to the charge conference lay preachers and qualified candidates for ordained ministry.

Responsibilities of the Chairperson

1. To guide the work of the committee throughout the year, including planning agendas and presiding at meetings.
2. To be available to the pastor(s) for counsel, understanding, and support.
3. To take part in the church council and the charge conference.
4. To report regularly to the church council concerning the work of the committee.

Getting Started

1. Take a second look at your responses in the Opportunities section. Or, if you have not answered these questions, take time to do so now.
2. Meet as the pastor-parish relations committee to evaluate the committee's recent work—strengths and weaknesses—and plan for the coming year.
3. Learn about the lives of your pastor(s) and staff and of individuals in your community. Ask questions! Listen!
4. Talk to people in your congregation or in other congregations who held this job in the past or who have special interests in this area.
5. Study *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation: 2005–2008—Pastor Parish Relations* (see Resources section).

Skills and Interests Helpful for Your Job

1. Ability to listen to and communicate with people of all ages.
2. Ability to work with other volunteers and committees.
3. Good working relationship with the pastor(s).
4. Genuine interest in responding to the hopes and concerns of people in your community.

Training for Your Job

From time to time the church offers workshops that can help you in your task. Check with your pastor(s), the

committee on lay leadership, or your district superintendent to find opportunities that match your training needs

People and Agencies That Can Help

- Your pastor(s).
- Adults in your church, especially those in leadership positions.
- Pastor-parish relations committee members in other congregations.
- Your district/conference board of ordained ministry.
- Your bishop and district superintendent.
- InfoServ, (800) 251-8140, a toll-free direct telephone service providing current information about United Methodist resources, programs, and staff services.
- General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, PO Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37203-0007; (615) 340-7389; www.gbhem.org.
- General Board of Discipleship, Congregational Leader Formation Team, PO Box 340003, Nashville, TN 37203-0003; (615) 340-1760; www.gbod.org.

Print Resources That Can Help

- *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation: 2005–2008—Pastor Parish Relations*. Order from Cokesbury, (800) 672-1789 or www.cokesbury.com.
- *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church—2004*. Order from Cokesbury.
- *Interpreter*. This magazine includes guidance and ideas for laity who are active in the church. To order call (888) 346-3862 or go to www.interpretermagazine.org.

The following may be ordered from Discipleship Resources online at www.discipleshipresources.org or by phone at (800) 972-0433. You may also use this phone number to request a free Discipleship Resources catalog.

- *The Buck Stops Here: Legal and Ethical Responsibilities for United Methodist Organizations* (DR306).
- *Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church* (DR220).
- *Safe Sanctuaries for Children and Youth: Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church*. DVD (DR415) or VHS (DR414).
- *Safe Sanctuaries for Youth: Reducing the Risk of Abuse in Youth Ministries* (DR404).
- *What Every Leader Needs to Know*. A series of booklets on topics related to leadership.

For more information, visit the General Board of Discipleship website (www.gbod.org).

Resources for Pastoral Relations Committees

Effective and Ineffective Pastoral Relations Committees (PRC)

Characteristics of Effective and Ineffective PRCs

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
- "We are in this together" attitude
- Provide support and understanding

Ineffective

Conduct annual evaluations only

- Withholds regular feedback
- Lets issues 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
- Doesn't put issues in perspective

What PRCs and Clergy Most Need from Each Other

PRCs 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 PRCs

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 pastoral relations committees deemed effective by both the PRC chair and the pastor and those deemed ineffective by the chair and pastor.

Theological Foundations for Evaluation

"Evaluation is one of God's ways of bringing the history of the past into dialogue with the hope of the future.... We are called into new growth and new ministries by taking a realistic and hopeful look at what we have been and what we can still become."

from *Theological and Theoretical Foundations for Evaluating Ministry*, 1990

Scripture

From the wisdom of the Hebrew Scriptures

- "Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom for the future." (Proverbs 19:20)

Jesus invited evaluation of his ministry

- "He asked them, 'Who do you say I am?'" (Mk 8:27-29; also Mt 16:13-23; Lk 9:18-22)

The Bible calls us to grow toward "perfection"

- Jesus challenged listeners to "Be perfect ... as [God] is perfect" (Mt 5:48)
- From Paul: "Not that I have...already been made perfect, but I press on...." (Phil. 3:12)
- Also from Paul: "Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith...that you may become perfect." (II Cor. 13: 5, 9)

Truthful, loving communication can result in growth

- "But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into...Christ." (Eph. 4:15)

Theology and Heritage

Growing toward the "not yet" God has for all of us.

- *Growth and development are essential both to human existence and to faith.*
- *Faith is a lifelong process—a continual journey of growth.*
- *The way things are is never synonymous with God's ultimate will for us*

Growth through mutual accountability.

- *Christians seek help from others in reflecting on one's faith journey.*
- *Small groups often provide a loving, supportive, and nurturing environment in which to evaluate one's growth.*
- *Mutual trust and respect permit allow for the giving and receiving honest feedback.*

Giving and Receiving Feedback

Feedback *IS*:

- Sincere and plain-speaking
- Self-revealing on the part of evaluators
- Humbly invited, humbly offered
- Contains useful insights
- Dialogue *with* pastor
- Personal and interactive
- Tool for improvement
- Ongoing process in the midst of ministry
- At its best, love in action

Feedback *IS NOT*:

- Winning a point or coercing another
- Passing rumors
- Hiding behind what someone else says
- Advocating a theological perspective
- Something done *to* pastor
- Weapon to be used against an enemy
- Defending one's self or others
- Saving up complaints for a one-time session
- Objective truth

Asking for and Receiving Feedback

- ✓ Specify the feedback you seek and why you are asking.
- ✓ Be sure those giving feedback understand what they are being asked to do.
- ✓ Have adequate time and a setting where you will not be interrupted.
- ✓ Assume positive motive and intention on the part of those giving feedback.
- ✓ Invite feedback givers to offer specific observations from their own experience.
- ✓ Repeat & rephrase comments to be sure you understand what they meant to say.
- ✓ Be aware of your feelings, breathing, physical comfort—call for a break if needed.

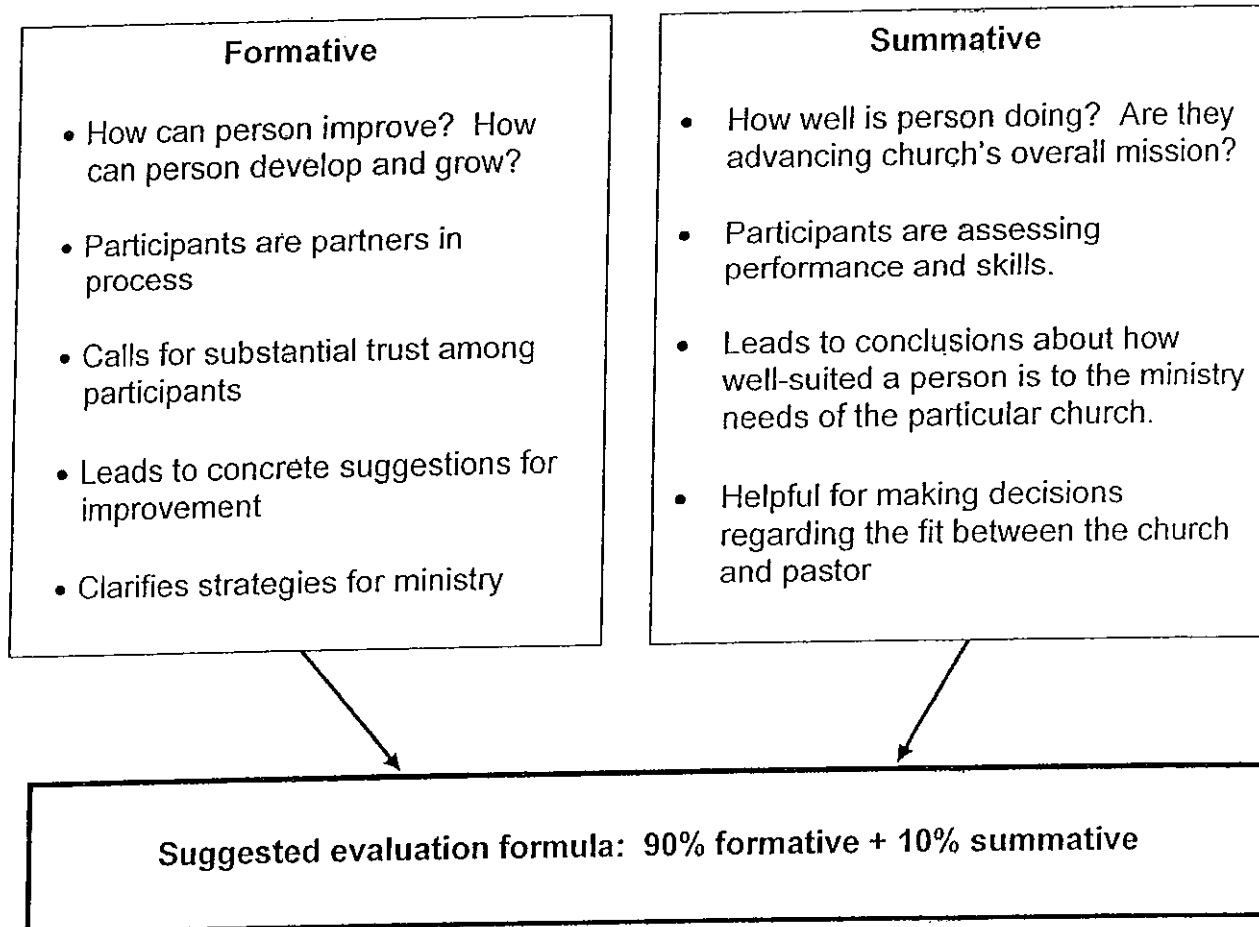
Giving Feedback

- ✓ Have adequate time and a setting where you won't be interrupted.
- ✓ Be clear about confidentiality—what can be shared from evaluative session.
- ✓ Avoid ganging up as a group on the one receiving feedback.
- ✓ Assume positive motive and intention on the part of the one receiving feedback.
- ✓ Speak from your own experience—give specific details.
- ✓ Invite questions for clear understanding—did they hear what you meant to say?
- ✓ Divide the feedback itself and conclusions from feedback into different sessions.

*adapted from: Art Gafke, Ministry Assessment Process: Giving and Receiving Feedback, GBHEM

Resources for Pastoral Relations Committees

Types of Evaluation



Two Purposes of Evaluation

- Examine the effectiveness of the church in achieving its mission.
- Examine the effectiveness of the pastor (staff) in leading the church toward the fulfillment of the mission.

Some Steps in Evaluation

- Gather appropriate information.
- From a thoughtful assessment of the information, decide what feedback will be shared, by whom, and how.
- Present the affirmations and areas for growth.
- Thank those from whom information was sought and indicate that it was helpful in the recently completed review.

Why is My Pastor Leaving?

Why do pastors move within the United Methodist Church?

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the United Methodist Church is the itinerant system in which pastors move from appointment to appointment. "Itinerancy is the system by which the Methodist Church moves its ministers from church to church so that at all times every preacher has a church and every church has a preacher..." (From *Encyclopedia of World Methodism*). This system dates back to the days of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism.

Itinerancy is part of the "connectional" nature of the United Methodist Church, which stresses the "united" nature of all United Methodist churches. This system means that, "all leaders and congregations are connected in a network of loyalties and commitments that support, yet supersede, local concerns..." (From *Sharing God's Gifts Glossary of United Methodist Terms*).

All local churches are bound together by a common mission and common governance. This is how United Methodists work together to accomplish mission and ministry throughout the world.

Who makes the decision to move a pastor?

The bishop is given the responsibility of making all pastoral appointments. Detroit Annual Conference Churches are in the Michigan Episcopal Area, which is served by Bishop Deb Kiesey. An Episcopal area has nothing to do with Episcopalians (another protestant denomination), but rather is a geographic area within the United Methodist Church served by a bishop.

Bishop Deb serves both The Detroit and The West Michigan Annual Conferences. The Detroit Annual Conference is made up of all the United Methodist churches in the eastern half of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan and all of the Upper Peninsula. The Detroit Conference is divided into six districts, each served by a district superintendent. Part of Bishop Deb's job, along with the superintendents, is to appoint clergy to United Methodist churches in the Michigan Episcopal Area. These appointments are made official at Annual Conference. The Detroit Annual Conference meeting is held at Adrian College the third week in May.

Can the bishop reassign other pastoral leaders in a local church?

In the United Methodist Church, clergy includes two orders: deacons and elders. Elders are ordained clergy who work under the itinerant system as assigned by the bishop.

Deacons are ordained clergy as well; however, they do not itinerate and are responsible for finding their own placements and are not subject to being moved by the bishop. Many local churches also receive pastoral/ministry leadership in particular areas (such as Christian Education, Youth Ministry, Music Ministry) by directly hiring staff members. Direct hire staff members are not appointed by the bishop, therefore are not subject to reassignment.

Why doesn't the congregation have a say in whether or not a pastor stays with a local church?

The United Methodist Book of Discipline states "Clergy shall be appointed by the bishop, who is empowered to make and fix all appointments in the Episcopal area." The bishop and the cabinet (all district superintendents in the conference) look at the appointment needs throughout the conference, taking into consideration the needs of each church, the gifts and talents of each pastor, and other circumstances in the conference. These circumstances might include vacancies that will have to be filled in the future. The bishop makes an effort to consider the needs of the pastors' families, as well. When a spouse's career or children's schooling is affected, the bishop must weigh the cost-benefit of any appointments that might adversely affect the family.

The Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) in each local church consults with the district superintendent about the relationship between the pastor and the congregation and to communicate the desires of the church, but the role of the committee is *advisory only*. The district superintendent reports the advice of the SPRC to the bishop and the cabinet.

Similarly, pastors communicate to their district superintendents whether they wish to stay at their current appointment, move to another, or have no preference. However, there are no assurances that a pastor's wishes will be honored.

What can I do about voicing any concerns I might have?

Anyone from a local church can speak to a representative of the Staff Parish Relations Committee about his or her concerns. It is the SPRC Chairperson's responsibility to share concerns with the district Superintendent if necessary.

The district superintendent will also keep up with the transitional process by communicating with the SPRC Chairperson and the pastor.

2019 PROFILE OF THE CHURCH

MICHIGAN AREA OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

CHURCH NAME:

DISTRICT:

PASTOR:

DUE TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO CHURCH CONFERENCE

To be completed by Church Council/Governance Board in consultation with SPRC and the Trustee/Parsonage Committee.

	Membership	Total average worship attendance (For all worship experiences per week)	Average church school attendance	Total church expenditures	Percentage of Ministry Shares paid
2019 to date					
2018					
2017					
2016					
2015					
2014					
2013					
2012					
2011					
2010					

WHAT DO THESE NUMBERS REVEAL ABOUT THE CURRENT HEALTH OF THE CONGREGATION?

The Michigan Conference equips and connects through: Christ-Centered Mission and Ministry; Bold and Effective Leaders; Vibrant Congregations and the FOUR AREAS OF MINISTRY FOCUS (Engaging in Ministry with the Poor, Improving Global Health, Developing Principled, Christian Leaders, and Creating New and Renewed Congregations). **IN LIGHT OF THESE, WHAT ARE THE CORE VALUES OF THE CONGREGATION?**

How do your mission/vision and core values guide decision-making and alignment of ministries in the church? See this website, which might be a helpful resource: <https://michiganumc.org/resources/church-vibrancy/>

WHAT UNIQUE QUALITIES DOES THIS CHARGE POSSESS THAT SETS IT APART?

PASTORAL MINISTRY NEEDED: DESCRIBE WHAT IS NEEDED FROM THE PASTOR (PRESENT OR FUTURE) IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS IN ORDER TO ASSIST THE CONGREGATION TO FULFILL ITS VISION, MISSION, AND GOALS. WE MUST REMEMBER THAT WE ARE PART OF AN ITINERATE SYSTEM, SO THE FOCUS HERE IS ON THE OFFICE, NOT THE PERSON.

A. Spiritual Gifts: (Preaching, teaching, presence [How is s/he present with people especially those hurting], caring, etc.)

B. Leadership Style:

C. Worship Leadership and Preaching: (Include a description of the worship style and options your congregation provides.)

D. Pastoral Care:

E. Administration:

F. Community Involvement:

G. Academic and Career Experience Desired:

IN THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH APPOINTMENTS ARE MADE WITHOUT REGARD TO RACE, ETHNIC ORIGIN, GENDER, MARITAL STATUS, AGE, OR DISABILITIES. HOW IS THE SPRC PREPARING THE CONGREGATION TO GENUINELY EMBRACE OPEN ITINERACY? YOU MAY BE EXPECTED AS A CONGREGATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A TRAINING EXPERIENCE REGARDING CROSS-RACIAL/CROSS-CULTURAL EXPERIENCE.

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION: DESCRIBE COMMUNITY (URBAN, RURAL, SUBURBAN, SMALL TOWN, ETC.), GENERAL ECONOMIC SITUATION, AND EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION OF THE AREA IN WHICH THE CONGREGATION IS LOCATED.

SCHOOLS: PLEASE DESCRIBE THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM(S) WHICH THE PASTOR'S CHILDREN MIGHT ATTEND AND/OR THE SCHOOL DISTRICT(S) THE CONGREGATION SERVES.

DEMOGRAPHICS: IDENTIFY 3 DOMINANT MOSAIC GROUPS IN YOUR CONGREGATION'S REACH (PER MISSIONINSITE)

HOW MANY NEW SMALL GROUPS WERE ESTABLISHED IN THE LAST YEAR?

HOW MANY NEW WORSHIP SERVICES WERE ORGANIZED BY THE CHURCH IN THE LAST YEAR?

WHAT GOALS HAVE BEEN SET FOR THE CONGREGATION FOR THE NEXT YEAR? THE NEXT THREE TO FIVE YEARS? HOW WILL THESE GOALS BE ACHIEVED?

PARSONAGE INFORMATION: PLEASE GIVE ADDRESS AND WHO OCCUPIES THIS HOUSE.

NUMBER OF BEDROOMS? BATHROOMS? SQUARE FOOTAGE?

IS THERE A FAMILY ROOM? STUDY?

GENERAL CONDITION OF HOUSE?

ANNUAL REVIEW OF HOUSE MADE ON WHAT DATE? ACTION REQUIRED ON?

CHURCH STAFF: LIST THE POSITIONS OF PAID STAFF (¶258.2.g (12) 2016 Book of Discipline page 195) OTHER THAN THE PASTOR. THE PASTOR'S SALARY INFORMATION IS FOUND ON THE COMPENSATION RECOMMENDATION FORM.

NAME	POSITION	HOURS/ WEEK WORK	SALARY/ HOURLY RATE	BENEFITS*	TOTAL SALARY/ WAGES
			\$	\$	\$
			\$	\$	\$
			\$	\$	\$
			\$	\$	\$

List additional paid staff on a separate sheet of paper.

*Benefits may include: Hospitalization and Medical Expense Program; Pension; Continuing education; Travel expenses; and Other.

PROTECTION POLICY

Does your church have a protection policy? (Enter Yes or No in box below.)	Is the most recent copy on file with the district office? (Enter Yes or No in box below.)	When was your church protection policy last reviewed? (Enter date in XX/XX/XXXX in box below.)	When was the last training held for your church on your protection policy? (Enter date in XX/XX/XXXX in box below.)

It is the responsibility of the SPRC to prepare the congregation to genuinely embrace and accept the open itinerancy of The United Methodist Church.

Are you an engage congregation? (Formerly Spotlight or Six-Lanes) A link to this website may be helpful: <https://michiganumc.org/missions/engage-mi/>

WHAT ARE THE 2-4 MAJOR AREA OF MISSION FOCUS FOR YOUR CONGREGATION AND BRIEFLY DESCRIBE EACH?

WHO DO YOU PARTNER WITH TO ACHIEVE EACH MISSION FOCUS LISTED ABOVE?

SIGNATURE AND DATE

SIGNATURE AND DATE