

SECTION IV

BEGINNINGS

ON SAYING WELCOME! THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

The kind of welcome that is extended the incoming pastor/family often sets the tone for the relationship that will exist between pastor and congregation. It is difficult to adequately prepare a farewell for one pastor/family and at the same time prepare to welcome the new pastor/family. This is uniquely United Methodist! Yet, as challenging as it may be, it is essential that both the "letting go" and the "embracing" be equally fulfilled. Above all, feel free to be creative and to plan to make the welcome one of joy and real excitement.

Following are some guidelines to assist you in welcoming the new pastor/family. The primary responsibility for this rests with the chair/members of the PPR Committee.

- 1. PPR/Chair:**
The chair of the PPR Committee is encouraged to stay in touch with your District Superintendent.
- 2. PPR Committee:**
After the April Cabinet Meeting, the District Superintendent will be establishing a "Meet Your Pastor" gathering with the PPR Committee and incoming pastor. At this time the new pastor will be visiting the parsonage and church/churches of the new appointment. The goal in all of this is to give the new pastor/family a real sense of welcome! It is not recommended that people from your church go to visit the new pastor at his/her present church.
- 3. Extend an early welcome!**
Encourage some of the church leaders to write notes/letters of welcome to the new pastor/family after the formal announcement is made to the congregation.
- 4. Remember the children:**
If there are children/youth in the incoming pastor's family, consider ways to help them feel welcome. You are encouraged to think creatively. Prepare for entertainment during early days.
- 5. Formal announcement:**
The PPR Committee chair needs to be responsible for an article announcing the appointment of the new pastor in the local newspaper(s) a few days prior to the coming of the pastor.
- 6. Welcome reception?**
The PPR Committee Chair should discuss with the incoming pastor plans to welcome his/her family. This can include such things as a reception, fellowship gathering, neighborhood groups, etc.
- 7. Moving plans:**
The PPR chair needs to discuss with the incoming pastor plans involving moving day schedule, etc. (see Guidelines for Moving, page 21).
- 8. First Sunday:**
The PPR chair needs to be the primary contact person relative to the first Sunday. Discuss your role in terms of presenting the pastor/family to the congregation. Mutually agree how

this will be done in the context of worship/reception/order of worship, parish newsletter, etc. (See "An Order for The Celebration of an Appointment" Pg. 18.)

9. PPR meeting with new pastor:

Discuss with the incoming pastor a date for your first PPR Committee meeting. It is important for the PPR Committee to meet with the pastor within the first couple of weeks. One of the suggestions for this first meeting is to use the "Expectations of the Pastor's Role" (see next page). This allows for understandings to be clear. This instrument then becomes the basis for review of the pastor's ministry in the months ahead.

Also, be sure a clear understanding is established regarding office hours, time off, etc. Support your pastor in the discipline of keeping regular hours so as to be available to the congregation, as well as time for personal replenishment. It is helpful to interpret to the congregation that pastors are generally heavily committed on weekends and need to take time off during the week.

In that first meeting, discuss with your pastor any understanding you have about policies relating to weddings, funerals, etc. Share church goals with the pastor. In the first meeting, go over the pastor's compensation and pay periods. Be clear about such things as utility bills, purchase/payment of office supplies, etc.

Set dates for future meetings; you may want to meet more frequently the first year.

Remind members of the PPR Committee that they serve as the primary listening and support group for the pastor.

10. Vacation plans:

Discuss vacation time immediately. Remember that since the United Methodist Church has an itinerant ministry, if the pastor has not had a vacation prior to the move then it is appropriate and important to enjoy a vacation before the end of the year. (There are vacation and continuing education policies established by the Cabinet. Consult with your D.S. for details.)

11. Church leaders' meeting:

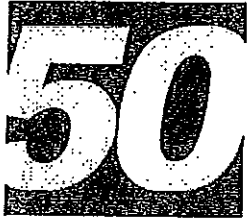
Consider arranging a meeting of the Lay Leader and persons from various groups in the church with the new pastor. This might be a dinner or an informal gathering.

Hopefully the new pastor will not be put in a position of needing to make major decisions during his/her first few weeks. This beginning time ought to provide opportunities for getting to know the congregation.

12. Congregation understanding:

Discuss ways of encouraging the congregation to welcome the new pastor and to be patient as he/she learns names/traditions of the church.

Please remember that these are not rules but suggestions to stimulate your thinking. You have a sacred trust. Pray for wisdom and insight.



50 Ways to Welcome your New Pastor or Associate Pastor

From the Lewis Center for Church Leadership

Prepared by Robert Crossman

Prepare to welcome your new pastor

- 1. Open your hearts and decide that you are going to love your new pastor.
- 2. Begin praying daily for the new pastor and family, even as you continue to pray for your departing pastor and family.
- 3. Invite church members individually to send cards of welcome and encouragement to the incoming pastor.
- 4. Know that welcoming your new pastor in genuine and effective ways lays the ground work for a healthy and vital relationship and the development of stable, long-term ministries together.
- 5. Plan for the transition. Occasionally important welcoming gestures are missed with everyone thinking someone else is handling these details.
- 6. Appoint a specific liaison person to whom the pastor can go for help and information during the transition.

Say goodbye to your current pastor in a healthy way

- 7. Show love, regard, and even grief, for your departing pastor. This is one of the best things you can do for the new pastor.
- 8. Acknowledge the change in public ways. Especially in the case of a much-beloved pastor, this allows the congregation better to let go and receive the new pastor.
- 9. Provide the congregation the opportunity to say thank you and goodbye to the outgoing pastor, even if things have not always gone well.
- 10. Find appropriate occasions — in worship and at other times — to thank the outgoing pastor.
- 11. Express appreciation in ways that are consistent with what you have done in the past.
- 12. Consider giving the pastor the last two weeks off. This helps the pastor enter the new situation rested and gives an emotional buffer between one pastor's last Sunday and another pastor's first Sunday.
- 13. Plan goodbye celebrations prior to the beginning of the two weeks off.

- 14. Provide information to the local media about the outgoing pastor's accomplishments and future plans.
- 15. Do not invite the former pastor to return for weddings, funerals, or baptisms. This allows your former pastor to engage fully with his or her new congregation, and it establishes your new pastor as everyone's pastor from the beginning.

Make things move-in ready

- 16. Make sure the parsonage and pastor's office are clean and ready. Offer to provide help or a cleaning service if needed.
- 17. Determine if the parsonage is in need of repairs or painting. Consult the outgoing and incoming pastors about timing so as not to disrupt the lives of either party. Do not ask a new pastor to move into a parsonage "under construction."
- 18. Consult the new pastor on any paint, design, or furnishings issues.
- 19. Offer to have someone cut the parsonage grass.
- 20. Make sure the new pastor and church officials are clear on how moving expenses are paid and all matters related to compensation, benefits, and reimbursement policies.

Welcome your pastor on moving day

- 21. Stock the parsonage refrigerator and pantry with some staples.
- 22. Make sure there are kid-friendly foods and snacks in the refrigerator if children are arriving.
- 23. Have a small group on hand to greet the new pastor and family when they arrive and to help as needed.
- 24. Offer child care if there is an infant or toddler in the household.
- 25. Invite children in the household to do things with others of their same age.
- 26. Welcome any youth in the household by having church youth group members stop by and offer to show them around.

Continue the welcome during the entry period

- 27. Take food over for the first few days. Many churches continue the practice of having a "pounding" for the new pastor when persons bring food items.
- 28. Provide a map with directions to local dry cleaners, grocery store, drug store, veterinarian, etc., and information on local options for internet and cable television providers.
- 29. Give gift certificates to several of your favorite restaurants in the community.
- 30. Give the pastor and family a welcome reception on the first Sunday.
- 31. Plan a worship celebration of the new appointment.
- 32. Invite the new pastor to any social events held by Sunday School classes or other groups in the early months.
- 33. Make sure the pastor's spouse and children, if applicable, are invited to Sunday School and other appropriate small groups.
- 34. Continue to remember your new pastor and family in your daily prayers.

Help the new pastor become familiar with the congregation

- 35. Introduce yourself to the pastor repeatedly! You have one name to learn; your pastor has many names to learn.
- 36. Wear name tags. Even if name tags are not a tradition, the congregation can wear them for a few weeks to help the pastor learn names.
- 37. Provide a current pictorial directory of all the church members, if available.
- 38. Provide an up-to-date list of all church committees and officers.
- 39. Provide the new pastor with a tour of where things are kept inside the church and perhaps a floor plan of the facilities.
- 40. Orient the new pastor to information systems and the way records are kept.

- 41. Make sure the pastor has a list of home bound or nursing home members, a list of those struggling with long term illness, and a list of those still in grief over recent deaths in the family. Better yet, take the pastor for an introduction to each of these households.
- 42. Have an appropriate person offer to go with the pastor for introductions and support if there are particularly urgent pastoral situations (a member near death or the family of a member who has just died).
- 43. Have a lay official offer to take the pastor to meet church members in their businesses or other work settings, if they are easily accessible.
- 44. Offer to help arrange small group sessions to meet and talk with the congregation.
- 45. Create a "church yellow pages" (a list of people in the church who have specific skills that a newcomer may find beneficial.... auto mechanic, doctor, dentist, dry cleaners, book store, office supply, etc.).

Help the new pastor connect to the community

- 46. Provide local media with information about the new pastor.
- 47. Provide a list of hospitals, nursing homes, and community service agencies.
- 48. Introduce your new pastor to other clergy in the community. Provide information on any ecumenical activities or associations.
- 49. Introduce the new pastor to public and community leaders.
- 50. Ask church members in civic clubs to take the new pastor to one of their meetings.

Dr. Robert Crossman, Minister of New Church Starts and Congregational Development for the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church, is the primary author of this document. The Lewis Center staff and others provided suggestions and editorial assistance.

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EXPECTATIONS OF THE PASTOR'S ROLE – FOR PPR COMMITTEE

To be used with the new pastor at first meeting of PPR Committee.

How important is each pastoral function to you? Circle the number 6 if you think the function is extremely important, 1 if you think it is unimportant, 2, 3, 4, or 5 if you estimate it somewhere in between.

1. Works with adults in adult religious education classes and/or special seminar series, etc. 1 2 3 4 5 6
2. Participates in community projects and organizations, such as service clubs, United Way, etc. 1 2 3 4 5 6
3. Ministers to the sick, dying and bereaved. 1 2 3 4 5 6
4. Leads corporate worship. 1 2 3 4 5 6
5. Works with congregational boards and committees. 1 2 3 4 5 6
6. Maintains a disciplined program of prayer and personal devotion. 1 2 3 4 5 6
7. Accepts speaking engagements before community and civic groups, for special community occasions or radio/TV. 1 2 3 4 5 6
8. Oversees church office activities, church bulletins, correspondence, records etc. 1 2 3 4 5 6
9. Tries to maintain harmony and resolve conflict among church members over church programs, finances and elections. 1 2 3 4 5 6
10. Prepares and preaches sermons. 1 2 3 4 5 6
11. Visits new residents and recruits new members. 1 2 3 4 5 6
12. Counsels with persons about their personal problems. 1 2 3 4 5 6
13. Follows a disciplined program of continuing education. 1 2 3 4 5 6
14. Works with children, visits children's Sunday School classes, gives children's sermons, etc. 1 2 3 4 5 6
15. Assists victims of social neglect, injustice, and prejudice; cooperates with social services and charitable programs. 1 2 3 4 5 6
16. Leads the congregation to an increasing openness in experiencing the racial ethnic inclusiveness of The United Methodist Church. 1 2 3 4 5 6
17. Works with young people (junior and senior high) in classes and/or fellowship groups. 1 2 3 4 5 6
18. Administers baptism and communion, conducts weddings and funerals. 1 2 3 4 5 6

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| 19. Cultivates a home and personal life with some friends and interests outside local church activities. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 20. Leads financial drives and building programs | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 21. Talks with individuals about their spiritual development, religious life and beliefs | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 22. Participates in denominational activities and conferences. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 23. Presents denominational programs to the congregation. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 24. Helps plan church budget and helps oversee church finances. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 25. Fosters fellowship at church gatherings. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 26. Serves as an example of high moral and ethical character. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 27. Maps out objectives and helps plan over-all church strategy and programs. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 28. Interests capable people in church activities; recruits and enables lay leadership. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 29. Visits regularly in the homes of the congregations(s). | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 30. Counsels people facing major decisions of life, such as marriage. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 31. Supplies new ideas for activities. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 32. Promotes enthusiasm for church activities. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 33. Gives oversight to the total educational program of the church. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 34. Leads confirmation classes for youth and adults. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 35. Oversees the church staff. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 36. Develops relationship with Lay Leader and formulates a partnership for ministry. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 37. Develops goals, plans and worship service format in partnership with Lay Leader. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

Now that you have completed the questionnaire, please go back and draw a circle around the number (to the left of the page) of the five functions that you consider most important.

If this is the first meeting of a pastor with his/her S/PPRC following a move, discuss the following:

1. Issues of transition: parsonage, schools, spouse employment, insurance, compensation package as understood by pastor and S/PPRC, vacation time, travel obligations the pastor has, etc.
2. Church policies and traditions (written and unwritten).
3. Dates for future S/PPRC meetings (at least once each quarter).

Two Biblical Models for Transition

Moses to Joshua

Moses spoke to the LORD, saying,

"Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint someone over the congregation who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of the LORD may not be like sheep without a shepherd."

So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand upon him;

have him stand before Eleazar the priest and all the congregation, and commission him in their sight.

You shall give him some of your authority, so that all the congregation of the Israelites may obey.

But he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the decision of the Urim before the LORD; at his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he and all the Israelites with him, the whole congregation." Numbers 27: 15-21

Steps in the transition...

1. Moses recognizes that it is time for him to begin relinquishing his leadership.
2. He calls upon God for help in making the choice
3. The current leader, Moses, indicates his support of the chosen successor (lay your hand...)
4. The outgoing leader signifies respect of the process by which the new leader was selected
5. The community witnesses the transition
6. Through Eleazar, the priest, the new leadership is endorsed through practice and ritual
7. The entire community is involved

Questions to discuss...

1. Has the pastor helped the congregation understand that this transition is at a good time for the congregation, pastor and pastor's family?
2. What are the opportunities for all in this transition?
3. Has your PPRC (and other church groups) spent time in prayer about this transition?
4. What support and encouragement have you heard from the District Superintendent and your pastor about the new pastor?
5. Have you communicated these points to the congregation?
6. Do you understand the benefits of the itinerant system for appointing pastors? Have you had a discussion about these or are too many people focused on the negatives?
7. Have you made plans for a significant ritual on your current pastor's last Sunday?
8. Have you made plans for a significant ritual on your new pastor's first Sunday?
9. What plans are there for the entire congregation to say goodbye?
10. What plans are there for the entire congregation to say hello?

AN ORDER FOR THE CELEBRATION OF AN APPOINTMENT
from *The United Methodist Book of Worship*

This order is intended primarily for use within a corporate service of worship. It may be led by the chairperson of the PPR Committee, Lay Leader and/or by some other designated leader in the congregation.

Before the reading of the Scripture lessons, the pastor comes before the Lord's table and the person officiating says to the congregation:

Dear friends, today we welcome (Name), who has been appointed to serve as pastor of (name of church).

We believe that (he/she) is well qualified and has been prayerfully and wisely appointed.

The person officiating then says to the pastor:

(Name), you have committed yourself to live among us as a bearer of the Word of God; minister of the sacraments; and sustainer of love, order, and discipleship of the people of God.

The pastor responds:

Today I reaffirm this commitment in the presence of this congregation.

The person officiating says to the congregation:

Brothers and sisters in Christ, as a people committed to participate in the ministries of the church by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness, will you who celebrate this new beginning support and uphold
(Name) in these ministries?

The congregation responds:

We have committed ourselves, and we reaffirm our commitment.

The person officiating continues:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, strengthen and sustain us in our ministries together, with (Name) as our pastor. Give (him/her) and us patience, courage, and wisdom so to care for one another and challenge one another that together we may follow Jesus Christ, living together in love, and offering our gifts and talents in your service, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

As the pastor stands at the Lord's table, several people come forward to make presentations. As these are received, the pastor places them on the table. Other presentations may be made and some here omitted, as deemed appropriate.

Presenter: (Name), accept this Bible, and be among us as one who proclaims the Word.

Pastor: Amen.

Presenter: (Name), take this water, and baptize new Christians in this place.

Pastor: Amen.

Presenter: (Name), take this bread and cup, and keep us in communion with Christ and his Church.

Pastor: Amen.

Presenter: (Name), receive this hymnal, and guide us in our prayers and praise.

Pastor: Amen.

Presenter: (Name), receive this stole, and shepherd us as a pastor.

Pastor: Amen.

Presenter: (Name), receive this *Book of Discipline*, and strengthen our connections as United Methodists.

Pastor: Amen.

Presenter: (Name), receive this globe, and lead us in our mission to the community and the world.

Pastor: Amen.

Pastor: Let us pray.

Pastor and Congregation:

Lord God, bless the ministries of your church. We thank you for the variety of gifts you have bestowed upon us. Draw us together in one Spirit, that each of us may use our differing gifts as members of one body. May your Word be proclaimed with faithfulness, and may we be doers of your Word and not hearers only. As we who have died and risen with Christ in baptism gather at His table and then scatter into the world, may we be one in service to others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

Congregation: And also with you.