

Appalachian District UMC



The heart of the Holston Conference!

Welcome

Appalachian District S/PRC Training Event

- **Pastor-Parish Relations Committees**
- **Staff-Parish Relations Committees**
- **Charge-Wide PPR Committees**

2020/2024 Book of Discipline Referenced

“The Mission” of the Church (BOD 2020/2024, Para. 120, p. 93)

“The mission of The Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs.”

Pastor's Job Description

(BOD 2020/2024, Para 340; pp. 276-279)

Word includes preaching and visiting



Sacrament includes baptism and communion

*Order
Service*



Unauthorized Conduct

(BOD 2020/2024, Para. 341, p. 279)

- Engaging an evangelist (not a UMC General evangelist) w/out D.S. Approval.
- Discontinuing services in a local church between annual conference sessions.
- Organizing a pastoral charge/church.

- Holding a service (includes weddings/baptisms) in another pastor's appointment without the pastor's permission
- Failure to maintain ministerial confidence
- Rebaptizing

The ideal s/prc & Charge-Wide Committee member is someone who:

- Has an active prayer life and believes in the power of the Holy Spirit and the authority of Holy Scripture in their own life. 
- Attends worship regularly. (One cannot know a pastor's effectiveness or the atmosphere of the congregation if one is not active in worship and other church ministry.) 

- Can commit to keep confidences, even from spouse and closest friends.
- Can “keep their cool” in the midst of all situations. Is a good listener and does not become defensive when anger and frustration are expressed.
- Can maintain balance when there are negatives and positives being discussed.
- Can be fair and see beyond their own personal feelings.

- Can recognize qualifications for effective ministry regardless of age, gender or ethnic identity.
- Can be an honest friend to the pastor.
- Is supportive of our United Methodist system of appointments, is open to the itinerant system, and places their trust in a praying Bishop and Cabinet to make decisions led by the Spirit of God. (Not every choice may be the best, some errors may be made – we are all humans.) Above all: PRAY!

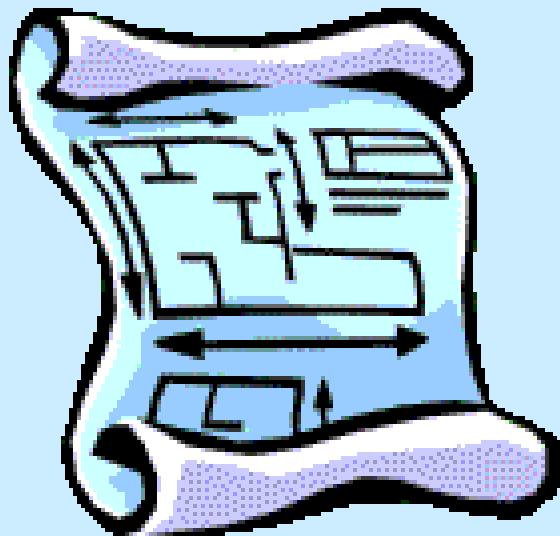
- Can, work collegially with the DS to help create good relationships and transitions.



WHAT DOES THE DISCIPLINE REQUIRE?

Found in Paragraph 258.2

pp. 199 - 258



- **People serving on this committee must be engaged in and attentive to their own spiritual development so as to give proper leadership in the responsibilities with which the committee is entrusted**
- **In conducting its work, committee SHALL identify and clarify its values for ministry**

- It SHALL engage in biblical and theological reflections on the mission of the church, the primary task, and ministries of the local church
- The committee SHALL reflect biblically & theologically on the role & work of the pastor(s) & staff as they carry out their leadership responsibilities

- The Committee SHALL assist pastor(s) & staff in assessing their gifts and in setting priorities for leadership & service
- It is the responsibility of the Committee to recommend additional staff as needed by the church(s)

- **Membership of S/PRC: minimum of 5, maximum of 9, plus the Lay Leader and a Lay Member of Annual Conference.** Lay Leader and Lay Member of A.C. are exempt from three-year term. This applies to Charge-Wide Committees also.
- Must be full members of church (or Associate Members)
 - One member SHALL be a young adult and one MAY be a senior high youth

- **Lay Leader is ex-officio member (voting) but is exempt from three year term**
- **No staff member, family member of the pastor or staff person may serve on S/PRC**
- **Only one person from an immediate family residing in same household shall serve on the committee**

- **If a person(s) ineligible (spouse is on S/PRC) to serve on the committee is elected as the Lay Member to A. C. or Lay Leader, then the committee shall consist of the five to nine persons only**
- **To secure experience and stability, the members (not including the Lay Leader or the Lay Member to A. C.) SHALL be organized into three classes and serve for a three-year term**

- **Where there is more than one church on a charge, committee SHALL include at least one representative from each church**
- **Churches are encouraged to establish a policy that members not succeed themselves**
- **Charge Conference MAY appoint a Local Church Pastoral Advisory Committee in a multi-church charge in addition to the Charge-Wide Committee.**

- Committee **SHALL** meet at least quarterly, and once a month for 1st 6 months of a new Pastor's appointment



- It **SHALL** meet additionally at request of Bishop, D.S., Pastor, professional staff person, or chairperson of the committee

- Pastor should be present at every meeting except those where s/he voluntarily excuses self or at request of D.S. In which case there should be a stated agenda.
- Pastor is NOT a voting member
- The Committee SHALL meet *only* with the knowledge of the pastor and/or D.S.

- Committee **MAY** meet with D.S. without pastor present but pastor must be notified in advance and be consulted with immediately after if about pastor
- Committee **SHALL** meet in closed session, and information shared in the committee shall be confidential

(BOD 2020/2024, Par 258.2e, p. 201)

Duties of the S/PRC

(The goal is to help the pastor be successful and grow God's Church)

S/PRC & Pastor are ministry team

- There is an essential partnership between the S/PRC, Pastoral Advisory Committees and pastors involving communication and support.
- Confidentiality: What is said in the Committee stays in the committee. (If you have a problem with confidentiality, you may wish to consider not serving on this committee.)
- To confer & counsel with pastor & staff in making an effective ministry

- Make pastor & staff aware of conditions that affect relations between pastor, staff, and people
- Continually interpret to the people the nature & function of ministry including cross-racial appointments, appointment of women, & sensitivity to open itineracy
- Inform the people when pastor or staff have been requested to do specific things or to set specific priorities

- Help the people be aware of things that will help the pastor be more effective
- Inform the people when physical limitations or personal issues will temporarily affect pastor's performance
- Consult with pastor regarding pulpit supply at times of pastor's absence/illness



- Develop & approve written job descriptions & titles for associate pastors and other staff members (The Discipline contains the job description which governs pastors – *Paras. 339 – 340, Page 275-279.*)
- Provide annual HELPFUL feed back of pastor and staff for use in ongoing effective ministry and for identifying continuing education needs and plans

- Recommend pastor and staff salary, travel expense, health insurance, continuing education and other such practical matters, to the church council (& finance committee)
- The S/PRC must distinguish between petty, unspecific concerns and specific, persistent concerns.
- The S/PRC must deal with substantive issues NOW! Don't let them smolder for weeks, months, YEARS before addressing them. If the pastor(s) or members of the church staff do not take the initiative in dealing with the issues, the S/PRC should.

- Interpret/share with the pastor(s) and members of the church staff areas of satisfaction and/or appreciation as well as areas of dissatisfaction and concern.
- Find appropriate ways to affirm the leadership of the pastor(s) and members of the church staff, to celebrate their ministry in and with the congregation. (Christmas gift/Pastor Appreciation Month)

- If the S/PRC is pressured by persons outside the Committee, assure them that they are heard. We do not petition, poll (or survey) the congregation; this is divisive. Listen to what others tell you but do your own thinking.
- It is often helpful to let the congregation know when the S/PRC is meeting, to identify the members of the Committee (by name and telephone number), and invite input from the congregation.

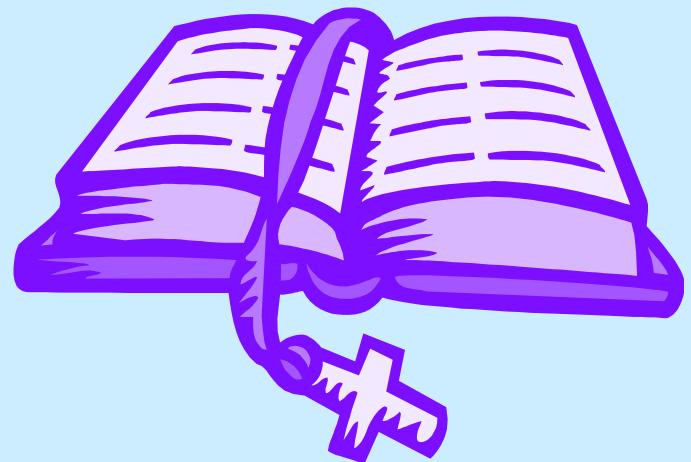
- Candidates for ministry must be enlisted, interviewed, evaluated, reviewed and recommended to the Charge Conference (*BOD 2020/2024, Para. 258.2.g. (9), pp. 202.*)
- Committees should use *Para. 310, p.231-232 “Wesley’s Questions for Examiners”* and require in written responses to *Paras. 310.1.d* for a basis for the interview.

- Recommend compensation package annually to the Church Council (Finance Committee is not mentioned). (*BOD 2020/2024, Para. 258.2.g.(16), p. 203*).

(Have: *2026 Salary Support Worksheet*)

- District Office for Assistance

- Continuing Education:
Part-time pastors, Full-time pastors.



- **Evaluation for Continuing Formation (Education) for Full Members and Local Pastors (BOD 2020/2024, Paras. 350, pp. 293-296)**
- **Consult with pastor & staff concerning continuing education & spiritual renewal, arranging with church council for necessary time & financial assistance to obtain appropriate certifications, etc.**

Continuing Ed / Spiritual Growth Leave

(BOD 2020/2024, Para. 351, p.294)

Sabbatical Leave

(BOD 2020/2024 Par 352 pp. 295-296)

For Associate Members or Clergy
Members in Full Connection who have
been serving in a full-time appointment
for six consecutive years

CONFERENCE VACATION POLICY

- Recommended Vacation Policy
(Page 396, 2017 *Holston Conf. Journal*):

A minimum of four weeks (paid) vacation annually.

- **The Appointment Process** (*BOD 2020/2024, Paras. 425 –430, pp.357 - 364*) Above all else it must be the work of the Holy Spirit.

The bishop and cabinet will develop a list of churches/charges which need or will benefit from new pastoral leadership. This list is developed from:

- **Consultation of DS/Bishop and S/PRC**
- **Consultation of DS/Bishop with pastor (includes pastor initiated move).**
- **Move initiated by DS/Bishop**

The process for formalizing this data will be a review by the cabinet of every appointment in the Conference. Each name will be coded with one of the following:

R: Return

M: Move

O: Open (retirement, leave, etc.)

SN: Should not move (Means there are compelling reasons for the church that a move not take place)

After the initial review, the cabinet may initiate a change in status from “R” to “M”, etc., following consultation with the appropriate parties

It is assumed that churches not listed for a change of pastors, will best be served by the current pastor continuing another year. The cabinet will seek to resist the temptation to “open up” additional churches during the appointment making process...

...unless there is strong evidence it is in the overall best interest of the appointive process. Appointment making will not be reduced to a “fishing expedition” by those who will move “if the right thing comes along.”

The reason for not voting in the congregation is that there are other players in the appointment process (DS, Cabinet, Bishop) who are not present and voting leaves them out of the loop along with the information they bring to the table.

If there are issues that need to be discussed concerning the pastoral appointment, the DS is to be invited to meet with the S/PRC Committee to review the issues.

Experience has shown that best results are achieved through the S/PRC Committee's discussion/dialogue with the DS along with prayerful consideration of circumstances in order to reach a consensus regarding a change of pastors

Striving for consensus rather than voting allows all participants to be on the same “page” and avoids the scenario of some winning but others losing.

WHEN A CHANGE IN PASTORAL LEADERSHIP OCCURS



- **It is urgent that prayer and sensitivity to God's will and purpose undergirds the entire process**
- **Celebrate the era and be positive about what has/is occurring**

- **If change was initiated by the church or pastor, D.S. will consult with S/PRC Committee during Jan. or in Feb. to determine needs of church**
- **The D.S. will consult with pastors during October - November to ascertain pastor's desires & needs regarding his/her appointment**
- **Once an appointment has been projected, the D.S. will first call the pastor, then chair of S/PRC**

- **Chair of S/PRC will then notify members**
- **As soon as possible, arrangements will be made for newly projected pastor to visit the church, parsonage, community and meet committee**

- **Church/Charge is responsible for moving expenses for incoming pastor (\$\$\$\$)**
- **S/PRC should assure that parsonage has been cleaned and is ready for the new pastor to move in (S/PRC arrange a time-line)**
- **If the outgoing pastor fails to leave parsonage clean, D.S. should be notified promptly so that he/she can inspect (pet odor)**
- **Phone and electrical services should remain functional**

PARSONAGE Policies & Guidelines

(Hand-out Holston Conference Parsonage Policies & Guidelines)

- Parsonage System*
- Accountability and Responsibility*
- Neglect and Abuse*
- Care and Maintenance*
- Guidelines for moving*
- Minimum Standards for Parsonages*

- **Parsonage (where applicable) is to be mutually respected by pastor's family as property of church, and by church as a place of privacy for pastor's family**
- **Chairs of S/PRC & Trustees and pastor SHALL make annual review of parsonage to assure proper maintenance (Pastors let them in!)**

General Advice

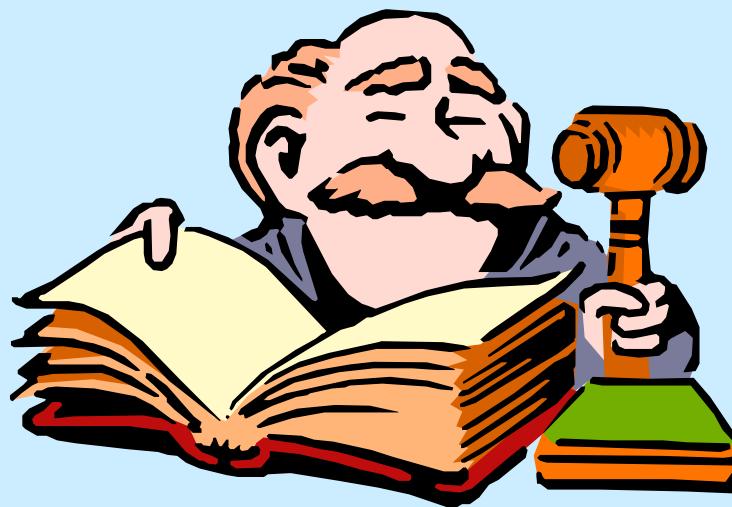
- **Avoid “ghost” or hidden comments such as “they” or “a lot of people” statements**
- **Ask “who” or “exactly how many”**
- **Avoid generalities**

- **Work towards consensus, avoid voting**
- **We are a team! The S/PRC, D.S., Bishop & Cabinet**



- **Pastors and District Superintendents are human and make mistakes... be merciful**
- **Encouragement is more effective than negative criticism. Build on strengths of the pastor and minimize weaknesses**
- **Some conflict of purpose and personality is inevitable**

- If there is a serious complaint against the pastor, offer the complainant a hearing before the S/PRC. If verified, contact the D.S. for additional action



- When possible, be a pastor to the pastor

Other Issues

- When hiring “lay” staff, give attention to references and background checks. Careful personnel records should be maintained to provide good “paper trail.” Again, confidentiality is important. Develop Accurate Job Description(s).

- For the sake of your community witness do not speak negatively of one another in the community. Pastors do not “run-down” your congregation. S/PRC, Charge-wide PPR & Pastoral Advisory Committees do not “run-down” your pastor.

- Don't play games with your tithes and offerings. It's not scriptural. The full tithe, the full offering belongs to God.
- Recognize Pastor Appreciation Day/Month (October).

2026 Schedule for Pastors and Congregations anticipating a move.

Resources:

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2020/204

Guidelines: Pastor Parish Relations – Connecting the pastor, staff, and congregation.
(Cokesbury, ISBN: 978-0-687-64781-1)

Clergy Killers (ISBN-13: 978-0-664-25753-8)
Antagonists in the Church (ISBN-13: 978-0-806-62310-8)

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Thank you