

Duties & Responsibilities

In churches that employ only a pastor, this committee is known as the Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC). In churches with additional staff, it is known as the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC). The role and responsibilities are the same.

Begin with the Mission of the UMC

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

Committee Basics from ¶1258.2

Purpose of the Staff-Pastor Relations Committee

The Staff-Pastor 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 Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee 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
- Advises on matters related to the work of the pastor and staff
- Pastor should be present, unless s/he excuses self or if DS 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 ¶1258.2e)

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 Pastoral Relations Committees

Effective and Ineffective Pastoral Relations Committees

Characteristics of Effective and Ineffective PRCs

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

What PRCs and Clergy Most Need from Each Other

PRCs Most Need from Clergy

Cooperation and receptivity

- Willing to listen with open mind
- Attempt to understand members' needs and concerns
- Attempt to make some changes
- Openness to improve ideas

Clear and open communication

- Pastor's vision for ministry
- Candid assessment of what's going on in the church
- Information about issues and needs

Clergy Most Need from PRCs

Honest feedback

- Balanced, objective, thoughtful, and candid feedback
- Treated as adults who can take criticism

Personal concern and support

- Advocate for pastor

Communication with the congregation

- Education of congregation
- Feedback from and to congregation

Based on a comparison of pastoral relations committees deemed effective by both the PRC chair and the pastor and those deemed ineffective by the chair and pastor.

Duties of Committee (§258.2g)

Communication

- Confer and counsel with pastor and staff, advising them of ministry conditions
- Continually interpret to people the nature and function of ministry
- Counsel pastor and staff on relationships with congregation, priorities, skills, and 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, insurance, 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(17))

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 or pastor’s family.” (§258.2g(16))

Annual Evaluation

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

Appointment Issues

- Confer with pastor and 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

Connection with the Discipleship Priorities

The Staff Parish/Pastor Parish Relations Committee's work aligns with the Kentucky-Tennessee Episcopal Area's five Discipleship Priorities under Bishop David Graves: Mental Health & Well-Being, Professions of Faith, Culture of Call, Spiritual Leadership Development, and Disrupting & Dismantling Racism & Discrimination.

Mental Health & Well-Being

By caring for the holistic health of clergy and staff, the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee advances the Area's emphasis on flourishing leaders

Spiritual Leadership Development / Culture of Call

Through mentoring and supporting candidates for ministry, the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee helps raise new spiritual leaders

Professions of Faith

Healthy staff relationships enhance the congregation's capacity to reach new people for Christ.

Disrupting & Dismantling Racism & Discrimination

By ensuring equity and inclusion in staff and leadership, the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee helps embody the church's commitment to justice and beloved community.

Visual Chart of Work

