



Spanish Fort

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Committee Resource Manual 2026

1. Nominations Report
2. Calendar of Meetings
3. Church Council
4. Finance
5. Trustees
6. SPRC

FOR LAY LEADERSHIP

Effective August 1, 2025-December 31, 2026
Names in bold are nominated as officers, such as chair

CHURCH COUNCIL		
Term Expires Dec. 2026	Term Expires Dec. 2027	Term Expires Dec. 2028
At Large: Kirra Bennett	At-Large: Buddy Light	At Large: Connie Waggoner
At-Large: Tim Dozier	At Large: Ali Bolton	At Large: Chris Uhle
At-Large: Jessica Harris	Vice Chair At Large: Debbie Taylor	At Large: Cheryl Gibbs
EX OFFICIO MEMBERS		
Trustee Chair	SPR Chair	Finance Chair
Missions Team Chair: Gay Desotell	Church Treasurer: Shannon Brown	Children's Team Chair: TBD
Lay Member of AC Marilyn Sullivan	Youth Team Chair: TBD	Lay Member of AC Bill Nelson
Family Life Ministries TBD	Worship Team Leader: Leisa Younger	Secretary: Cindy Nelson
Youth Rep: Kathleen Harris	Young Adult Rep: Scott Clemons	Preschool Board Chair: Melinda Immel
Associate Pastor: Sarah Roberts	Senior Pastor: Woods Lisenby	Associate Pastor: Mike Owenby
Lay Leader/Lay Member of AC: Asher Carmichael		Church Council Chair: Jason Lober

NOMINATIONS AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

2026	2027	2028
Laura Maxwell	Christy Inabinett	Ashley Harris
Jeff DeRocher	Margie Walters	Amanda Tyler
Kerri Smith	Gay Desotell	Will Clarke
Ex Officio Members		
Senior Pastor		Lay Leader

STAFF-PARISH RELATIONS

2026	2027	2028
Lynn Langley	Barbara English	Sara Jane Garrett
Kevin Inlow	Scott Haynes	Teri Smith
David Craig	Jessica Lowell	Elizabeth Pierce
Ex Officio Members		
Conference Lay Member: Marilyn Sullivan		Lay Leader
Senior Pastor (Non-voting)	Associate Pastor (Non-voting)	Associate Pastor(s) (Non-voting)

FINANCE

2026	2027	2028
Ted Langley	Shannon Brown	Robert McMillan
Blair Lober	Tracy Roberts	Earl Gentry
Michael Maxwell	Lee McKeithan	Lyndsey Dixon
Ex Officio Members		
Lay Leader	SPR Chair or Representative	Church Council Chair
	Trustees Chair or Representative	
Senior Pastor	Associate Pastor	Associate Pastor

TRUSTEES
CHAIR ELECTED AT THE FIRST MEETING OF THE YEAR

2026	2027	2028
Toby Brown	Michael Pierce	John Tyler
Terri McCracken	Ryan Lowell	Janet English
Dwayne Smith	Brian Desotell	Leighton Griggers
Ex Officio Members		
Senior Pastor (Non-voting)	Associate Pastor(s) (Non-voting)	Associate Pastor(s) (Non-voting)

STUDY/BUILDING COMMITTEE

Brandon Bias	Aaron Immel	Jessica Inlow
Tyler Scott	Ashley Harris	Jeff DeRocher
Becky Comer	Trustees Rep (Janet English)	Laura Maxwell
	Senior Pastor	

TRUSTEES 5:30 PM	SPRC 5:30 PM	FINANCE 5:30 PM	CHURCH COUNCIL 5:30 PM	NOMINATIONS
1/4/2026 & 1/12/2026	1/4/26	1/4/26	1/4/26	1/4/26
2/9/26	2/12/26	2/23/26	No Feb Meeting	
3/9/26	3/12/26	3/23/26	3/30/26	
4/6/26	No April meeting	No April meeting	No April Meeting	
5/11/26	5/14/26	5/18/26	5/27/26	
06/15/26	No June Meeting	No June Meeting	No June Meeting	
7/13/26	7/17/26	7/20/26	7/27/26	
8/1/26	No August Meeting	No August Meeting	No August Meeting	
9/14/26	9/17/26	9/21/26	9/28/26	TBD
10/19/26	No October Meeting	No October Meeting	No October Meeting	TBD
11/9/26	11/12/26	11/16/26	11/19/26	
12/7/26	12/10/26	12/14/26	12/17/26	



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UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Church Council

1. Big Picture
2. Membership and Meetings
3. Mission and Ministry
4. Schedule
5. Resources

1. THE BIG PICTURE

PURPOSE

“The Book of Discipline says that the church council is the executive agency of the charge conference (§244.1). This means that between meetings of the charge conference, the church council is the group of leaders that guides and furthers the ministry of the congregation. The church council exists to create and supervise the strategic plan for an effective congregation. The church council as a group should reflect the character and population of the congregation. Decisions made by the council will shape the future and demonstrate for everyone how God’s kingdom comes in the immediate community.

The work of the church council is to envision, plan, implement, and annually evaluate a congregation’s ministry and mission.” (From *Guidelines Church Council: Connect Vision and Ministry in Your Church*)

Some Notes About the Church Council:

- The church council is accountable to the charge conference and serves as the executive agency of the charge conference between meetings to oversee the administration and ministry of the congregation.
 - The church council determines God’s call to the congregation for ministry that is transformative.
 - The church council initiates planning, establishes goals, implements action plans, and evaluates effectiveness for congregational ministries of nurture, outreach, witness, and administration.
 - The church council strategizes so that the congregation makes disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
 - The church council works with the committee on staff/pastor-parish relations and the committee on nominations and leader development for effective pastoral, staff, and lay leadership.
 - The church council recommends to the charge conference the compensation, housing needs, and benefits for the pastor(s) and other staff after receiving recommendations from the committee on staff/pastor-parish relations.
 - The church council fills leadership vacancies between meetings of the charge conference upon the recommendation of the committee on nominations and leader development.
 - The church council coordinates with the pastor, finance committee, and trustees to provide for financial support, physical facilities, and the legal obligations of its local congregation.
 - The church council maintains the congregation’s connection with appropriate district and annual conference programs and structures.
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2. MEMBERSHIP AND MEETINGS

MEMBERSHIP

The charge conference will determine the size of the church council. Members of the church council shall be involved in the mission and ministry of the congregation as defined in ¶ 252.2. The membership of the council may consist of as few as eleven persons or as many as the charge conference deems appropriate. The council shall include persons who represent the program ministries of the church as outlined in ¶ 243. The membership shall include but not be limited to the following:

- a) the chairperson of the church council;
- b) the lay leader;
- c) the chairperson and/or a representative of the pastor-parish relations committee;
- d) the chairperson and/or a representative of the committee on finance;
- e) the chairperson and/or a representative of the board of trustees;
- f) the church treasurer;
- g) a lay member to annual conference;
- h) the president and/or a representative of the United Methodist Men;
- i) the president and/or a representative of the United Methodist Women;
- j) a young adult representative
- k) a representative of the United Methodist Youth;
- l) the pastor(s).

MEETINGS

- The council shall meet at least quarterly. The chairperson or the pastor may call special meetings.
 - In order for the council to give adequate consideration to the missional purpose of the local church, it is recommended that the first agenda item at each meeting be related to its ministries of nurture, outreach, and witness. The administrative and supportive responsibilities of the church will then be given attention.
 - It is recommended that the council use a consensus/discernment model of decision-making.
 - Quorum - The members present and voting at any duly announced meeting shall constitute a quorum.
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3. MISSION AND MINISTRY

The Church Council is to plan and implement programs for nurture, outreach, witness, and resources in the local church. Nurture, outreach, and witness ministries and their accompanying responsibilities include:

- a) The nurturing ministries of the congregation shall give attention to but not be limited to education, worship, Christian formation, membership care, small groups, and stewardship. Attention must be given to the needs of individuals and families of all ages.
 - b) The outreach ministries of the church shall give attention to local and larger community ministries of compassion, justice, and advocacy. These ministries include church and society, global ministries, higher education and campus ministry, health and welfare, Christian unity and inter-religious concerns, religion and race, and the status and role of women.
 - c) The witness ministries of the church shall give attention to developing and strengthening evangelistic efforts of sharing of personal and congregational stories of Christian experience, faith, and service; communications; Lay Servant Ministries; and other means that give expressions of witness for Jesus Christ.
 - d) The leadership development and resourcing ministries shall give attention to the ongoing preparation and development of lay and clergy leaders for the ministry of the church (§ 258.1).
 - e) The nurture, outreach, and witness ministries and their accompanying responsibilities shall include consideration of (i) the election of a prayer coordinator to promote prayer and mobilize the local church to pray, (ii) establishing a prayer room or designated place for prayer and prayer resources, and (iii) encouraging intentional prayer for the pastoral leadership of the local church.
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ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- a) review the membership of the local church;
- b) fill interim vacancies occurring among the lay officers of the church between sessions of the annual charge conference;
- c) establish the budget on recommendation of the committee on finance and ensure adequate provision for the financial needs of the church;
- d) recommend to the charge conference the salary and other remuneration of the pastor(s) and staff members after receiving recommendations from the committee on pastor-parish relations (staff-parish relations);
- e) review the recommendation of the committee on pastor-parish relations regarding provision of adequate housing for the pastor(s), and report the same to the charge conference for approval. Housing provisions shall comply with the annual conference housing policy and parsonage standards. Housing shall not be considered as part of compensation or remuneration except to the extent provided for in denominational pension and benefit plans.

WHAT DOES THE CHAIRPERSON DO?

- This leader meets and works with the pastor, lay leader, and others to fulfill the church's mission.
- The leadership team chair, along with the pastor and lay leader, is the primary spokesperson for the vision and mission of the church and encourages all other ministry leaders.
- This person should organize an annual planning meeting for the church's vision and ministry goals.
- This person should become familiar with United Methodist resources and organizations.
- During the year, this leader prepares and communicates the agenda for meetings, leads the meetings, follows up actions by assigning responsibility for implementation, coordinates the activities of the leadership team, and maintains a healthy and growing spiritual life.

5. RESOURCES

Guidelines Church Council: Connect Vision and Ministry in Your Church

https://ntcumc.org/Church_Council.pdf

AWF Website (Conference Resources)

<https://vimeo.com/662728121>

United Methodist Church Website (General Church Resources)

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/chair-of-church-leadership-team-administrative-council>



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UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Finance Committee

1. Big Picture
2. Membership and Organization
3. Responsibilities
4. Resources and Projects

1. THE BIG PICTURE

PURPOSE

The ministry of the committee on finance nurtures the financial vitality of the congregation. This is a comprehensive assignment that encompasses a variety of responsibilities, all of which are necessary if the congregation is to accomplish its vision for ministry.

The committee on finance shall give stewardship of financial resources as their priority throughout the year. It may delegate the responsibility to either a sub-group or task force that would plan, strategize, and implement ways to generate more resources for mission and ministries of the local churches and beyond. It is strongly recommended that the committee on finance, in collaboration with the church council, find creative ways to turn their congregations into tithing congregations with an attitude of generosity.

Summary

In The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, (§258.4) the committee on finance is charged with all of the following activities:

- overseeing stewardship
 - compiling a budget annually
 - raising sufficient income to meet the budget
 - administering funds received by the church
 - counting and depositing the offering
 - disbursing funds
 - establishing internal control policies
 - annually reviewing and reporting on the adequacy and effectiveness of
 - internal controls
 - providing for an annual audit of the church financial statements
 - reporting to the annual charge conference on the audit
 - recommending proper depositories for church funds
 - using contributions in accordance with donors' intent
 - annually reporting to the church council all designated funds that are separate from the church budget
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2. MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

MEMBERSHIP

The Discipline provides for the committee on finance to be made up of persons who, by virtue of other leadership responsibilities, link the committee to other areas of congregational life, and others who are nominated in recognition of their commitment and witness of personal stewardship. The Discipline calls for the following members of the committee:

- chairperson
- pastor(s)
- lay member of the annual conference (one)
- chairperson of the church council or board
- chairperson or representative of staff/pastor-parish relations committee
- representative of the trustees (selected by the trustees)
- chairperson of the ministry group on stewardship
- lay leader
- financial secretary
- treasurer
- church business administrator
- others as determined by the charge conference

If any of these persons are paid (other than the pastor), such as the financial secretary or business administrator, they serve without vote. As a member of the committee on finance, you serve in a fiduciary capacity and as such, must always strive to act in the best interest of the congregation, rather than in any personal interest in which you might profit. The congregation has placed its confidence and trust in you to make decisions for them regarding the use of money they have contributed to the church. This is a position that requires the highest standard of care and complete loyalty to the interests of the church.

You were nominated by the committee on nominations and elected by the charge conference to serve a term of up to three years (§2526, the Discipline). In order to maintain continuity and experience, you and other members of the Finance Committee are divided into three classes with an equal number of members in each class. One class of Finance Committee members is elected each year. The charge conference can also fill vacancies that occur in any class. In a perfect world, the composition of your committee will include a good balance between consistency and diversity. Keeping in mind the importance of the different functions within the body of Christ, it will take a variety of gifts to work faithfully together. It is also helpful to mix new members with those who have a history in the congregation.

(From, Finance: Handling God's Money in the Church)

ORGANIZATION AND TASKS

All financial askings to be included in the annual budget of the local church shall be submitted to the committee on finance. The committee on finance shall compile annually a complete budget for the local church and submit it to the church council for review and adoption. The committee on finance shall be charged with responsibility for developing and implementing plans that will raise sufficient income to meet the budget adopted by the church council. It shall administer the funds received according to instructions from the church council.

The positions of treasurer and financial secretary should not be combined and held by one person, and the persons holding these two positions should not be immediate family members.

No immediate family members of any appointed clergy may serve as treasurer, finance chair, financial secretary, counter, or serve in any paid or unpaid position under the responsibilities of the committee on finance, as described herein. These restrictions would apply only to the church or charge where the clergy serves.

The committee shall carry out the church council's directions in guiding the treasurer(s) and financial secretary.

a) The committee shall designate at least two persons not of the immediate family residing in the same household to count the offering. They shall work under the supervision of the financial secretary. A record of all funds received shall be given to the financial secretary and treasurer. Funds received shall be deposited promptly in accordance with the procedures established by the committee on finance. The financial secretary shall keep records of the contributions and payments.

b) The church treasurer(s) shall disburse all money contributed to causes represented in the local church budget, and such other funds and contributions as the church council may determine. The treasurer(s) shall remit each month to the conference treasurer all World Service and conference benevolence funds then on hand. Contributions to benevolence shall not be used for any cause other than that to which they have been given. The church treasurer shall make regular and detailed reports on funds received and expended to the committee on finance and the church council.¹⁰ The treasurer(s) shall be adequately bonded.

c) The committee on finance shall establish written financial policies to document the internal controls of the local church. The written financial policies should be reviewed for adequacy and effectiveness annually by the committee on finance and submitted as a report to the charge conference annually.

d) The committee shall make provision for an annual audit of the financial statements of the local church and all its organizations and accounts. The committee shall make a full and complete report to the annual charge conference. A local church audit is defined as an independent evaluation of the financial reports and records and the internal controls of the local church by a qualified person or persons.

From The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2016 (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2016)

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Finance Committee has several administrative functions. They are to:

- The finance committee annually compiles a budget for supporting the mission and vision of the local church and submits the budget to the church leadership team for review and adoption. During the year, the finance team recommends any changes to the approved annual budget to the church leadership team.
- This team is responsible for developing and carrying out plans to raise enough income to support the budget that has been approved.
- Both the finance team and individual members need to engage in spiritual practices that attend to God's will and direction. Team members need to hold one another accountable to decisions and actions that fulfill the mission and vision of the church.
- The finance team (or committee) recommends to the church leadership team proper depositories for church funds and carries out the church leadership team's directions about administration and disbursement of funds and about procedures for the church treasurer and the financial secretary.
- There are three tasks not specifically assigned to the treasurer, financial secretary, or the chairperson of the committee on finance by the Discipline. Keeping these responsibilities separate is essential in maintaining segregation of duties. These tasks are: (1) approving payments for expenditures; (2) signing checks; (3) reconciling bank accounts. While the treasurer, financial secretary, or finance chairperson may be authorized to do any one of these tasks, no person should be authorized to do more than one. No persons related to one another should perform any two or more of these three tasks.
- This team arranges for an annual audit of financial records and makes a report of this audit to the charge conference.
- In congregations in which there is no stewardship team or committee, the finance committee has responsibility for teaching disciples a biblical understanding of abundance and generosity and stewardship of all resources.
- The finance leaders of the church are accountable to the charge conference through the church council.

WHAT DOES THE CHAIRPERSON DO?

- The finance chair works with the leadership team chair, the church staff, and other ministry leaders to fulfill the mission of the church.
 - The finance chair works with the trustees to handle designated gifts and bequests in accordance with The Book of Discipline.
 - This person will guide the work of the finance team through the year, including planning agendas and presiding at meetings.
 - This leader will gather all budget requests to be reviewed by the committee, ensure that the congregation and pastor(s) are informed about the church's financial situation, and recommend to the church council any changes that need to be made in the budget after it has been approved.
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- This leader is accountable to the charge conference through the church council.

4. RESOURCES

The Church Audit: You Can Do This!

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/march-9-2021-the-church-audit-you-can-do-this>

Finance: Handling God's Money in the Church

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/cm4nmcvbnun4dql/Guidelines%20-%20Finance.pdf?dl=0>

AWF Website (Conference Resources)

<https://www.awfumc.org/resources>

United Methodist Church Website (General Church Resources)

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/finance-committee2>



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UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Trustees Committee

1. Big Picture
2. Membership and Organization
3. Responsibilities
4. Schedule
5. Points of Emphasis
6. Resources and Projects

1. THE BIG PICTURE

PURPOSE

As a trustee, you will supervise and maintain all property belonging to your congregation so that the ministries of the congregation can be effective. You will work closely with the church council to respond to God's call.

You were elected by the charge conference to act as its agent in caring for the physical resources of the church and for all legal matters. In all matters, you will receive guidance from the church council (§2529, the Discipline) before acting for the church. The council may give you broad limits within which to act, or it may recommend specific tasks in your stewardship of church facilities.

For Instance:

- incorporate the local church;
- develop a policy (to be approved by the charge conference) to be used by the church in purchasing, leasing, selling, mortgaging, constructing, remodeling, repairing, and maintaining any and all church properties;
- develop policies for the use of your church building, facilities, grounds, vehicles, equipment, and furnishings;
- develop a covenant or other agreement with short- and long-range “tenants” (groups or individuals that use the church and its facilities on a regular basis);
- develop a policy for the acceptance or rejection of bequests, gifts, or trusts.
- Work with local law enforcement to conduct a security evaluation of the church grounds and create policies for the implementation of security protocols.

CONNECTING RESOURCES WITH VISION

Talk with the pastor and other congregational leaders to learn how church property, equipment, and investments can be involved in achieving the goals that have been set. Identify current issues. Talk with people in your congregation and community about issues and concerns related to the use of church property. Keep in mind, a focus on Christian hospitality is an appropriate framework for these discussions.

2. MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

MEMBERSHIP

The board of trustees comprises not more than nine or fewer than three members. The chairperson must be a professing member of the local United Methodist church. At the first meeting of the trustees, the chairperson is elected for one year (§2530.2, the Discipline). The chairperson will represent the trustees as a member of the charge conference and the church council.

You were nominated by the committee on nominations and elected by the charge conference to serve a term of up to three years (§2526, the Discipline). In order to maintain continuity and experience, you and other trustees are divided into three classes with an equal number of trustees in each class. One class of trustees is elected each year. The charge conference can also fill vacancies that occur in any class. In a perfect world, the composition of your Board will include a good balance between consistency and diversity. Keeping in mind the importance of the different functions within the body of Christ, it will take a variety of gifts to work faithfully together. It is also helpful to mix new members with those who have a history in the congregation.

ORGANIZATION

By Discipline, the Trustees are to meet and organize within the first thirty days of the calendar or conference year (§2530.1, the Discipline). The previous chairperson or the pastor calls the meeting for this purpose. Your first item of business is the election of officers (§2530.2, the Discipline). Officers shall include a chairperson and may include a vice-chairperson, secretary, and other officers as needed. (Note: The chairperson and vice-chairperson shall not be members of the same yearly class so as to avoid these two offices becoming vacant at the same time. Election of a treasurer will depend on your church's practice and procedure.)

Secondly, schedule a time to orient the new trustees with a tour of the church grounds, should it be necessary. Walk through the building(s) to acquaint all trustees with safety features; water, gas, electric cutoffs; potential trouble spots; and so on. New trustees may have a fresh perspective that enables all the trustees to see things as they really are, rather than the way to which you have become accustomed. Next, organize your work into manageable portions and set your calendar for the year.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees together have several legal and administrative functions. They are to:

- oversee, maintain, and supervise all local church property.
- report annually to the charge conference on the state of the church's property, equipment, investments, and resources.
- receive and administer all gifts made to the congregation; make certain that all trust funds of the congregation are invested properly.
- ensure that the articles of incorporation of the congregation are kept up-to-date, if applicable.
- be responsible, in conjunction with the pastor, for all use of the church buildings and grounds.
- maintain adequate insurance coverage on all church property and develop appropriate risk management policies.
- submit to the committee on finance the annual budget requests for insurance, property maintenance and improvement, and new property purchases.
- be accountable to the charge conference and to the church council.

Much of the work of the trustees is governed by specific requirements of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church. You should obtain a current copy from your pastor or from Cokesbury (phone 1-800-672-1789) and create policies for the implementation of security protocols.

WHAT DOES THE CHAIRPERSON DO?

- Guide the work of the board of trustees throughout the year, planning the agendas and presiding at meetings. The chairperson also creates an environment in which the team members nurture and care for each other.
 - Provide advice and direction to the board and others based on detailed knowledge of the disciplinary and legal requirements related to church property.
 - Keep close communications with the pastor in the church council (or main administrative groups).
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4. POINTS OF EMPHASIS

#1 UNDERSTAND THE TRUST CLAUSE.

Ours is a connectional church. Each local congregation is connected to every other local congregation through the district and the annual, jurisdictional, and General conferences and has certain disciplinary responsibilities to The United Methodist Church as a whole. For this reason, titles to all properties are held in trust for the benefit of the entire United Methodist connection. The Book of Discipline ¶2501 states that The United Methodist Church is organized as a connectional structure, and titles to all properties held at “General, jurisdictional, annual, or district conference levels, or by a local church or charge, or by an agency or institution of the Church, shall be held in trust for The United Methodist Church and subject to the provisions of its Discipline.” The specific wording of the trust clause is stated in the Discipline in ¶2503.

The absence of such a clause in any deeds or conveyances does not relieve the local church of its connectional responsibilities (¶2501.6, the Discipline). Every congregation that has accepted pastors appointed by a bishop of The United Methodist Church or any local congregation that has used the name, customs, or policy of The United Methodist Church is deemed by The Book of Discipline to have accepted the terms of the trust clause with respect to its property. Decisions in both state and federal courts have upheld The United Methodist Church and its predecessors in their rights under the trust clauses. The written consent of the district superintendent for the sale of the property constitutes a release of the trust clause (¶2542, the Discipline).

#2 BUILD RELATIONSHIPS!

In order for this calling of a trustee to be lived out as an act of ministry, it will be important to continually refine the role of the trustees in relation to other committees of the church, to the church staff, and to the rest of the community. As those called to represent Christ and be agents of hospitality, work collaboratively. Avoid silos or other power plays. Remember that you are there to serve the mission of the church and to help facilitate the other program ministries to flourish.

#3 PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO INSURANCE COVERAGES AND OTHER LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES.

Always know that it is far better to consult a lawyer BEFORE you take legal action (contracts, etc) then it is have to call one afterwards. The denominational guidelines are an excellent resource on this particular theme.

#4 ALIGN EACH BUILDING POLICY TO VISION AND MISSION.

If you define it now, there is less chance you will need to defend it later. Policies for vehicles or buildings use are a necessary tool in exercising safety and good stewardship. But again, the mission of the church must always be in mind. Do not allow the policies to become an obstacle to ministry, but rather a means of grace and transformation.

Are there rooms in your church where the children are discouraged or not permitted? Why is that? Is there any place where Jesus is not permitted? Does Jesus say, let the children come to me, that is, unless I'm in the parlor sitting on this sacred couch that was donated in 1976? Are there rooms that are designated for purposes that are no longer relevant? Again, are we serving a mission or a museum? These are important theological questions to be discussed openly with your pastor and staff.

5 IDENTIFY THE BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR PRESCHOOLS, AFTERSCHOOL CARE PROGRAMS, SCOUT TROOPS, WEDDINGS, AND OTHER EXTENSION MINISTRIES.

Are their special licenses that are required? Who supervises these employees? Is this intended to create revenue for the church? Who will provide the custodial services? Who manages the finances for this program? How does this fit into the over mission and vision of the church?

6# COMMUNICATION.

You cannot over-communicate when it comes to facility needs, renovations, or new building development. A regular update in the church newsletter or other correspondence can do wonders for congregational investment and support. When the pastor does it occasionally sounds like a complaint or a lack of appreciation for the existing church. When the trustees communicate these needs, however, it conveys congregational ownership and thus sounds more like an authentic movement of the Holy Spirit. Let us pray that it is!

5. RESOURCES

Trustees: Managing the Resources of the Congregation

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/82d14aqhvv1r0ph/Guidelines%20-%20Trustees.pdf?dl=0>

AWF Website (Conference Resources)

<https://www.awfumc.org/resources>

United Methodist Church Website (General Church Resources)

<https://www.umc.org/en/content/book-of-discipline-2525-ff-board-of-trustees>



Spanish Fort

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

SPRC Committee

1. Big Picture
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1. THE BIG PICTURE

PURPOSE

The ministry entrusted to this committee is in its name: relations. In every size congregation, the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee (S/PPRC) must focus on building strong relationships between the staff and the congregation, and between the congregation and the district superintendent (DS). The SPRC is the administrative unit in the local church, where staff and congregation are integrated to focus on the mission of the church. The SPRC is the governing board in an advisory capacity...NOT to manage the staff. Finding a balance between building relationships and handling administrative tasks can be difficult, so the ministry of this committee is crucial for this aspect of a vital and effective congregation. You have been elected to this committee for Kingdom work: We pray in the Lord's Prayer that God's will be done and Kingdom come. Strong relationships lead to ministry that impacts Christian disciple-making so that God's will may be done for the transformation of your community and our world.

United Methodist congregations give the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee the responsibility for administering the relationship between staff, congregation, and the district superintendent so that the mission of the Church moves forward. This summary of specific tasks for the S/PPRC is listed in (§258.2g) in The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (with added suggestions from the Task Force on Clergy Health and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women).

Tasks:

- Encourage, strengthen, nurture, support, and respect the pastor and staff and their families, including advocating for a healthy work/life balance.
- Promote unity in the churches.
- Confer with the staff on the effectiveness of ministry and impediments to effectiveness, including conflict of interest, and sexual misconduct.
- Confer with the staff about effective use of their gifts, skills, time, and priorities.
- Conduct annual staff evaluations.
- Teach the congregation about itinerancy, steps into ordained ministry, the value of diversity in staffing, and the ministerial education fund.
- Write job descriptions for staff.
- Confer with staff about continuing education and spiritual formation.
- Confer with the district superintendent about the clergy leadership for the congregation.
- Recommend staff positions to the church council.
- Create written personnel policies and sexual misconduct policies for the congregation.
- Consult on matters of staff support including housing, vacation, insurance, pension, and other matters outlined in the Discipline

2. MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

MEMBERSHIP

The Book of Discipline requires every congregation to have a committee on staff parish relations. The staff parish relations committee members are proposed by the committee on nominations and elected by the charge or church conference. The Discipline provides for a rotation system to ensure continuity on the committee. It requires that at least five and not more than nine members be elected for terms of three years each, in three classes. All members must be professing or associate members of the church.

The S/PPRC should be the most diverse group in the church. Each person should represent or relate to various constituencies in the church. This built in diversity will generate deep conversation about leadership qualities. At the same time, committee members will develop skills for communicating with church members about leadership.

In addition to elected committee members, the Discipline also requires that a lay member of the annual conference and the lay leader be members of the SPRC. These leaders are exempt from the three year term. No employee of the church or a member of the pastor or staff member's immediate family may serve on the committee, nor may any affiliated ordained clergy persons. Only one person from an immediate family residing in the same household shall serve on the committee. SPRC members must be laypersons, other than the appointed staff. SPRC members should be Christian spiritual leaders who demonstrate regular worship attendance, small group participation, Bible study, and regular generous giving. These practices are essential for committee members to bring integrity to the leadership of this ministry.

ORGANIZATION

The committee shall meet at least quarterly. It shall meet additionally at the request of the bishop, the district superintendent, the pastor, any other person accountable to the committee, or the chairperson of the committee. The committee shall meet only with the knowledge of the pastor and/or the district superintendent. The pastor shall be present at each meeting of the committee on pastor-parish relations or staff-parish relations except where he or she voluntarily excuses himself or herself.

The committee may meet with the district superintendent without the pastor or appointed staff under consideration being present. However, the pastor or appointed staff under consideration shall be notified prior to such meeting with the district superintendent and be brought into consultation immediately thereafter.

The committee shall meet in closed session, and information shared in the committee shall be confidential.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

Your ministry of administration and relationship building, plus leadership and management, is a big responsibility. This Guideline suggests practical ways to manage your responsibilities by assigning tasks to a quarterly calendar, though you may organize in whatever way makes sense for your context and church. Adapt the suggestions for your community while always keeping the big picture in mind.

- Prepare for your leadership by reading the appropriate paragraphs in the Discipline and studying this Guideline. As you read, think about your own gifts and skills that will contribute to the tasks of this committee.
- Prepare yourself for every meeting by reading materials you get before the meeting and asking questions about the agenda.
- When the committee meeting schedule is set, place these dates in your personal calendar. When you cannot attend, notify the chairperson.
- Do all you can to promote positive relationships among staff and congregation, communicating with attentiveness to confidential issues.

An explanation of the work you will do on behalf of the church may be couched in “job description” language. You will do a job, certainly; but more importantly, you are engaged in ministry.

- Encourage, strengthen, nurture, support, and respect the pastor and staff and their families, including advocating for a healthy work/life balance.
- Examine candidates for ministry and, when approved, recommend them to the Charge Conference.
- Confer with the staff on the effectiveness of ministry and impediments to effectiveness, including conflict of interest, and sexual misconduct.
- Conduct annual staff evaluations.
- Teach the congregation about itinerancy, steps into ordained ministry, the value of diversity in staffing, and the ministerial education fund.
- Review & revise job descriptions for staff.
- Confer with staff about continuing education and spiritual formation.
- Confer with the district superintendent about the clergy leadership for the congregation.
- Recommend staff positions to the church council.
- Create written personnel policies and sexual misconduct policies for the congregation.
- Consult on matters of staff support including housing, vacation, insurance, pension, and other matters outlined in the Discipline.

The SPRC gives management to the pastor and staff, but it also gives leadership to ensure the mission and vision of your congregation, inspired by God, is in alignment as you carry forth. You give leadership to the vision but you also have to manage this along the way. If you are just about managing it, you lose the mission. If it's all about the vision, somebody needs to take care of the details.

4. POINTS OF EMPHASIS

#1. CONFIDENTIALITY

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
 - If you cannot keep a confidence, then have the integrity to resign from the Committee.
 - Joint statements owned & shared by all members
 - Careful reporting to Council of each meeting
-

#2. WHEN FOLKS COMPLAIN

When a church member voices a concern to you about the pastor or paid staff:

1. Encourage him/her to speak to the pastor (or staffer) directly.
 1. If they have already done so but are dissatisfied, you may encourage them to further direct conversation or reflection upon other positive responses and forgiveness.
 2. If the person can't or won't speak to the pastor AND the issue seems important, then...
2. Have the person write down their concern, date and sign it.
 1. If they decline, tell them that you cannot carry verbal concerns to the committee.
3. Convey the written concern to the chair of the S/PPRC.
 1. The chair or secretary should write an acknowledgment: 'We received your concern and will discuss it at our next meeting.'
4. The chair should inform the pastor &/or staff person of the written concern.
5. At the next regular or called S/PPRC meeting, the whole committee decides if:
 1. The concern has merit and deserves further attention, or
 2. The concern has no merit and deserves no action. If not, then write a note thanking the person for their input and informing him/her that the Committee will remain aware.
6. The Committee discusses legitimate concerns with the pastor/staff person for a full understanding of situation. Together, decide on a course of action and follow up.
7. The whole committee decides if a joint statement is needed to the church or the individual who initiated the concern. All members are obliged to share only the approved, joint statement without additions or deletions.

8. The S/PPRC may receive individual's letters only, not petitions from groups. When trying to gain a sense of the entire congregation, S/PPRC should not conduct polls, but should make known (via newsletter, bulletin) who the S/PPRC members are so the general membership can approach them. Each S/PPRC member should keep a discreet list of who approaches them and give it to the Chair. The Chair can then determine if a few individuals are unduly influencing S/PPRC opinions.
9. S/PPRC is responsible for addressing situations with the pastor and any paid staff. The Lay Leadership/ Nominating Committee is responsible for addressing situations with elected members of the congregation.

#3 PASTORAL CONSULTATION PROCESS

Letter From District Superintendent to Pastor:

You are blessed to have a specific corner of the world assigned to you where you join God in ministry. I am looking forward to hearing where and how you are seeking to join God in your corner of the Kingdom and serving God in ministry.

During our conversation time together, we will meet for approximately one hour. In this hour, we will discuss the following questions. Please confirm []. In order to help with travel time, I am holding these consultations in multiple locations. So that our time together is productive, bring your completed questions to the consultation. And please bring a copy for me so that I will have a copy during our conversation. Following our initial conversation, we may need to schedule other times to meet as well. I desire to do all I can to add to equipping you for an effective, fruitful, and successful ministry in your corner of the kingdom.

I pray for you every day. As we begin this journey towards a time of consultation in December and January, may we seek to listen to God's guidance as we unfold the answers to these questions. May our hearts be open to all God is doing in our midst and all God is calling us to do in ministry. May we continuously see God's guidance as we are equipped to do God's work in effective, fruitful, and successful ways.

Moreover, we will also discuss your appointment For the 2022-2023 Annual Conference

Please submit the answers to these questions on separate sheet(s) of paper:

1. How is it with your body, mind, and soul? What are you doing to help care for yourself in a holistic way? What brings you joy?
2. How are you adapting in these challenging times? How are you changing your corner of the world?
3. How do you spend your weekly time off? How have you spent your yearly time away in the past 12 months?
4. What is your biggest concern as we look forward to ministry in the coming year? What vision do you have for ministry in the coming year?

To be signed and dated at consultation

Pastor _____

District Superintendent _____

Date _____

Letter From SPRC to District Superintendent

► Church/Charge _____

► Our committee met on _____

► The following members were present: _____

(date)

Check one:

____ Our committee would like to meet with the District Superintendent for a consultation.

____ We do not feel a need to meet with the District Superintendent at this time.

Signed: Staff/Pastor-Parish Committee Chair Signed: Pastor Date: _____

On a separate page, please comment on the following questions:

1. How has your committee helped the pastor(s) succeed in the past year?
2. How will you help in the coming year?
3. List three strengths of your pastor(s).
4. List one or more areas of ministry in which your pastor exhibits growth.
5. List suggestions for areas in which your pastor may benefit from education.

#4 EFFECTIVE AND INEFFECTIVE DYNAMICS

Effective

- **Meet regularly and often**

- **Prepare for meetings**

- Have an agenda
- Stay focused on agenda and identify topics for future meetings
- Allow adequate time

- **Establish partnership with pastor**

- Keep pastor informed
- Take pastor into confidence
- "We are in this together" attitude

- Provide support and understanding.

Ineffective

- **Conduct annual evaluations only**

- Withholds regular feedback
- Lets Issues build too long
- Related to salary and appointment
- decisions more than to growth

- **Allow too little time and care**

- Insufficient time to do task well

- Insufficient care In getting input and preparing for evaluation
- **Behave unfairly**
- Bringing unevaluated complaints
- Bringing anonymous complaints
- Giving all sources equal credibility
- Doesn't put issues in perspective

5. RESOURCES

Pastor-Parish Relations: Concerning the Pastor, Staff, and Congregation

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/v39s0nvueyta39m/Guidelines%20-%20SPR.pdf?dl=0>

AWF Website (Conference Resources)

<https://www.awfumc.org/resources>

6. FAQ'S

1. Who determines what staff positions are required in the local church?

Committee (SPRC) is given broad oversight and responsibility in church staffing matters. The SPRC shall "recommend to the church council, after consultation with the pastor, the professional and other staff positions (whether employee or contract) needed to carry out the work of the church or charge." (Paragraph 258.2.g [12])

"It is the responsibility of the [SPRC] committee to communicate with the committee on nominations and leadership development and/or the church council when there is a need for other leaders or for employed staff to perform in areas where utilization of the gifts of the pastor(s) and staff proves an inappropriate stewardship of time." (Paragraph 258.2)

2. To whom are staff responsible?

The SPRC shall "confer with, consult, and counsel the pastor(s) and staff on matters pertaining to priorities in the use of gifts, skills, and time and priorities for the demands and effectiveness of the mission and ministry of the congregation." (Paragraph 258.2.g [4])

3. Who determines the job description for staff?

The SPRC is to "develop and approve written job descriptions and titles for associate pastors and other staff members in cooperation with the senior pastor." (Paragraph 258.2.g [7])

4. Who sets staff salaries?

It is the responsibility of the church council to "recommend to the charge conference the salary and other remuneration of the pastor(s) and staff members after receiving recommendations from the committee on pastor-parish relations (staff-parish relations). (Paragraph 252.4.d)

5. Shall staff receive benefits? Who sets the benefits of staff?

"The [SPRC] committee shall further recommend to the church council a provision for adequate health and life insurance, and severance pay for all lay employees." (Paragraph 258.2.g [12])

6. What about retirement benefits?

"[The SPRC] shall recommend that the church council provide, effective on and after January 1, 2006, 100 percent vested pension benefits of at least three percent of compensation for lay employees of the local church who work at least 1040 hours per year, are at least 21 years of age, and have at least one year of permanent service. The church council shall have authority to provide such pension benefits through either a denominational pension program administered by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits or another pension program administered by another pension provider." (Paragraph 258.2.g[12])

7. What about continuing education?

The SPRC shall "consult with the pastor and staff concerning continuing education and spiritual renewal, to arrange with the church council for the necessary time and financial assistance for the attendance of the pastor and/or staff at such continuing education and spiritual renewal events as may serve their professional and spiritual growth?" (Paragraph 258.2.g [8])

8. What about professional certification?

The SPRC is to "encourage staff members to seek professional certification in their fields of specialization." (Paragraph 258.2.g [8])

"When persons are hired or contracted, consideration shall be given to the training qualifications and certification standards set forth by the general Church agency to which such positions are related." (Paragraph 258.2.g [12])

9. Are there guidelines for changing the employment status of staff? Who hires and fires staff?

"The [SPRC] committee and the pastor shall recommend to the church council a written statement of policy and procedures regarding the process for hiring, contracting, evaluating, promoting, retiring, and dismissing staff personnel who are not subject to episcopal appointment as ordained clergy. Until such a policy has been adopted, the committee and the pastor shall have the authority to hire, contract, evaluate, promote, retire, and dismiss nonappointed personnel." (Paragraph 258.2.g [12])

10. When does the SPRC meet? May the staff member attend?

"The committee shall meet at least quarterly. It shall meet additionally at the request of the bishop, the district superintendent, the pastor, any other person accountable to the committee, or the chairperson of the committee. The Committee shall meet only with the knowledge of the pastor and/or the district superintendent. The pastor shall be present at each meeting of the committee on pastor-parish relations or staff-parish relations except where he or she voluntarily excuses himself or herself." (Paragraph 258.2.e)

"The committee shall meet with the district superintendent without the pastor or appointed staff under consideration being present. However, the pastor or appointed staff under consideration shall be notified prior to such meeting with the district superintendent and be brought into consultation immediately thereafter." (Paragraph 258.2.e)

The committee shall meet in closed session, and information shared in the committee shall be confidential." (Paragraph 258.2.e)

SPRC Role and Responsibilities Regarding Congregational Complaints and Vibes

I. Interactions

An SPRC member should not seek out complaints about a pastor or other staff member but should graciously receive all comments a member of the congregation expresses.

II. Confidentiality

An SPRC member should honor all requests for confidentiality, except for information that places a person or the church in physical or legal danger. Examples would include instances of drug use or sexual or financial misconduct. An SPRC member may share with the SPRC any information not subject to a valid confidentiality request.

III. Complaints Regarding Pastors

A complaint from a church member may be directed towards any conduct, statement, incident, or practice (or lack thereof) the member finds objectionable. Only complaints implicating the pastor's job performance or fitness for employment will be considered by the SPRC.

IV. Complaints Regarding Non-Pastoral Staff

The SPRC member should encourage the church member to address their complaint directly with the staff member or, when appropriate, that person's supervisor. Because non-pastoral staff members are subject to supervision by the pastors and, in some instances, by other non-pastoral staff, the SPRC generally will not address congregational complaints regarding non-pastoral staff members unless they involve violations of law or similarly egregious circumstances. In such circumstances, the procedures in Part V will apply.

V. Complaint Procedure

A complaint cannot be brought on behalf of another person.

The SPRC member should encourage the church member to address their complaint directly with the subject of the complaint or, when appropriate, their supervisor. If the church member declines to do so, or if the church member indicates the matter remains unresolved after doing so, the SPRC member should invite the church member to write down their complaint, sign it and date it. If the church member declines to do so, the SPRC member should advise the church member that only written, signed complaints will be considered by the SPRC.

If the church member presents a written, signed complaint, the SPRC member should present it to the chair. If the chair determines that the complaint implicates the pastor's job performance or fitness for employment (or, in the case of a non-pastor staff member, involves sufficiently egregious circumstances), it will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and will advise the pastor or subject staff member of the complaint and its contents.

The chair will invite the church member to attend the next SPRC meeting and present their complaint, in which case the church member will be excused after doing so. If the church member declines to attend, the SPRC will nevertheless consider the complaint but may discount the complaint accordingly. After hearing from the pastor or subject staff member and conducting such further investigation, if any, as it deems appropriate, the SPRC will determine whether the complaint has merit and, if so, what if any corrective action is appropriate. The chair will advise the church member of the SPRC's resolution.

VI. Vibes

A vibe is a general sense of the congregational atmosphere derived from observation, conversation, and other means. Vibes will not be based on, or confirmed by, informal polling. Care will be taken not to discern a vibe based on the loud grumbling of a few. The SPRC may discuss perceived vibes with the pastors without awaiting a church member complaint or appearance at an SPRC meeting.

SPRC Role and Responsibilities Regarding Employment Decisions

“The committee and the pastor shall recommend to the church council a written statement of policy and procedures regarding the process for hiring, contracting, evaluating, promoting, retiring, and dismissing staff personnel who are not subject to episcopal appointment as ordained clergy. Until such a policy has been adopted, the committee and the pastor shall have the authority to hire, contract, evaluate, promote, retire, and dismiss nonappointed personnel.”

The Book of Discipline ¶ 258.g(12) (2016).

I. Hiring

A. Open Positions.

The senior and/or executive pastors may recommend that new staff positions be created or that changes be made in existing positions. Such recommendations must be approved by formal vote of the SPRC.

B. Search Committee.

Unless waived in a particular instance by the SPRC, a search committee shall be formed when a director-level position is to be filled. Director-level positions shall from time to time be identified by the pastors and confirmed by the SPRC but presently include the following: (a) Director of Music & Worship; (b) Director of Contemporary Worship; (c) Director of Student Ministries; (d) Director of Children’s Ministry; (e) Director of Servant Ministries; and (f) Director of Finance & Operations. Unless waived in a particular instance by the SPRC, a search committee shall be formed when the position of Associate Director of Music & Worship or Maintenance Supervisor is to be filled.

A search committee shall include 1-3 members of the SPRC, 2-5 other members of the congregation, and the senior and/or executive pastors, with generally no more than six non-pastoral members. The senior and/or executive pastors shall identify the congregational members of any search committee, taking into consideration the various stakeholders concerning the position at issue. Any hiring recommendation of the search committee must be approved by formal vote of the SPRC.

In the absence of a search committee, any hiring recommendation of the senior and/or executive pastors must be approved by formal vote of the SPRC.

C. Other Positions.

Positions falling outside paragraph I.B may be filled without a search committee and without formal SPRC approval of the individual hired, unless the SPRC in a particular instance requires otherwise.

D. Compensation.

Prior to the extension of any offer, the SPRC must approve a compensation range that may be offered. Unless the SPRC in a particular instance requires otherwise, negotiation of compensation within the approved range shall be the responsibility of the hiring individual.

E. Extension of Offer.

Job offers ordinarily will be extended by the pastor or other responsible staff person. The SPRC may in its discretion identify a member to be present.

F. Notification of Acceptance/Rejection.

The SPRC shall be notified within 24 hours of an offeree's acceptance, rejection, or other response to an offer of employment.

G. Promotions.

Unless waived in a particular instance by the SPRC, the above provisions apply to positions to be filled by promotion.

II. Compensation

A. Annual Review.

The senior and/or executive pastors shall present to the SPRC an annual proposal for employee compensation for the following year. This presentation ordinarily will occur in September. The SPRC shall by formal vote approve a proposed personnel budget for consideration by Finance.

B. Mid-Year Changes in Compensation.

Adjustments to compensation ordinarily will occur effective the first pay period in January. Other than for new hires, promoted employees, and employees whose duties have substantially changed or expanded, mid-year compensation increases will be considered by the SPRC only under the most compelling circumstances.

III. Evaluations

A. Frequency and Timing.

New employees, and employees in new positions, shall be evaluated upon the completion of a 90-day probationary period. All employees shall be evaluated in writing annually.

B. Conduct of Evaluations.

Evaluations shall be performed by the employee's direct supervisor.

C. Review of Evaluations.

Evaluations shall be promptly reviewed with the employee. An evaluating supervisor may request that a member of the SPRC participate in such review. The employee's SPRC liaison ordinarily will be the member participating.

D. Reporting of Evaluations.

Evaluations shall be promptly shared with the evaluating supervisor's direct supervisor, the senior and executive pastors, and the SPRC. The senior and/or executive pastors shall review employee evaluations with the SPRC annually. The SPRC shall be promptly informed of any consequential developments resulting from evaluations, including the creation and execution of any corrective action plan. The SPRC shall be promptly informed of any concern that an employee is or may become subject to discipline or termination for performance-related reasons.

IV. Discipline

A. General.

The responsibility for disciplining employees for performance issues or work rule infractions lies with the pastors and supervisors.

B. SPRC Involvement.

The SPRC must pre-approve by formal vote the issuance of a final warning, a final corrective action plan, or any other measure the violation of which will or may result in termination. The SPRC may elect to have a member present when an employee is advised of such a measure.

V. Termination.

A. Probationary Employees.

The SPRC, in coordination with the pastors, will determine whether a probationary employee continues in employment past the probationary period.

B. Other Employees.

The SPRC must pre-approve by formal vote the involuntary separation of any non-probationary employee.

C. SPRC Presence.

A member of the SPRC, or a second staff member designated by the SPRC for that purpose, will be present when an employee is advised of their termination.

VI. General

Any exceptions to, or special circumstances not covered by, the Employee Handbook must be addressed and approved by formal vote of the SPRC.

SPRC – Staff Liaisons Role and Responsibilities

SPRC Role and Responsibilities Regarding Staff Complaints and Vibes

I. Staff Liaison

An SPRC liaison shall be assigned to each staff person. The purpose of this assignment is to offer each employee someone who will celebrate, encourage, and champion the staff person and the ministry in which they work, as well as receive concerns and official complaints from employees in the case where they do not feel comfortable bringing them to their supervisor or the staff Human Resources representative.

An SPRC liaison should meet in person with their assigned staff member(s) at least quarterly and should speak with them at least monthly. An SPRC liaison should interact with their assigned staff member(s) so as to make them feel known, valued, and heard as individuals and not merely as employees. Especially in the first meetings, the liaison should take a genuine interest in the employee's life outside the workplace, including such things as family.

II. Complaints

The SPRC liaison is not meant to serve as the arbiter of employee complaints but rather to make sure the employee knows the proper channels for reporting and helps them connect with the person(s) who can best help resolve an issue.

A complaint is an employee's expressed objection: to a particular treatment directed at the employee (*e.g.*, an insult, a work assignment); to an employment decision (*e.g.*, an evaluation, a denial of leave); or to prohibited conduct (*e.g.*, embezzlement), accompanied by an expressed or implied request for review and/or corrective action. A complaint may focus on a single incident, a pattern of similar incidents, or a collection of dissimilar incidents.

1. If the matter involves anyone other than the staff member's direct or indirect supervisor, the staff member should address their complaint directly with the other individual before involving their direct supervisor.
2. If the matter cannot be resolved without additional support from a supervisor, the staff member should seek guidance by making their director supervisor aware of the situation.
3. If the matter involves the staff member's direct supervisor, the staff member should address the complaint with the supervisor of their direct supervisor.
4. If the matter involves the staff member's indirect supervisor, the staff member should address their complaint with the Human Resource Representative.
5. If the staff member declines to address the matter with the relevant supervisor or the Human Resources Representative, or if the staff member indicates the matter remains unresolved after doing so, the staff member can bring their complaint to their liaison or the SPRC-Chair.

III. Duties of the Chair

If the chair determines it is appropriate, they can invite the staff member to present their complaint to the SPRC. If the chair determines that it does not rise to the level of SPRC discussion, the chair will advise the staff member, and the SPRC's involvement in the matter will end.

In determining whether to hear from the staff member, the chair will consider the relevant circumstances, including the nature of the complaint, the gravity of the complaint, and the reasons the staff member declines to address the matter with the relevant supervisor. In general, an employee's

preference to avoid the inevitable discomfort of addressing a matter with the supervisor will not furnish grounds for an audience with the SPRC or the chair.

If the matter is brought to the SPRC, the staff member making the complaint must attend and present their complaint. Pursuant to the Discipline, the pastors are entitled to be present at any such meeting. If a pastor declines to excuse themselves and the staff member declines to present their complaint in the pastor's presence, the SPRC will take no further action unless the chair determines that, pursuant to the Discipline, the District Superintendent should be present. Requesting the District Superintendent's presence will occur in only the most compelling situations, such as where the complaint involves sexual harassment, financial misconduct, or other gross impropriety or where the staff member demonstrates an objectively reasonable fear of retaliation.

In the discretion of the chair, a staff member may present witnesses. Anonymous or hearsay complaints will not be considered by the SPRC.

The chair will advise the staff member of the SPRC's decision, which will be final.

III. Confidentiality

An SPRC liaison should honor all requests for confidentiality made by their assigned staff member, except for information that places the employee, another person, or the church in physical or legal danger. Examples would include instances of drug use or sexual or financial misconduct. An SPRC liaison may share with the SPRC any employee information not subject to a valid confidentiality request, and staff members should expect such sharing if they have not expressly requested otherwise.

IV. Vibes

A vibe is a general sense of the work environment derived from observation, conversation, and other means. The SPRC may discuss perceived vibes with the pastors without awaiting an employee complaint or appearance at an SPRC meeting.