



**GUIDELINES**  
for Leading Your Congregation

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# **PASTOR-PARISH RELATIONS**

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*Supporting your pastor, staff,  
and congregation*

*Written by Betsey Heavner  
General Board of Discipleship*

PASTOR-PARISHRELATIONS

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# Our Identity, Call, and Mission

**A**bout now a small voice in the back of your mind may be whispering, “What am I doing here? To what have I said yes? What is my role?” At the same time you may be aware that your congregation has extended to you a *call—a call to serve*. And you have said *yes—yes to leading in a vital mission*.

***The mission of The United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ.*** You have agreed to serve as a leader bringing your unique passions, gifts, and abilities to the church. When the leaders focus on the church’s purpose—*its mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ*—and link that purpose to the passions of the people, amazing things can happen.

***The fundamental way we fulfill our mission is to reach out to people in the name of Jesus Christ, to relate people to God, to nurture and strengthen them in their journey of discipleship, and to send them into the world to be the church—inviting and receiving others in the name of Jesus Christ. We call this the primary task of The United Methodist Church.*** Effective leaders keep the whole of the primary task in their sight, working to keep all of its aspects in concert.

***Leaders in the church must be first, and foremost, spiritual leaders*** who model and embrace Christian discipline and teaching. *By practicing the means of grace—prayer, fasting, studying Scripture, corporate worship, celebration of the Lord’s Supper, Christian conversation, and acts of mercy—church leaders stay tuned to the mission of the church and live out the primary task.* Members and would-be members should be able to look to a congregation’s leaders for spiritual example and direction because true leaders are known by their fruits. People’s lives are changed through their influence.

***Leaders use their gifts and talents to enable others to use their gifts and talents to the fullest potential.*** The flow of information, inspiration, guidance, and vision from leaders is an encouragement to others on their spiritual journey. Leaders help others to see new possibilities. When leaders are focused on the mission of the church, community is built and ministry occurs. The church focused on God is alive with creative energy aimed at transformation.

## Four Essential Leadership Functions

*Church leaders support and strengthen the church when they pay attention to these leadership functions: (1) help people discover the current reality in which they live; (2) bring together the congregation’s understandings of current reality and desired reality into a shared vision; (3) develop the plans*

*to help the community move from current reality toward the reality of its shared vision; and finally, (4) monitor the whole work of the church as the congregation moves with God's guidance toward its vision.*

### 1. Discovering Current Reality

Accurately describing current reality—the way things are—may be the most important function of leadership. The booklets in this Guideline series offer suggestions for leaders to pay attention to the various committees of the church's ministry. In addition, it is critical for church leaders—lay and clergy—to spend time together discussing the ministry of the whole congregation. The conversation needs to include attentiveness to God's guidance and everything that describes a congregation's "what we are, here and now." Because God is always doing a new thing, this job is continuous. When we pay attention to change, we provide a base of integrity and strength from which to move into the future. Faith in Jesus Christ and a spiritual centering in God offers the strongest foundation to move people fearlessly through the massive changes of the twenty-first century.

### 2. Naming Shared Vision

Ask the question, "What do you want more than anything else in the world?" and most persons will give a response that indicates that they want to live in a world filled with love, faith, security, and meaning. Because persons desire a positive future, they are willing to invest themselves in organizations that are committed to it. By its very nature, the church is devoted to the creation of a better future. When the church promises to move people personally and corporately toward their desired reality, people will invest time, energy, and resources into the church. As people see their own desires linked to the congregational vision and a deeper understanding of God's future, they deepen their commitment and involvement. Building this link is a vital role of leadership.

Naming a shared vision is accomplished by asking people about their lives and their faith, and by listening very carefully. By listening, we mean deep listening—the kind that requires setting aside our own agendas and entering into the worldviews of others, and listening for God through the conversation. It is a significant shift in our understanding of leadership in the church to move from telling people what we think they need to know to listening to people in order to find out who they are and what their desired realities are. Effective spiritual leaders listen to the hearts of people and begin to articulate a shared vision.

### 3. Developing Bridges

To span the gulf between our current reality and the hope expressed in the shared vision, leaders must build a bridge. The third critical function of

leadership is to plan actions and develop systems that create the bridge across this gulf. Leaders who are elected to administrative and program committees are responsible for the ongoing work of the church and must pay attention to the present. At the same time, leaders *must* be focused on the future—keeping today and tomorrow in tension—ensuring that the church does not get stuck in the past, present, or future.

Church leaders who are attentive to God’s leading and who can hold the tension between today and tomorrow are *visionary leaders*. Visionary leaders see it all—current reality, desired reality, and the bridges to get from one to the other.

#### 4. Monitoring the Journey

Perhaps the most critical task for leaders is keeping an eye on the whole of the faith journey of the congregation. When leaders are constantly caught up in “doing” the administrative and program work of the church, there is not any time left for “being” with God in prayer to discern the leading of the Spirit for the congregation. Leaders must step back from “doing” constant activities in order to pay attention to the total direction of the church’s mission and ministry. All elected and appointed leaders must spend time together listening to God in prayer, Bible study, conversation, and other means of grace in order to lead the entire community in the work of Christ. Anything less is not Christian spiritual leadership.

## Your Job on the Staff-Parish Relations Committee

This committee is also called the “Pastor-Parish Relations (PPR) Committee.” In this Guideline, the term Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) is used because the committee relates to the entire staff, both appointed leadership and employed lay leadership.

You have been elected a leader in your church! *A leader in the church is a person who is spiritually gifted and called by God to guide the church to follow God’s will.* This way of thinking about leadership focuses our attention on God and away from “business as usual.” It is sometimes hard to remember our focus when meetings seem routine or while listening to someone who is unhappy or in the midst of a crisis or celebration.

For two millennia, Christians have learned that effective spiritual leaders follow Jesus’ model of servant leadership. During historical times of church

growth and revival, spiritual leaders—both lay and clergy—have served in partnership. *The Staff-Parish Relations Committee is the local church administrative unit in which lay and clergy spiritual leaders integrate the staff and congregational interests to focus on the mission of the church.* An effective partnership of leaders that is guiding the church to follow God’s will occurs when individuals who are growing in faith come together for a common purpose. Spiritual leadership requires both your careful attention to the “means of grace” and your complete openness to the Word of God.

“Means of grace” is the title of a John Wesley sermon. Means of grace are those practices that enable Christians to be more receptive to the grace of God. In his writings, Wesley named various means of grace, including public worship, study of Scripture, the Lord’s Supper, prayer, fasting and abstinence, and acts of mercy.

## Your Job as the Chairperson

\_\_\_ Ask God to increase your understanding of the way your skills will be used as chairperson of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC).

\_\_\_ Read this Guideline to understand the responsibility of the SPRC and the committee’s relationships with other parts of the church system.

\_\_\_ Make an appointment with your pastor to talk about the expectations each of you has for the functioning of the committee. Form an understanding of “partnership” for your work together. Pray together for your church and the leadership each of you will have.

\_\_\_ Meet with the previous chairperson to become familiar with how the committee worked in the past and to handle any unfinished business. Get copies of job descriptions, policies, and procedures that have guided the committee.

\_\_\_ Read *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*. The 2000 edition will guide your work.

*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* is revised following each General Conference. Most of the book is organized by paragraph rather than page, chapter, or section. The paragraphs are numbered consecutively within each chapter or section, but many numbers are skipped to allow for future enactment. Two sections will be particularly helpful for your leadership on the Staff-Parish Relations Committee: the paragraphs in the 200’s relate to the local church and the paragraphs in the 300’s relate to the ministry of the ordained. There is a table of contents and a topical index.

\_\_\_ Make an appointment with your district superintendent to get acquainted and to talk about the working of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee.

\_\_\_ Consult with your pastor and district superintendent to get information about working with candidates for ordained and diaconal ministry, parsonage standards, ministerial evaluations, continuing education, and other areas of your work. Ask about conference policies and federal laws related to sexual harassment, childcare workers, and equal opportunity employment and benefits for lay staff.

\_\_\_ Consult with chairpersons of other committees who relate to staff persons. For example, trustees relate to the work of a custodian; the worship committee relates to musicians and worship leaders; the education committee relates to the director of Christian education, director of youth ministry, and daycare teachers. The SPRC has responsibility for proper screening, including contacting references and performing background checks on lay employees of the congregation. The SPRC should guide the appropriate groups to conduct background checks for volunteer staff, such as children and youth workers (see the resource *Safe Sanctuaries* for guidance).

\_\_\_ Develop a calendar of meetings in consultation with the pastor, other people who will attend, and the church calendar.

\_\_\_ Arrange for training for the committee, especially new members.

Your leadership is a partnership with others. People who can help are the district superintendent, annual conference program staff persons, ordained and lay leaders in your church, and people in the community outside your church who are skilled in communication, mediation and peacemaking, law, benefit programs, and social needs. Other sources of help are your annual conference board of ordained ministry, the General Board of Discipleship, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. See the resources suggested at the back of this Guideline.

## Your Job as a Member of the Committee

\_\_\_ Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-13 while considering your own ministry and the work of this committee.

\_\_\_ Read *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* to learn what is expected of the Pastor/Staff-Parish Relations Committee. See the note about using the *Discipline* (page 7).

\_\_\_ Study these Guidelines to help you understand how the committee relates to the overall administration of your local church.

\_\_\_ When the schedule of meetings of the committee has been made, place these dates in your personal calendar. When you cannot attend, notify the chairperson.

For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us (Romans 12:4-6).

## What's the Job of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee?

**T**he SPRC works as a team within the congregation to interpret the local church's mission and vision with several constituencies. The individuals and groups this committee works with include: the lead pastor, all ordained leaders—both elders and deacons—appointed by the bishop, the lay staff, the congregation (individually and corporately), the community outside the walls of your church, the district superintendent, and the United Methodist connectional church.

*The SPRC should have a clear understanding of your church's mission and vision, built upon reflection on the mission of the wider church and its ministry. Clear understanding of your church and prayerful listening to God's direction will guide your work with these individuals and groups. The committee also has the primary responsibility for managing relationships among these groups.*

“Manage” means guide, teach, mentor, tend to conflict, and organize celebration of ministry of ordained and lay staff. Manage does *not* mean to control these functions!

Other responsibilities for the SPRC include: explaining the nature and function of ministry to the staff and the congregation, conferring with the congregation and the staff/pastor about ministry direction, assessing the ministry of the congregation and the staff/pastor, conferring and consulting with the district superintendent, supporting lifelong learning (continuing education) for all staff, and identifying individuals from the congregation whom God seems to be calling for ordained ministry.

The committee on lay leadership nominates people for the SPRC to present for election by the charge or church conference. The Discipline (§258.2) *requires that at least five and not more than nine members be elected for terms of three years each, in three classes. (One member must be a young adult.)* This permits a carryover of committee members and thus provides continuity to the committee.

The SPRC should be the least homogenous group in the church. Each person should represent or relate to various constituencies in the church.

The Discipline *also requires that a lay member of annual conference be a member of the SPRC (§258.2). No employee of the church or a member of the pastor's or staff member's immediate family may serve on the committee.*

The SPRC of a charge where there is more than one church must have at least one representative from each church. Individual churches may form pastoral advisory committees. Charges in a cooperative parish shall meet together to consider professional leadership.

*The committee is required to meet at least quarterly.* It may be called to meet by the bishop, the district superintendent, the pastor, any member of the professional staff, or the chairperson of the committee. *It may not meet without the knowledge of the pastor or the district superintendent.* When the pastor or any member of the staff who is under consideration is not present and that person's employment is under consideration, that person must be informed prior to the meeting and immediately thereafter be brought into consultation either by the committee or the district superintendent.

The measure of an effective SPRC is growth in congregational ministry in one or more of these areas: faith, service, love of God and love of others, positive relationships.

## Overview of a Year with the Staff-Parish Relations Committee

Several functions and responsibilities of the SPRC continue throughout the year. These include assessing staff and listening to the congregation to increase effectiveness of ministry and identifying candidates for ordained ministry. Although these functions and responsibilities are

ongoing throughout this overview, they are highlighted for attention during a particular quarter.

## First Quarter: January-March

1. *Provide training or review for all committee members.* In reviewing responsibilities, be sure to include a report on the current status of candidates for ordained ministry recommended by the charge conference. The congregation needs to support and encourage candidates through the years of training and formation for ordained ministry.
2. *Explore the nature and function of the church and ministry.* Find out the pastoral and staff duties that are being performed. Jointly negotiate priorities for pastoral/staff work and review job descriptions. Rewrite as necessary. Make plans to share this information with the congregation. See the resource section for help with job descriptions.

TIP: Assign committee members to each staff member to build one-on-one relationships. Joys and concerns should be shared with the committee.

## Second Quarter: April-June

1. *Begin the assessment/evaluation of ministry areas.* The goal of assessment is to improve the ministry of the congregation under the guidance of God. Effective assessment begins with a clear understanding between the SPRC and the staff members about the expectations of the staff members. While this underscores the importance of job descriptions (see first quarter tasks above), effective assessment also calls for building positive relationships and for strong communication skills among the people involved. Suggestions for effective assessment are listed in other parts of this Guideline. Share the findings with the staff members and agree on who will follow up to improve ministry. Decide who, if anyone, will receive this information and how it will be interpreted by your committee.

This task can be assigned to subcommittees to work with the pastor and staff members to complete the evaluation of their area of ministry.

2. *Arrange a parsonage tour with the parsonage family and a representative of the board of trustees for inventory, maintenance, and repair.* Keep liaison with the parsonage family open to address issues before they become problems.

## Third Quarter: July-September

1. *Review non-salary support for the pastor and staff,* such as vacation, business expenses, professional and continuing education expenses. Make recommendations for adjustments. Review salary-and-benefits

packages for the pastor and staff for the coming year and send recommendations to the finance committee for their consideration. (That committee will report its own recommendations to the church council for approval prior to your charge/church conference.)

2. *Ask the pastor and staff for their plans for continuing education and continuing spiritual formation for the coming year.*
3. *Identify guides who can lead candidates through the Ministry Inquiry Process.*
4. *Interview candidates for ordination as deacon or elder using guidelines contained in *Christian As Minister* (see Resources).*
5. *Follow up the evaluations of ministry areas.* Evaluate the committee measurement/evaluation process and revise to improve the church's ministry.

## Fourth Quarter: October-December

1. *Compare vision/mission statements, charge conference goals, and job descriptions.* Revise job descriptions, if necessary, in consultation with the pastor and the employed staff.
2. *Evaluate the total work of this committee.* Ask for input from the pastor and staff. Search for ways to improve. The committee and staff should agree on what to report to the congregation and to the church council.

## Prepare Yourself for Leadership

**B**efore your first meeting, *review this Guideline to get the “big picture” of your job.* Note ideas that appeal to you.

*Slowly and meditatively read Mark 10:35-45 and John 13:12-20.* What does Jesus teach his followers about leadership? What is the Word from God for you as you prepare for leadership?

As a leader in your congregation and a baptized minister of Jesus Christ, you are called to lead and support the ministries of the congregation to make disciples in your community. Reflect on these questions during the tenure of your leadership:

1. What are the realities in the world surrounding your congregation? What are the opportunities for ministry they provide?
2. How are the people in your congregation witnessing and serving in the world?
3. How is God working in and through your congregation?

4. Are there activities or programs that ought to be discontinued because they do not support the mission and vision of the church?

Understanding your job, spending time with God in prayer and meditation, and understanding the context of your community is both a solid preparation for leadership and a never-ending task for leaders.

## Sample Meeting Agenda

Committee members should be notified by a telephone call or postcard in advance of the meetings. The chairperson should arrange for an opening devotional, preferably from a member of the committee.

Minutes of the last meeting should be corrected, if necessary, and approved. It may be helpful for these minutes to be mailed with the notice about the meeting in order to give members an opportunity to reflect upon them prior to the meeting.

Reports from members who are liaisons to the pastor/staff should be heard. These reports should have first been discussed with the staff members concerned. Staff members should have the opportunity to share recent joys or disappointments, plans that are progressing for the future, and the most pressing concerns.

Discuss who in the congregation and the pastor/staff can work together to achieve goals for mission and ministry.

Include a time of learning and education for the committee about its task.

Review the decisions and recommendations made during the meeting and clarify who is responsible for the actions.

Close the meeting with a brief evaluation of the meeting. How has the meeting helped to advance the mission and vision of your church? What issues have been raised for future agendas? How have committee members experienced God's love and guidance in this meeting? Spend some time in prayer.

## Your First Meeting

1. Open your meeting with worship, seeking God's guidance. Use First Corinthians 12:4-13 as a scriptural basis for the committee's work.
2. Go over the responsibilities of the committee and its relationships with other organizations in the local church. Help new members become a part of the group by inviting everyone to join the discussion about the task.

3. Elect a vice-chairperson and a secretary.
4. Conduct an assessment of last year's committee activities. Which activities are ongoing? What needs to be added or taken away in order to fulfill the mission of the church? How can the committee work as a team to help the church accomplish its mission?
5. Study the paragraphs from *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* that relate to the work of the committee and make plans to carry out those tasks and responsibilities.
6. Go over the mission statement and goals adopted by your charge conference to gain understanding about the kind of ministry your church needs. If your church has no mission statement or goals, urge the church council, with the help of your pastor, to formulate and adopt some.
7. Agree on the procedures for your decision making and discussions.
8. *Stress the absolute necessity for confidentiality as it relates to what goes on in the committee—not only the actions taken, but also the discussions preceding the actions.* Remember that the administrative task of working with personnel is different than the program ministries of other committees. It is helpful to reflect on the difference between confidentiality (private matters shared in trust) and secrecy (something hidden or concealed).

## Skills for Staff-Parish Relations Committees

The sample agenda on the previous pages contains the item “include a time of learning and education for the committee about its task.” Among skills that are useful for the SPRC are communication skills, hospitality and celebration skills, and peacemaking and mediation skills.

### Communication Skills: Listening and Responding to the Church and Community

One of the most difficult things to do is to listen. *Active listening requires the full attention of everyone involved.* Without listening, no communication takes place.

The SPRC listens to many different voices. It listens to the congregation, the community, the pastor, the staff, and people in the United Methodist connection. Some of these voices need help to say what they really want to say, and the SPRC may need to ask their opinions in interviews and surveys.

The SPRC should use active listening skills to make certain different voices are clearly understood.

Careful listening is such a critical task for the SPRC and for the congregation that you might consider arranging training sessions. Resources may be available in your community through sponsors of crisis hot lines or a school's communication department.

Body language is an important part of communicating. We often reveal more about what we are thinking by our actions than by our voices. Be alert to what people are saying with their hands, eyes, heads, arms, and legs.

## A Checklist for Good Communication

1. Encourage the other person to stay in the present, the here-and-now. Stay away from the "we used to do it" scenario.
2. Begin statements with "I believe" or "I feel," and encourage others to do the same.
3. Ask what the other person is feeling, if appropriate. Body language is a clue. Be aware of your own feelings as well.
4. Repeat what you hear to ensure accuracy. Ask questions for information.
5. Build trust by finding what you can agree on, then move on to any differences.
6. Accept; do not judge. This does not necessarily mean reaching an agreement.
7. Suggest opportunities for in-depth conversation (at home, on a walk, at lunch, and so forth).
8. Provide a platform for sharing (for example, an "I wish" card in the Sunday bulletin).

## Hospitality and Celebration Skills

The SPRC is the cheerleading squad for the staff of your church. Hospitality includes a pleasant environment for the staff to work in and the tools and equipment for the job. How will you celebrate the work of the staff who builds the mission and vision of the church?

*The United Methodist Book of Worship* includes services to celebrate the appointment of clergy leaders and to say farewell to clergy leaders.

Recognize, however, the importance of acknowledging all staff at times other than the beginning or end of their appointment/employment or Christmas time.

## Communication and Peacemaking: Dealing with Rumors

Rumors can get started and travel quickly. It is important when rumors begin to make sure that facts surrounding the situation get out quickly. Notices in the church newsletter can help correct misinformation.

It is essential to use facts to confront those who are spreading the rumors and to ask them to let everyone know the truth. Beware of falling into the trap of repeating the misinformation. State the facts from the pulpit when appropriate and necessary. In cases where the misinformation has become material for the local media, invite reporters to hear the facts when they are given. The SPRC can lead the congregation to be proactive with news releases to local newspapers, daily and weekly, and other media.

The quicker the facts are made known, the quicker the rumors will die.

## Communication Skills for Measuring Ministry: Giving Feedback

The job of the SPRC is to interpret the congregation's mission and vision in order to provide feedback to the congregation, the staff, and the district superintendent. Assessment of ministry should raise awareness of mission and vision for both the congregation and the staff.

Begin the measurement with consideration of:

1. The place where ministry takes place—the community, the church and its history, people and their history.
2. The mission/vision statements of the congregation and charge conference goals.
3. The tasks or job description of the one being assessed.
4. The performance of the individual. What kind of results does the individual obtain? What results do we desire and expect? How can we help?
5. The gifts, skills, and ability of the individual. What qualities are present, and which ones are lacking? How can we help by matching our needs with the available skills? Perhaps rewriting the job description will help.

6. Team-ministry approach. How can more members become team members to share the load?

## Communication and Mediation Skills: Resolving Problems

Conflict is simply two different ideas in the same place at the same time. Conflict is normal in communities and families. *The important part of conflict management is bringing those conflicts into the open where they can be clarified.* Good communication will permit understanding by the parties in the conflict. Once understanding is achieved, work with one another to resolve the conflict. If the conflict is handled properly, a strengthened church can result.

Know when to ask for help. Earlier is better! See suggestions in the resource list.

## Ministers Together

**T**he apostle Paul, writing to the church in Rome (Romans 12:6-8) and to us, stated that *we are all members of the Body of Christ*. Each of us has different gifts that God can use, and we are all ministers to God's saving grace. Some are ordained to preach, to teach the Word of God, to administer the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and to lead the church in ministries in the world.

The United Methodist Church recognizes several forms of ministry, including ordained ministers, local pastors, diaconal ministers, deaconesses, and missionary personnel. All of these people have committed themselves to ministry. They, along with the laity in the local congregation, make up the ministry of the church. You may not have all of these forms of ministry present in your congregation. Which do you have?

We are not bound by *where* we minister, for as John Wesley said, "The world is my parish." Each of us is a baptized minister where we are, and we minister to those around us. It may be the service organization we belong to or the baseball team or our family or the school. Through our connectional system and our individual baptisms, we reach out beyond our local church. Jesus told the disciples and us to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). Each of us needs to minister to all persons so they may be brought into full relationship with Christ's Body.

*The SPRC models how a group talks about its understanding of ministry and how laypeople and clergy minister together.* Here are some ways to start a discussion:

Read Mark 2:1-12 and discuss “ministry.” Complete the following thoughts:

1. I was ministering to someone when . . .
2. Someone ministered to me when . . .
3. The spiritual gift that I see in you (name of each committee member) is . . .
4. I believe God is leading me into a ministry of . . .
5. The support I can give others who minister is . . .
6. I would like this committee to help me develop my faith by . . .
7. Our committee’s ministry is . . .

The task of the SPRC calls for balancing the mission of the church with the commitment, skills, and talents of those in ministry. The committee needs to assign tasks to those who have the skills necessary to do the task. Consider the lay members as well as the pastor(s) for these tasks. For example, you may find members who are skilled at making hospital calls and will offer a ministry to those hospitalized.

When we affirm gifts of the laity and of the clergy and weave them together, we are truly ministers together.

## Support for the Clergy and Staff

There are many ways to support the ordained and lay staff. It is more than saying “Hello, how are you?” when you greet on Sunday morning. It is more than saying “Thank you” when a staff member has performed a menial job. *It is building up relationships between persons; it is getting to know one another so that you know when something is bothering the other person even when nothing is said.*

Stress and pressure sap the strength of church staff as much as it drains the strength of other people. The SPRC has an important role supporting the morale of the staff and providing positive, helpful feedback. Pastors need friendly advisers, persons to suggest how best to handle some of the joys, concerns, and issues of the parish. This function of counsel determines, in large measure, the degree to which the shared vision can be achieved. *The*

*SPRC members are chosen because they have the ability, by way of the Holy Spirit, to discern what the pastor (or staff) needs, what the church needs, and how to bring these needs together for ministry.* Possessing the information that the SPRC can provide is essential to developing and meeting the mission and ministry direction of the congregation and pastor.

## Specific Support

Each year the committee needs to review salary and nonsalary support for each staff member. Remember that your annual conference sets minimum salary recommendations for ordained ministers. Have the lay member of the annual conference from your church discuss the action taken by the conference with the committee before the committee makes compensation recommendations for the coming fiscal year.

For other staff members, assign a member of the committee to contact other churches of a similar size in your vicinity to discover their salary scale for the same services. This will help you determine equitable salary for your lay staff. Other aspects of support for all employees include determining:

1. Working conditions, including working space, office helpers (volunteers), equipment, and hours.
2. Travel expenses, including car or car allowance, pulpit supply, annual conference session-attendance allowance, continuing education for both clergy and employed staff, moving expenses, and so forth.
3. Compensation for the pastoral staff, including salary, housing, utilities, and other benefits mentioned above. Determine fringe benefits for all employees to include Social Security, Worker's Compensation, insurance, opportunity for pension program, and vacation allowances. Some conferences have vacation policies for clergy.

Your committee's recommendations go to the finance committee for their consideration. They will make their report to the church council. That report may be as you recommended, or it may differ. If it differs, the SPRC has the right and the responsibility to advise the council or the charge conference of its recommendations and the reasoning behind that decision. However, the charge conference has the final decision on salary matters.

## Continuing Education and Spiritual Formation

If individuals are to be effective in their ministry, they must have opportunities to expand their knowledge and skills through continuing education and

their identity and relationship with God through spiritual formation. Continuing education is not just for the ordained staff but for other church employees as well.

Ordained elders and deacons are required to report at charge conference on their continuing education and spiritual formation of the past year and plans for the new year. Many churches provide continuing education funds as part of the pastoral ministry for this purpose. Many annual conferences have standards and guidelines for continuing education. Check your annual conference journal for these. Talk with the clergy staff about a plan for meeting, or exceeding, these standards and guidelines.

If your pastor's plan calls for additional financial aid, it may be possible to obtain it from the Ministerial Education Fund (MEF). One-fourth of this fund is retained in each annual conference and is administered by the conference board of ordained ministry for theological education, enlistment, and continuing education. The MEF is an apportioned fund. Your committee should tell the congregation about this fund and support 100 percent remittance to the MEF.

Talk with other staff persons about their own continuing education. Church secretaries can benefit by taking advantage of seminars offered in your own community or nearby communities. Many annual conferences provide workshops for secretaries, Christian educators, youth ministers, and directors of music/choir directors/organists. Professional organizations for United Methodists provide resources and workshops for musicians, educators, youth ministers, church secretaries, and church administrators.

Many areas for possible growth and learning are enumerated in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, for example, pulpit supply, visitations, and so forth. The pastor is allowed to take one week each year and one month during one year of each quadrennium for continuing education and spiritual formation. This is not a vacation but a time of learning that will enhance the ministry of the pastor and the congregation. Furthermore, a pastor who has held a full-time appointment for at least five years is permitted to request an educational leave of up to six months while continuing to hold an appointment. The pastor will need to have a careful discussion with the committee and the district superintendent if such a plan is sought. One part of such a plan is determining alternative pastoral leadership while the leave is in effect and the financial obligations that may go along with that leadership.

# The Committee in Ministry with Ordained, Appointed Staff

There are four ongoing functions for the Staff-Parish Relations Committee with ordained elders and deacons who are members of the annual conference and appointed to your church by the bishop.

## Interpretation

One of the most important roles of the SPRC is continued communication and interpretation of the local church's mission and vision. The membership of the church and the appointed or employed leaders need consistent reminders of the common aim and direction for the shared ministry between them. When the members take on this task sufficiently, growth in ministry is the natural result.

The SPRC tells the congregation about the forms of ministry in The United Methodist Church: lay ministry, licensed ministry, ordained ministry; deacon in full connection, or elder. The SPRC also tells the congregation about the United Methodist understanding of education and credentialing for clergy, about the Ministerial Education Fund, and about the open itinerancy of The United Methodist Church. Information in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* will help you with this important communication.

In order to interpret ministry to the congregation, the SPRC members must be growing in the knowledge and love of God and in their understanding of the local church ministry. Regular worship attendance, church school or Bible study, and regular systematic giving are essential if members are to bring integrity to the interpretive function of this ministry. When this is done, the members better articulate the local church vision, not only because they know it, but because they live it! Living within the context of the mission and vision allows the members to speak as informed, faithful proponents about what God has given to the pastor and the people together.

## Assessing Effectiveness and Providing Feedback

Measuring ministerial competence is essential to the continued growth and development of the ordained staff, the lay staff, and the local church. *Thus, the spiritual and theological value of assessment must not only be stressed, it must be featured.* The Staff-Parish Relations Committee has the opportunity to encourage, develop, and improve the ministry of the church in untold

ways when it measures the effectiveness of the local church and the staff. This process provides opportunity for the SPRC to help the staff focus on priority tasks for the mission and vision of the congregation.

See the section “Communication Skills for Measuring Ministry: Giving Feedback” earlier in this Guideline.

Assessing the pastor(s) and the local church should be done in a context of Christian community. Appraisal is for the purpose of building the Body of Christ. It is therefore to be exercised in a spirit of love and care. Committee members should realize that the growth and development of the congregation are dependent upon a loving yet earnest assessment, not only of the pastor, but also of the congregation and how the church can become better.

The committee also functions to assess the employees of the local church and to consider when changes are needed in the number of paid personnel. This always happens within the vision/mission context of the local church.

Again, good listening skills are essential. To offer effective assessment in the church, the SPRC must have a full understanding of what is going on in the church and what should be taking place. This happens with a broad, well-rounded view of how the effectiveness of personnel is perceived. The SPRC that understands this perception can distinguish fantasy from reality and can be effective mediators between the congregation and the staff.

*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* calls for the SPRC to provide assessment annually for the pastor’s and staff’s use in an effective, ongoing ministry and for identifying continuing education needs and plans (§258.2f[3]). Your conference board of ordained ministry and cabinet has prepared the criteria, processes, and training for evaluation and continuing education. Check with them for their guidance.

## Consulting with the District Superintendent

There are times when pastoral change is necessary. New discernment in the call of the clergyperson, appointment needs of the annual conference, and needs of the local church are all reasons why pastoral change may be initiated. When this occurs, the SPRC conveys the local church’s needs and desires to the district superintendent. The district superintendent utilizes knowledge of the local church’s vision and mission to represent the church in the appointive process.

This is described in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, §432.1 ff.

*It is critical to note that this is a process of consultation, not of call. The connectional system allows for a pooling of clergy gifts and graces, making available a wide array of clergy for service. This clergy pool is deployed for the annual conference by the bishop and the cabinet. This cooperative system allows United Methodists to retain qualified clergy for local churches on a continual basis. The SPRC is the body that is responsible for assuring that fairness, justice, and appreciation are shown for those who facilitate God's work in the name of the church. An effective and responsible Staff-Parish Relations Committee moves the local church toward attaining its God-given vision and mission.*

For this system to function well the SPRC needs to know the vision and mission of the Church. This knowledge helps the committee keep the present pastor informed about needed directions, or it helps the bishop and the cabinet identify the gifts and graces needed for the next spiritual leader of the congregation. Clarity in consultation leads to the best possible match for clergy leadership.

## Other Issues of Ministry with Ordained, Appointed Staff

The Staff-Parish Relations Committee is the team in the local church who has primary responsibility for managing relationships when there are staff changes. In The United Methodist Church, the ordained staff is appointed to serve for one year at a time. Each year (usually in late winter), after the assessment of the congregation and pastor, the SPRC and the district superintendent consult about clergy leadership for the following year.

When there is a change in ministerial leadership, some members of the congregation will be disappointed to see the former pastor leave. It is easy to become attached to a person who has been close to families in times of crisis and celebration. It is hard to say goodbye. When leaving, the pastor should express thanks for accomplishments and for having been able to help the congregation dream about the future.

### Saying Goodbye to Clergy and Staff

The consultation process between the SPRC and district superintendent is confidential. (See comments in "Your First Meeting," item 8, page 14.) Talk with the district superintendent about the appropriate time to a change. Remember that the bishop makes the final appointment.

When an appointment change is announced, plan opportunities to celebrate the ministry of the pastor and congregation during your life together. The SPRC can model for the congregation a healthy acceptance of and the process

for grieving the loss of a pastor (and parsonage family). Work through feelings of anger, hurt, loss, and fear of failure. Do not dump previous feelings and frustrations on the new pastor; let her or him begin with a clean slate.

Ask your district superintendent about a conference policy related to pastors returning to do weddings, funerals, or visitations. Generally these life passages should be shared between the congregation and the *new* pastor. If there is any difficulty, appeal to the district superintendent for help.

The SPRC can provide opportunities for congregational members to write letters and make other expressions of appreciation to the exiting pastor. *The United Methodist Book of Worship* has a service of farewell for a pastor.

The SPRC needs to be alert to avoiding gossip (as opposed to facts) about the incoming pastor. Use good listening and communication skills.

### The Long Pastorate

In the modern era, there is recognition of a high correlation between the length of time a pastor serves a congregation and the church's growth. Therefore, we are finding across the denomination that the old average of a six-year appointment is stretching to twelve or more years. Long pastorates provide many advantages, such as greater continuity of program and leadership, deeper relationships between pastor and people, and greater spiritual growth.

Remember, however, that United Methodist appointments are for one year at a time. *The United Methodist Book of Worship* has resources for a service to celebrate an appointment. This is a fine way to welcome new ordained leaders or to welcome a pastor back for another year.

### First-time Pastors

Some congregations will have the opportunity to be the first charge for a pastor. You can help the new pastor by setting two or three goals as priorities to help the pastor learn to allocate time. The SPRC needs to take the lead to check with the pastor on how well the goals are being met. Some congregations that are the first appointment for a series of pastors understand that their mission and ministry is to nurture good pastors for a lifetime of service.

### So a New Pastor Is Coming

The United Methodist Church has an open itinerancy system for providing pastoral leadership. From the beginning, when pastors traveled their circuits on horseback, our church has practiced this traveling ministry. The bishop and the cabinet work with the SPRC to appoint pastors. *We do not "call" them. The bishop and cabinet examine the church and attempt to make a*

*match*, providing a pastor who has the skills and training to meet the needs and goals of the local church. Sometimes the local church and the bishop and cabinet will not agree. But, as a connectional church, experience has shown that the system works!

One of the reasons it works is the relationship that develops between the church and the district superintendent. A unique form of trust develops as the district superintendent comes to know the congregation—its needs, goals, and concerns. Trust develops when the SPRC has continuous, close consultation with the superintendent. Pastoral appointments are to be nondiscriminatory, made without regard to race, ethnic origin, gender, or age. The SPRC should discuss this openly with the congregation prior to a pastoral change, not only in the midst of a change.

Sometimes the district superintendent is able to visit each church only once a year, to hold the charge/church conference. That does not mean that this is the only time communication between the committee and the district superintendent takes place. The district superintendent should be on the mailing list for the parish newsletter, letters that go out to the membership, and even the Sunday bulletins. You may want to invite the district superintendent to come to a meeting with the committee to share times of rejoicing at meeting goals or celebrating events such as anniversaries. Open lines of communication, again, are the key.

*Remember that the work of the SPRC is confidential. Check with the district superintendent about when to announce a new appointment change. Consideration must be given to the current pastor and to the other congregation where your new pastor is currently serving. Remember that appointments are official only when the bishop announces them!*

Members of the SPRC should encourage the congregation to attend worship on the new pastor's first Sunday. The SPRC chair and committee need to introduce the pastor to the new community. In all sizes of communities, new pastors will have a quicker and smoother transition if they know who is influential in the community, taboos in the community, community traditions and celebrations, community policies, and the practices and agencies for social services.

The SPRC tells the congregation and the community the pastor's preferences about civic involvement, as well as pastor's unique gifts for church and civic leadership.

Each pastor who goes to a new appointment is probably grieving over leaving the prior one, and the new congregation needs to be aware of this. Pastors need time to get acquainted in the new community at large, as well

as with the congregation. Time must be allotted for personal, spiritual, and family needs. It takes time for the congregation to discover the qualities of leadership that the new pastor brings.

Each time a new pastor comes, a church has an opportunity for members to become personally involved in ministry. The gifts of all the people of God, lay and clergy, form the identity, the mission, and the ministry of the church. *Remember (and help others remember) that the parsonage family is not an extension of the pastor.* Share clear policies with the congregation and the parsonage family about the care of the parsonage and the privacy issues for the family living in the parsonage.

You should not be surprised if your new minister is a woman or a member of an ethnic group different from the majority of the congregation. Welcoming a woman or a member of an ethnic group different from the majority is to know more fully the Body of Christ. The SPRC members need to be the leaders who call the congregation to hospitality and support of the new pastor. The SPRC is charged with setting the tone of acceptance, cooperation, and support of the new pastor—whatever the race, ethnicity, gender, or age. Affirm the gifts of the Holy Spirit given to all God's people and celebrate our oneness in God.

The SPRC needs to prepare the way for the pastor. Members of the SPRC will want to talk with the various ministry teams, committees, councils, and related groups to give each an insight into the qualifications, skills, and abilities of the new pastor. Individual members should listen for expectations and concerns from the groups they meet with and report back to the SPRC. The SPRC should then plan, together, to respond to these expectations and concerns.

### So a New Deacon Is Coming

The heart of Christian ministry is Christ's ministry of outreaching love. Those who respond to God's call to lead in service and to equip others for this ministry through teaching, proclamation, and worship and who assist the elders in the administration of the sacraments are ordained deacons. All deacons in full connection are under appointment of a bishop, accountable to a charge conference, and relate to a Staff-Parish Relations Committee. Some deacons serve in a local congregation, charge, or cooperative parish. Other deacons serve in an agency, a school, or an ecumenical agency, and their appointment to a congregation is called the secondary appointment. (See *The Book of Discipline*, 2000, for details.)

The SPRC tells the congregation and the community about the ministry of the deacon. Affirm the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of the deacon. Celebrate opportunities for congregational service in the world and new

forms of ministry to carry Christ's ministry of love and service to the world. See the section in the Guideline on "Your Role with the Community Outside the Church Walls," (page 32).

## The Committee in Ministry with Non-appointed, Lay Staff

**C**hurches of all sizes hire lay staff, even if that means a musician to help with worship, a custodian, or a part-time secretary or youth minister.

As with appointed staff, there are many ways to support all of the staff. Build relationships with all persons, getting to know each other. Assist the staff with building relationships by encouraging them to take work breaks together, to celebrate special days together, and to learn new skills together. Help the congregation understand that they need to inform the staff when someone in the congregation is hospitalized or when someone needs a visit. Sometimes members feel hurt or slighted by the staff when the problem can be solved by better communication.

The Staff-Parish Relations Committee can enhance the ministry of your congregation by alleviating stress on the pastor and the staff. Make sure your staff gets positive feedback, and monitor the quality of life of the pastor, staff members, and their families. Encourage them to have regular time off.

### Specific Support

Annually review salary and non-salary support for every staff member. For lay staff members, assign a member of the committee to contact other churches in your vicinity to discover their salary scale for such services. This will help you determine equitable salary for all your staff.

Other aspects of support for all employees are listed in this Guideline under the section on clergy support. For lay employees give special attention to:

1. Working conditions, including working space, procedures with office helpers (volunteers), equipment, and hours;
2. Continuing education for all staff (time and costs);
3. Benefits, including Worker's Compensation, insurance, pension payments, and Social Security.

Your committee's recommendations go to the finance committee for their consideration. They will make their report to the church council. That report may be as you recommended, or it may differ. If it differs, the SPRC has the right and responsibility to advise the council or the charge conference of its recommendations and the reasoning behind that decision. However, the charge conference has the final decision on salary matters.

## Personnel Committee of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee

**T**he SPRC should consider the need for a personnel committee. This is especially true if yours is a large church with several employees. The personnel committee would have the responsibility of recommending personnel policies, including hiring, supervising, and firing, as well as financial compensation. Job descriptions, line of supervision, and job assessment would all be handled by the personnel committee, which would report to and seek approval from the SPRC. A very large church may have a staff person who oversees personnel and relates to SPRC.

Developing and writing personnel policies and procedures for lay staff will be helpful for day-to-day operations, as well as when resignations, terminations, and realignment of staff occur. A written personnel policy will help you and the committee through the maze of relationships that too frequently cause hard feelings that can last for many years.

*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* says that the committee and the pastor shall recommend to the church council in a written statement the policy and procedures regarding the process for hiring, evaluating, promoting, retiring, and dismissing staff personnel who are not subject to episcopal appointment as ordained clergy (§258.2f[10]). All this must be done in consultation with the pastor-in-charge and with due process.

These policies and procedures also need to comply with the laws of the state and any annual conference rules regarding employment by local churches. Check with your district superintendent or your conference staff for advice.

### Checklist for policy and procedures:

1. Expectation of job descriptions
2. Recruiting, advertising process
3. Training qualifications and certification standards

4. Hiring (need for resume, references, background check, and interviews)
5. Statement regarding sexual harassment and misconduct
6. Evaluation procedures
7. Promotion procedures
8. Termination procedures
9. Grievance procedures
10. Affirmative action procedures
11. Health and life insurance
12. Pension benefits
13. Relationship between the employee, the supervisor, and the committee.

When you have finished your statements, present them to the church council for approval. Provide copies prior to the meeting. Recommend that policies require action at two separate meetings before they take effect. Resources for policy development are at the end of this Guideline. The United Methodist Association of Church Business Administrators can provide sample policies.

## Relating to the Congregation

*The SPRC works with other congregational leaders to initiate ongoing discussion about the congregation's vision goals, mission, and ministry. This is done in concert with the lay leader, the church council, and others.* Discussion of the congregation's mission, vision and goals will help the SPRC guide and support the ordained and lay staff. Annually, you will need to consider these questions with the congregation and with other congregational leaders and staff:

1. What are the goals of this congregation for ministry?
2. Where does ministry take place—the community? What is the church and its history? Who are the people and their history?
3. What is the job description and position of the staff person? How well is the job being done based on mutually understood criteria?
4. How can we help match our needs with the available skills? Perhaps re-writing the job description will help. Perhaps the gifts of members of the congregation can be used more effectively.
5. How can more members become team members to share the load?

*The assessment process should be a dialogue with the individual being evaluated and the group or person making the assessment. The pastor and the staff should agree upon which method will be used for measurement.*

*Completing these statements is a good start:*

1. I (or we) have grown in this congregation because . . .
2. Strengths and satisfying experiences our pastor has had are . . .
3. Helpful things our staff persons have done (or tried to do) were . . .
4. Areas for growth in this staff person are . . .
5. Our committee is showing its support by . . .

The content of those sessions needs to be from your own experiences and feelings—not what someone else has said. Be honest and straightforward as you share your feelings, but be tactful and diplomatic. Always begin with the strengths and elaborate on them. Remember the different gifts given to each of us by God.

## Annual Assessment

As was pointed out earlier, the committee needs to agree with the pastor and the staff about the time and procedures for annual assessment of ministry. This could be called an “assessment covenant.” It could be a celebration of the gifts and work of the pastor/staff. See suggestions for assessment in the sections “Communication Skills for Measuring Ministry” (page 16) and “Assessing Effectiveness and Providing Feedback” (pages 21-22).

Each person should have the opportunity to report accomplishments, and these should be celebrated. Each person should be given an opportunity to ask for help to accomplish goals, which could include continuing education opportunities. For instance, if your church office staff members have been provided a computer with a printer, and with word processing, database, and spread sheet programs, they may need special training to be able to use the equipment to its full potential. Church school teachers may need training to use video equipment. Solicit the needs of the staff and the pastor and find ways to fill those needs.

Review the goals set for the pastor/staff. Be sure to include those that were set by the charge or church conference and by what *The Discipline* says about the nature and function of pastoral ministry.

Find out what differences there are between assumptions about the church and

actual facts. For instance, how many hours are available each week for the different areas of ministry? (Number of persons multiplied by hours equals total hours.) What financial resources are available for the different areas of ministry? Act as a consultant with one person as the pastoral duties are prioritized.

Discuss who has been given the responsibility for the various areas of ministry. Should these responsibilities stay the same or be shifted? To whom? To what effect?

## Staff-Parish Committee Relationships with Other Committees

*Consult with other chairpersons or administrators who relate to staff persons (for example, trustees—custodian; worship—musicians and worship leaders; education—director of Christian education, director of youth ministries, and day-care teachers). (See “Support for the Clergy and Staff, pages 18-20).*

Evaluate the total work of the SPRC. Ask the pastor and employed lay staff to evaluate the committee’s work and the relationship between themselves and the committee members. Go back over the responsibilities assigned and see what has worked and what needs to be improved and ways that can be done. The committee and staff should agree on what to report to the congregation and to the church council.

As indicated earlier, your committee’s recommendations for staff salaries and benefits go to the finance committee for their consideration.

## Your Role with the Congregation and to Individuals

*The SPRC has the important task of communicating the work of the staff to the congregation and communicating feedback from the congregation to the staff. The SPRC listens to many different voices. They listen to the congregation, the community, the pastor, and the staff. See information about communication on pages 14-17.*

True listening is one of the most difficult things to do. To be most effective, church leaders need to listen first for the voice and guidance of God. When leaders are spiritually centered, they often hear the voice of God through communication with others.

One of the most important roles of the SPRC is the continued communication and interpretation of the local church’s mission and vision. The membership and

the appointed pastor need consistent reminders of the common aim and direction for the shared ministry between themselves. *When we affirm gifts of the laity and of the clergy and weave them together, we are truly ministers together.*

## Your Role in the United Methodist Connection

**T**he United Methodist Church has an open itinerancy system for providing pastoral leadership. Your conference board of ordained ministry and cabinet has prepared policies and tools to help with your work. Ask your district superintendent and look at the resource list at the back of this guideline. Your district and annual conference may provide training for Staff-Parish Relation Committees.

## Your Role with the Community Outside the Church Walls

**T**he community is where persons live out their daily lives. In the community, the lonely, the hurt, and the hungry, the powerful, the rich, the poor, and those in between are waiting to experience the consequence of God's love and power. The church's mission in every age has involved developing disciples and sending them into their community, into the world.

The ordained deacon in full connection leads God's people in living as Christian disciples in the community of their daily lives. Deacons in full connection may have a primary appointment in your congregation and lead in equipping people for ministry through Christian education, music, parish nursing, professional counseling, administration, and other ministries. A deacon in full connection may work in the community and have a secondary appointment to your church. (Their primary appointment is to the ministry in the community. This is called appointment beyond the local church or extension ministry). The SPRC has responsibility for all ordained clergy appointed to the church, whether it is a primary or secondary appointment. Initiate conversations with both deacons and elders related to your church who have primary appointments beyond the congregation to learn about their ministry and to help the congregation understand how the congregation's ministry is extended through their work in the world.

Reaching out to the community and receiving people into the faith family means seeking out and accepting people just as they are. This requires that a congregation look within and beyond its walls for the people who live in its

community. It must actively reach out to persons, with sensitivity to their needs and concerns, their hopes and dreams. Seeking out and welcoming persons who may be different from those persons already members of the congregation or who may have different physical or spiritual needs are at times frightening and difficult tasks. Yet this is one of the greatest challenges for Christian disciples.

## The Committee Identifies Ministers in the Congregation

**E**ncouraging people in their relationship to God and inviting them to commitment in Jesus Christ involves providing opportunities through which they can find God, including worship, study of the Scripture, and sharing the faith stories and journeys with one another. Providing activities, events, and situations in which people can experience God's presence and come to accept God's love for them is an important function of a Christian congregation.

*Leadership for the church always comes from the laity. The heart of Christian ministry is Christ's ministry of outreaching love. All Christians are called to the ministry of a servant in the world to serve and witness with deeds and words that heal and free. (See *The Discipline*, ¶120-¶135) The Staff-Parish Relations Committee has a responsibility to help teach the congregation this understanding of ministry. The SPRC can work with the lay leader and other committees to celebrate the ministry of all Christians and to help each Christian understand his or her role as a minister of Jesus Christ.*

*There are some whom God calls for ordained ministry from the people of the church. The SPRC is charged with the responsibility of discerning those whom God has called to represent Christ's ministry in the name of the church. This discernment is done with prayer and under guidance of the Holy Spirit. The SPRC has responsibility for the recruitment of persons who evidence God's claim upon them for ordained ministry, the examination of candidates for their calls from God and the evidence of gifts, and the recommendation of these candidates to the charge conference. When the charge conference votes to recommend a candidate for ordained ministry, the congregation assumes care and support of the candidate through the years of preparation for ministry. The care and support may include continued prayer by individuals and during services of worship, cards and care packages during years of education, opportunities for worship leadership, financial support, and other forms of encouragement.*

Aid for this task of recruitment comes from *The Christian As Minister* and the *Ministry Inquiry Process* (see Resources). *At least one member of the*

*SPRC should be trained as a guide for the Ministry Inquiry Process. The conference board of ministry provides this training.*

Enlistment is of paramount importance to the growth and development of the church in total. Leadership that is Spirit-led and vision-driven helps the church to tell the good news of God through Jesus Christ. In this way, the SPRC ministers to and through the entire United Methodist church, not only in the present, but for years to come.

# Resources

Resources for General Information and Answers to Questions

Write the name and phone number of your district superintendent:

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General Board of Discipleship, P.O. Box 340003, Nashville, TN 37203-0003; [www.gbod.org](http://www.gbod.org)

Ministry of the Laity: 877-899-2780, extension 7130

Congregational Leader Development: 877-899-2780, extension 7079

FaithQuest: A Vision for Leadership in the Local Church: 877-899-2780, extension 7295

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, P.O. Box 871, Nashville, TN 37202, [www.gbhem.org](http://www.gbhem.org)

Section on Elders and Local Pastors: 615-340-7389

Section on Deacons and Diaconal Ministry: 615-340-7375

The Alban Institute, 7315 Wisconsin Ave., 1250W, Bethesda, MD 20814-3211 (301-718-4407). [www.alban.org](http://www.alban.org) offers consultation, leadership training, and print resources related to congregational life, leadership, and conflict management

INFOSERV (800-251-8140) [www.umcom.org](http://www.umcom.org) can answer inquiries or direct you to answers and information.

Assessment Tool Available at Cokesbury Bookstore (800-672-1789) [www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com)

*Assessment: How We Do It* (Order #945018)

*Purpose:* To help clergy and SPRC reflect on the process and procedure of assessment

*Assessment: Giving and Receiving Feedback* (Order #945075)

*Purpose:* To help clergy and laity reflect on and improve feedback processes

*Assessment: Pastor-Staff Parish Relations Committee* (Order #945133)

*Purpose:* To provide a tool for assessment of the SPRC

*Assessment: Clergy Self-reflection* (Order #945257)

*Purpose:* To aid clergy self-reflection, using feed back from the SPRC and others

*Assessment: Team Ministry* (Order #945315)

*Purpose:* To assess and strengthen team ministry

*Assessment: Clergy and Congregations* (Order #945190)

*Purpose:* To assess their mutual ministry

*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, 2000

*Christian As Minister*, Kohler and Garcia, eds. 1997

Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation—see especially the Guideline for  
*Church Council*, 2000

*Ministry Inquiry Process*, Hunt, Mattaei, Kohler, Garcia, 1997

*Considering God's Call: A Guide for the Ministry Inquiry Process* (Video  
and Video Guide)

*First Steps to Ministry: A Video for Training Pastor/Staff Parish Relations  
Committee for the **Candidacy** Process.*

Resources Available from the General Board of Higher Education  
and Ministry, Section on Deacons and Diaconal Ministry

Guidelines for Developing Church Job Descriptions

Guidelines for Developing Church Personnel Policies

Guidelines for the Professional Staff Person When Interviewing

Guidelines for the Pastor-Parish/Staff-Parish Relations Committee When  
Interviewing and Hiring

Ministry Inquiry Process (video)

Resources Available from Discipleship Resources (1-800-685-  
4370) [www.discipleshipresources.org](http://www.discipleshipresources.org)

*Brief History of The United Methodist Church*, Waltz, 1998

*Brief Introduction to the Book of Discipline of The United Methodist  
Church*, Thurston, 1998

*Faithful Leadership*, Hawkins, 1999

*Grace Notes: Spirituality and the Choir*, Hook, 1999

*Listening to the Customer* (video)

*Management of Ministry: Building Leadership for a Changing World*,  
Anderson and Jones, 1993

*Quest: A Journey Toward a New Kind of Church*, Dick with Burry, 1999

36 Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation

*Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church*, Melton, 1997

*Small Churches Make a Big Difference* (video)

*United Methodist Member's Handbook*, Revised & Expanded '97 Koehler, 1997

*United Methodist Way*, Thurston, revised 1998

*Worship and Daily Life: A Resource for Worship Planners*, intro by Doris Rudy, 1999

*The Interpreter* (United Methodist Communications). The official program journal for United Methodist leaders. Issued eight times a year. Seven copies provided free to church officers selected by the pastor.

Resources Available from The Upper Room (1-800-972-0433)  
www.upperroom.org

*Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts*, Bryant, 1991

*Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts: A Workbook*, Penn, 1995

Magazines and devotionals for the spiritual life

The Pathways Center for the supporting, supplying, and strengthening of spiritual leaders

Other Helpful Books:

*Breath of New Life: Eight Marks of Spiritual Leadership*, Mutti (Abingdon Press, 1999)

*Clergy Women: An Uphill Calling*, Zikmund, Lummis, and Chang (Westminster John Knox, 1998)

*How to Manage Conflict in the Church*, vol. 1, Shawchuck (Spiritual Growth, 1983)

*Ordinary Ministry, Extraordinary Challenge*, Everist (Abingdon Press, 2000)

*SpiritGifts: Participants's Workbook and Leader's Guide*, Brown (Abingdon Press, 1996)

## Notes

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