

Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee Training

SPRC Foundations

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Topics for Discussion

- Organization of the SPRC: BoD para. 258.2
- Duties and responsibilities of the SPRC
- Skills for an effective SPRC
- Overview of the clergy evaluation process
- Overview of clergy compensation guidelines
- Overview of the appointment process
- Walk through a “normal” year for the SPRC
- Resources every SPRC should have

Organization of the SPRC

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What is the SPRC?

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

Who we are...

- Professing members of the local church
- ***People engaged and attentive to our own Christian spiritual development***
- Elected by Church Conference
- Lay Member to Annual Conference and Lay Leader (with voice & vote)
- A representative and lay leader from each church on the charge

Who we cannot be...

- Staff members
- Immediate family members of the pastor or staff
- More than one immediate family member from the same household

Committee Basics (§258.2a-d)

Organization

- Between 5 and 9 persons (one shall be a young adult and one may be a youth); all must be professing members
- Three year classes; *members shall be able to succeed themselves for one three-year term*
- Congregations on a charge meet separately when appropriate
- Congregations of a Cooperative Parish meet together to consider leadership needs of the cooperative parish ministry

Committee Basics (§258.2e-f)

Meetings

- Meets at least quarterly
- Meets at the request of the Bishop, DS, pastor, any person accountable to the committee, or chairperson of the committee
- Meets only with the knowledge of pastor and/or DS
- Pastor shall be present unless s/he excuses self
- May meet with DS without the pastor or appointed staff
- Shall meet in closed session
- All information shared is confidential!

Duties and Responsibilities of the SPRC



Duties of the Committee (§258.2g)

Mission and Ministry

- Encourage and support the pastor (appointed or assigned), staff, and families
- Promote unity in the church
- Confer and counsel with pastor & staff, advising them of ministry conditions
- Confer, consult, and counsel with pastor & staff on relationships with congregation, priorities, skills, and goals
- Provide an annual evaluation of pastor and staff to encourage effective ministry
- Communicate and interpret to the congregation the nature and function of ministry in the UMC regarding open itinerancy, inclusiveness and diversity, preparation for ordained ministry, and the Ministerial Education Fund
- Enlist, interview, evaluate, review, and recommend candidates for ministry: CLM; lay preachers; candidates for ordained ministry and missionary service

Duties of the Committee (§258.2g)

Personnel Issues

- Develop and approve job descriptions for staff in cooperation with the lead pastor
- Recommend to the Church Council, after consultation with the pastor, other staff positions to meet ministry needs.
- Consult with pastor and staff on continuing education and renewal leave, work-life balance, self-care, etc.
- Consult with pastor and staff on pulpit supply, compensation, travel, vacation, insurances, pension, housing – making recommendations to the Church Council.
- With Trustees and pastor make an annual review of parsonage
- With the pastor, hire, contract, evaluate, promote, retire, and dismiss non-appointed staff, in accordance with written policies recommended to Church Council.

Duties of the Committee (§258.2g)

Appointment Issues

- Prepare/update annually the Congregational Profile
- Confer with pastor and/or appointed members of the staff when it becomes evident that the best interests of the church and pastor(s) will be served by a change.
- Cooperate with the pastor(s), DS, and bishop in securing clergy leadership.
- Such conferring and cooperating with the DS and bishop is advisory only.

Duties of the Committee (§258.2g)

Committee Development

- Keep informed of personnel matters in relationship to Church policy, professional standards, liability issues, and civil law
- Communicate, interpret, and implement *Baltimore-Washington Conference Policies and Procedures*
 - Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Certification of Compliance
 - Sexual Misconduct Questionnaire – remembering ALL who use building!
- Participate in educational and training opportunities provided by the conference, region, or district

Skills for an Effective SPRC



Skills for the SPRC

- Maintain confidentiality and integrity
- Issues are discussed during meeting, not between meetings
- All matters under discussion are kept in strict confidence, i.e., a “safe” place
- All input brought to the meeting is held in confidence, but is “owned” input
- May invite someone to speak but individual may not stay for deliberations
- Minutes and evaluations are confidential. It recommended that the chair collect and keep this material.

Skills for the SPRC

- There should be careful reporting to the Church Council of each meeting, ensuring that confidentiality is maintained
- Create a climate of effectiveness
- Provide professional, constructive feedback in a system of evaluation (addressed next section)
- Importance of listening and feedback based on fact vs. polling for complaints, rumors, or anonymous complaints

Skills for the SPRC:

- Support clergy and staff through understanding boundaries, self-care, and awareness of BWC policy on sexual ethics, “Keeping the Sacred Trust”
- Report violations of “Keeping the Sacred Trust” to District Superintendent immediately
- Support clergy and staff through Conflict Resolution

Resources:

1. Sexual Ethics/Definition of Sexual Misconduct:
“Sexual misconduct within ministerial relationships is a betrayal of sacred trust. It is a continuum of unwanted sexual or gender-directed behaviors by either a lay or clergy person within a ministerial relationship (paid or unpaid). It can include child abuse, adult sexual abuse, harassment, rape or sexual assault, sexualized verbal comments or visuals, unwelcome touching and...”

Resources (cont.)

..advances, the use of sexualized materials including pornography, stalking, sexual abuse of youth or those without the capacity to consent, or the misuse of the pastoral or ministerial position using sexualized conduct to take advantage of the vulnerability of another” (§2044, 2016 Book of Resolutions), and “Keeping the Sacred Trust” Policy of the BWC.

<https://www.bwcumc.org/sexual-ethics-policy/>

Resources (cont.)

2. Conflict resolution brochure:

<https://www.bwcumc.org/resource-library/resolving-conflict-at-church/>

Remember:

Communicate, Companions, Council

Engaging Conflict Well: A Biblical Process Based on Matthew 18:15-17

- **Step 1: Communicate**
 - If A has an issue with B, A must address B
- **Step 2: Companions**
 - If A and B cannot resolve the issue, then someone from SPRC can sit with A and B while they continue to dialogue.
- **Step 3: Council**
 - If A and B and someone from SPRC cannot find resolution, then take it to the whole SPRC.
 - If the SPRC cannot resolve the issue, call your District Superintendent and request that s/he be present for continued dialogue.

Engaging Conflict Well

- If the District Superintendent cannot resolve the issue:
 - Outside resources explored. These costs, if any, are borne by the church.
 - Keep the district superintendent informed.
- Allegations of pastoral or ministry leader misconduct should go to the district superintendent ***immediately*** from the SPRC Chair.
- The DS will communicate with SPRC Chair and clergyperson in cases of conflict.

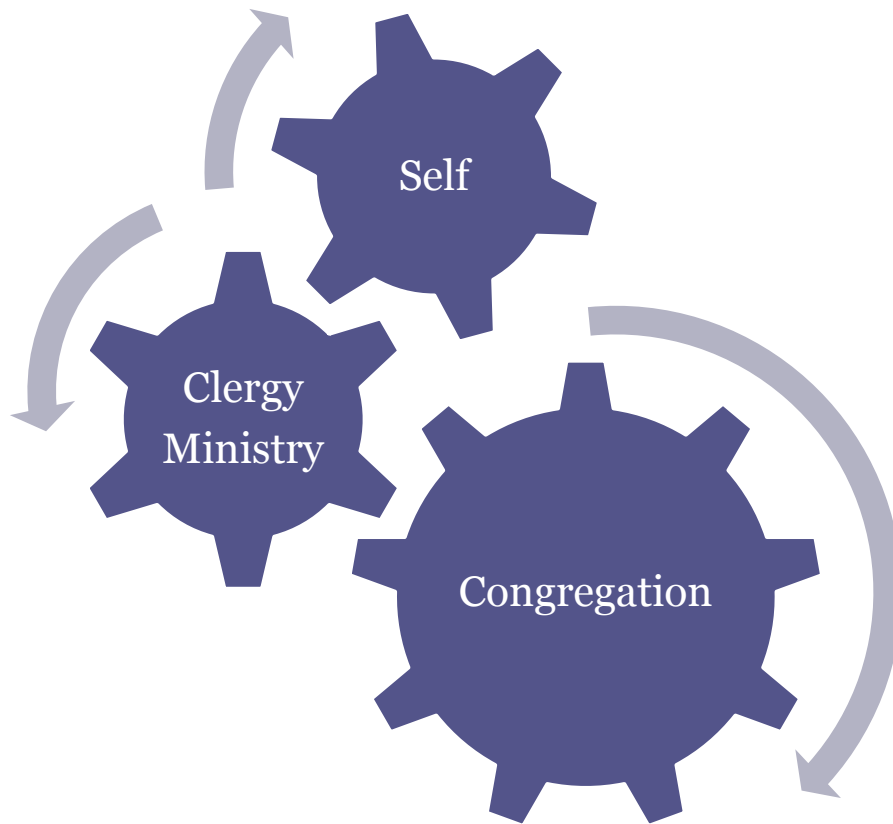
Organizational Systems for SPRCs

- The SPRC role in the life of the congregation: laity and clergy need maturity and self-leadership
- Relationship triangles: You cannot control relationships; you can mediate conversations.
- The temptation to overfunction—taking too much responsibility for the relationship or work, or underfunction – failing to take responsibility for the relationship or work.
- Managing your own anxiety in midst of conflict

The Evaluation Process:

References: Para. 258.2(g)(5) and Para. 350. “Evaluation is a continuous process for formation in servant ministry and servant leadership that must take place in a spirit of understanding and acceptance.”

Three Types of Evaluations



- *Congregation Evaluation*
Examines the effectiveness of the congregation in achieving its mission.
- *Clergy Ministry Evaluation*
Examines the effectiveness of the pastor (staff) in leading the congregation toward the fulfillment of the mission.
- *Self Evaluation*
Self-Examination of pastoral effectiveness.

Reasons for Regular Evaluations

- To establish and maintain good working relationships between the congregation and pastor and staff.
- To provide an opportunity for the congregation and pastor and staff to confer at periodic intervals on his or her performance.
- To offer a procedure for comprehensive and dispassionate appraisal in a setting other than during a time of crises.

Evaluation is an on-going communication process and not just a once-a-year conference or written report.

When Ministry Concerns Arise

- There should be no surprise “Needs Improvement” at end of evaluation period.
- Feedback periodically throughout the year should usually result in improvement. Plans to improve can follow evaluation process, also.
- In more serious cases, a more formal counseling process required. Consult with DS.
- SPRC has duty to engage in improvement process with pastor before requesting reappointment

BWC Clergy/Congregation Evaluation Forms

- **Clergy Self-Evaluation:** Completed by Clergy serving the church
- **Clergy Ministry Evaluation:** Completed by SPRC and Clergy collaboratively; using the Evaluation form provided by BWC (Review)
- **SPRC Advisory Form:** Completed by the SPRC
- **Clergy Advisory Form:** Completed by all Clergy (except retired)

Due Date: December 1

Clergy Compensation Guidelines

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Clergy Tax Guidelines

- Clergy are employed by the local church for income tax purposes
- Clergy are considered self-employed for social security purposes
- Clergy are not Independent Contractors
- The Housing Allowance is excluded from income taxes for appointed clergy (not for assigned)
- IRS Reporting Requirements
 - The church withholds income tax
 - The church **does not** withhold or pay FICA
 - The church is responsible for submitting a W2

Total Compensation Package (for Full-Time Clergy) (§4029 ff. BWC Policy and Procedures)

- Salary (includes church contributions to clergy's insurance or pension or Social Security tax, if any)
- Parsonage or Housing Allowance
- Accountable Reimbursements
 - Travel & Professional Expenses
 - Continuing Education
- Health
- Pension

2020 Equitable Compensation (for Full-time Clergy)

- Minimum Salary
 - Base Salary \$44,892
 - Additional Years of Service +\$250 per year
(up to 15 years)*
- Standard Housing Allowance \$20,263
 - clergy can request different exclusion
- Reimbursement for Travel and Professional Expenses and Continuing Education \$ 4,100

*Note: Increments are now limited to 15 years

2020 HealthFlex Rates: Church portion is \$10,320 per year, regardless of participant's plan

NOTE: The participant's total portion (participant and dependent) may be deducted from his/her salary and we recommend that deduction be done on a pre-tax basis (with statement on file in church for IRS purposes). Deducting the participant portion from their salary and submitting it on their behalf (a clerical function) is NOT the same thing as paying it FOR them with church funds.

2020 Pension Benefit

- Funding for the pension plans, **Clergy Retirement Security Plan (CRSP)**, and **Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP)** is based on a percentage of “plan compensation” (*plan compensation is salary plus either housing allowance or 25% of compensation for parsonage*) as follows and depends on status:

Defined Contribution (DC)

3% of Plan Compensation

Defined Benefit (DB)

12% of Plan Compensation--
limited by the DAC (\$68,876
for 2017)

Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP)

3% of Plan Compensation

+50% appointment: optional participation in pension if local pastor

+25% appointment: not eligible

Clergy Leave Benefits

- Leave Paid By the Church
 - Vacation – 4 weeks annually
 - Continuing Education or COS – 2 weeks annually*
 - Camp Volunteer – 1 week annually*
 - Sick Leave /Maternity-Paternity Leave
 - Continuing education/spiritual formation Leave – up to 3 months every seven years**
- Leave Funded By Other Sources
 - Sabbatical – one year leave of absence for special study

* - prorated for part-time clergy

** - only applies to full-time clergy

The Appointment Process



Cabinet Guidelines for Appointment-Making

- **United Methodist Church Practices**
 - Open-itinerancy
 - Appointments are for one year
 - Consider the gifts and graces of each clergy person and the missional needs of congregations individually and collectively and the mission field
 - Make appointments based on maximizing disciple-making

Cabinet Guidelines for Appointment-Making

- **Consideration for:**
 - The mission of the church in the conference
 - The needs/mission of a specific church and its community
 - The gifts, graces, and needs of the clergy (including family situations)
- **Steps in the Process (see BWC Point of Appointments)**
 - Profiling of the church and advisory (completed annually in Arena system)
 - Selection of the pastor by bishop
 - “Meet Your Pastor” meeting
 - Appointment confirmed through Statement of Understanding
 - Appointment announced

SPRC Calendar



SPRC Calendar

First Quarter:

- Organize Committee (vice-chair, secretary)
- Review action items coming out of Fall evaluations; Complete pastor and church goals for the year
- Look at SPRC Goals for year
- Training and review for members
- Review and update job descriptions for lay staff

Second Quarter:

- Begin evaluation of ministry areas
- Conduct a parsonage tour with the Trustees
- Review Conference rules on housing

SPRC Calendar

Third Quarter:

- Review non-salary support for pastor & staff (i.e., vacations, business, professional/annual conference & continuing education expenses)
- Review salary & benefits packages for the pastor & staff
- Interview candidates for deacon or elder using guidelines contained in *The Christian As Minister*
- Prepare the annual compensation form for Charge Conference approval.
- Review and update completion of Safe Sanctuaries forms for Charge Conference.

SPRC Calendar

Fourth Quarter:

- Annual Pastoral Evaluation & Appointment Advisory
- Annual Congregation Evaluation
- Annual Congregational Profile
- Present written evaluation to pastor
- Evaluate year's work of SPRC

Resources

- The 2016 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church
- Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation: 2017-2020
- Baltimore-Washington Conference Policies & Procedures Manual
- www.gcfa.org General Council on Finance & Administration of the UMC
 - Housing Allowances Q&As
 - Accountable Reimbursement Policies Q&As
 - Accountable Reimbursement Policy – Long and short form
 - Local Transportation Expenses Q&As
 - Legal Manual/esp. Personnel Section
- BWC Conflict Resolution Brochure

Resources (cont.)

- All resources listed on BWC website under “Advanced SPRC Training”
 - Boundaries Training for SPRCs
 - Healthy Conflict Resolution
 - Engage Conflict Well
 - Theological Foundations for Evaluation
 - Giving and Receiving Feedback
 - Effective and Ineffective SPRCs
 - BWC Minimum Compensation Requirements
 - BWC Point of Appointments
 - Organizational Systems for SPRCs and Clergy