

# Begin with the Mission of The United Methodist Church

*Make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world*

## Committee Basics from ¶258.2

### Purpose of the Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee

- The Staff Parish Relations Committee is the administrative unit in the local church where staff and congregational interests are integrated to focus on the mission of the church.
- The SPRC serves the "governing board" in an advisory capacity related to personnel administration.
- It does not exist to provide managerial or leadership oversight to the staff team (that is the work of the senior pastor).

### Membership

- Between 5 and 9 persons (one shall be a young adult and one may be a youth)
- Must be professing members
- Divided into three year classes
- Members shall be able to succeed themselves for one three-year term
- Oversees the work to all staff
- Pastor should be present, unless she or he excuses herself or himself or the District Superintendent is in attendance
- The lay delegate and lay leader are members and have voice and vote
- On charges, a representative & Lay Leader from each church
- Relates to and works with all staff (paid and non-salaried)
- People engaged and attentive to their own Christian spiritual development

### Who we cannot be

- Staff members
- No more than one immediate family member from the same household
- Immediate family members of the pastor or staff

### Meetings

- At least quarterly
- Written "minutes" of decisions/actions
- Pastor present, unless s/he excuses self
- Only with knowledge of pastor or district superintendent
- May meet with the district superintendent without pastor or appointed staff
  - *With due notice before and sharing immediately after*
- Shall meet in closed session (BOD ¶258.2e)

### 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

# Resources for Staff Parish Relations Committees

## Effective and Ineffective Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC)

### Characteristics of Effective and Ineffective SPRCs

Effective	Ineffective
<p>Meet regularly and often</p> <p>Prepare for meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have an agenda</li> <li>• Stay focused on agenda and identify topics for future meetings</li> <li>• Allow adequate time</li> </ul> <p>Establish partnership with pastor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep pastor informed</li> <li>• Take pastor into confidence</li> <li>• “We are in this together” attitude</li> <li>• Provide support and understanding</li> </ul>	<p>Conduct annual evaluations only</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Withholds regular feedback</li> <li>• Lets issues build for too long</li> <li>• Related to salary and appointment decisions more than to growth</li> </ul> <p>Allow too little time and care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient time to do task well</li> <li>• Insufficient care in getting input and preparing for evaluation</li> </ul> <p>Behave unfairly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bringing unevaluated complaints</li> <li>• Bringing anonymous complaints</li> <li>• Giving all sources equal credibility</li> <li>• Doesn’t put issues in perspective</li> </ul>

### What SPRCs and Clergy Most Need from Each Other

SPRC Most Need from Clergy	Clergy Most Need from SPRCs
<p>Cooperation and receptivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willing to listen with an open mind</li> <li>• Attempt to understand members’ needs and concerns</li> <li>• Attempt to make some changes</li> <li>• Openness to improvement ideas</li> </ul> <p>Clear and open communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pastor’s vision for ministry</li> <li>• Candid assessment of what’s going on in the church</li> <li>• Information about issues and needs</li> </ul>	<p>Honest Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balanced, objective, thoughtful, and candid feedback</li> <li>• Treated as adults who can take criticism</li> </ul> <p>Personal concern and support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for pastor</li> </ul> <p>Communication with the congregation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education of congregation</li> <li>• Feedback from and to congregation</li> </ul>

*Based on a comparison of pastoral relations committees deemed effective by both the SPRC chair and the pastor and those deemed ineffective by the chair and pastor. Lewis Center for Church Leadership, Wesley Theological Seminary, [www.churchleadership.com](http://www.churchleadership.com).*

# Duties of Committee (§258.2g)

## Communication

- Confer and counsel with pastor & staff, advising them of ministry conditions
- Continually interpret to people the nature and function of ministry
- Counsel pastor & staff on relationships with congregation, priorities, skills, goals
- Interpret to congregation: preparation for ordained ministry, Ministerial Education Fund

## Personnel Issues

- Develop and recommend to Council staff positions and job descriptions for staff other than pastor
- Recommend to Council personnel policies and monitor compliance
- Consult: pulpit supply, compensation, vacation, insurances, pension, housing – making recommendations to Council
- Enlist, interview, evaluate, review, recommend: Lay Speakers, Candidates for Ministry and missionary service
- Consult: continuing education, renewal
- "To encourage, monitor, and support clergy and lay staff pursuit of health and wholeness" (§258.2g(16))

## Parsonage Issues

- With Trustee and Pastor, make annual review of parsonage
- "The committee will follow up to assure timely resolution of parsonage problems affecting the health of the pastor's family." (§258.2g(16))

## Annual Evaluation

- Provide annual evaluations for pastor and staff to encourage effective ministry

## Appointment Issues

- Confer with pastor & cooperate with pastor, DS, and bishop in securing clergy leadership when it becomes evident that the interests of the church and pastor will be served by a change.
- Such conferring and cooperating with DS and bishop are advisory only.