

Right Start!

PART 1

An Equipping Module for the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee



Presenter:



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- Dean of the Cabinet
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- Author and coauthor of 5 books, including *IMPACT! Reclaiming the Call of Lay Ministry* and *Mission Possible 3+: A Simple Structure for Missional Effectiveness*

arumc.org/pastors-in-transition/



Download Resources for the Pastoral Transition



The SPRC has an unique role in a pastoral transition



What is the SPRC?

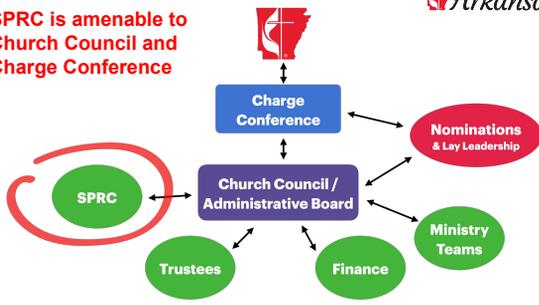


Duties and membership defined by ¶258.2

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.

For more general SPRC information, see the Training Video

SPRC is amenable to Church Council and Charge Conference



Duties of the Committee (§1258.2g)



Mission and Ministry

- Encourage and support the pastor, staff, and families
- 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.

Clergy Policies



- BOD rules on the functioning of the SPRC and the role of the Pastor
- Compensation rules in the BOD and in ARUMC policy
- Leave Paid By the Church
 - Vacation – Minimum Scale set by Annual Conference
 - Continuing Education – 2 weeks annually*
- Parsonage Standards
- Minimum Compensation (FT) and Salary Arrearage

Pause Video for Discussion

1. What are the congregation's history and record of pastoral moves?
2. What worked well or poorly during the last few clergy transitions?



Expectation #1: Say Goodbye Well





A transition is a time of simultaneously saying goodbye and saying hello. As laity, we need to remember that, just as we are going through our own emotions during a pastoral transition, the incoming and outgoing pastors are also going through their own stressful journeys of saying goodbye and hello. How we say goodbye to an existing pastor says a lot about us as a congregation.



Saying Goodbye with Grace

- ▶ Use opportunities to celebrate the pastor's leadership, and mark the ending with symbols that recognize the legacy of leadership
- ▶ Help the congregation grieve
- ▶ Be honest about the change
- ▶ Encourage healthy boundaries and the new relationship the pastor will have with the congregation when she/he becomes the *former* pastor
- ▶ Get up to date on bills, the Tithe, and records



Pastoral Transition Covenant

Approved by the Order of Elders 2014

"...To ensure a healthy transition from the current appointed pastor to the new appointed pastor all must exercise great self-restraint in order to allow for a relationship where the newly appointed pastor has the best opportunity to be effective in the service of our Lord Jesus...."

Don't invite clergy back to lead funerals or weddings, to visit the sick, or for other pastoral functions!!!!



Pause Video for Discussion

1. How can you and fellow board members model a healthy pastoral transition for the rest of the congregation?
2. How will you communicate that the former pastor will not be coming back for pastoral functions so situations will not be dropped into the lap of the incoming pastor?

Impact! Revitalizing the Call of Lay Ministry
The United Methodist Church, 2014



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PART 2

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Expectation #2: Say Hello Well



Welcoming Your New Pastor

- ▶ Use **symbols** to welcome the pastor
- ▶ **Communicate** the change through social media, videos, and press releases in the community
- ▶ Work with the incoming pastor to prepare **intentional methods to build relationships in the church**, such as cottage meetings, town halls, and Sunday School socials. Don't depend on a single meet and greet handshake line to be enough.
- ▶ Work with the incoming pastor to prepare intentional methods to get to **know the community**, such as inviting the pastor to join you as your guest to community gatherings and events.
- ▶ Ensure that the Parsonage and Office are **move-in ready**.
- ▶ **Equip the congregation** to welcome the new pastor (and family).



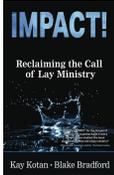
Welcoming Your New Pastor



The ARUMC is sharing downloadable tools and suggestions for welcoming your new pastor to the church and community

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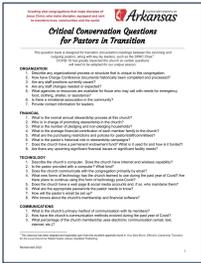




Imparted by Rotan and Bradford
Pages 147 and 142-3

“Have you met our new pastor?”





Critical Conversation Questions

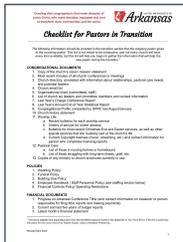
- ◆ A question bank (use the questions that are helpful for your context)
- ◆ Designed for transition conversations



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Checklist for Transitions

- ◆ Documents, passwords, policies, and financials
- ◆ Designed to be shareable to different team members (clergy, staff, committee chairs)





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Arkansas Staff Parish Relations Committee
Annual Timeline 2022-2023

SPRC Annual Timeline

- ◆ July – June
- ◆ Recommends topics for 12 months of SPRC Meetings
- ◆ Includes reminders of required reports
- ◆ Use this tool to nurture healthy relationships while staying focused on our disciple-making mission

Arkansas United Methodist Church
2022-2023 Annual Timeline 2022-2023

Arkansas UNITED METHODISTS OF arumc.org/pastors-in-transition/ b²



Parsonage Documents

- ◆ Parsonage Damage Report and Checklist
- ◆ Parsonage Guidelines During a Transition
- ◆ ARUMC Parsonage Standards

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Pause Video for Discussion

1. How can you and your fellow church members be intentional in helping a newly arrived pastor build strategic relationships and network with the community?
2. How can the SPRC encourage and equip the congregation to set up gatherings for intentional relationship building, such as cottage meetings?

Arkansas UNITED METHODISTS OF

Protecting the Call of Lay Ministry by Kites and Dabbert, Page 109-2

Expectation #3: Communicate



Committee Basics (§258.2e-f)

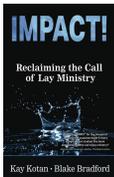


Meetings:

- The Discipline requires that the SPRC meet at least quarterly (But the ARUMC Cabinet recommends monthly meetings, and expects monthly SPRC meetings in the first year)
- SPRC meets only with the knowledge of pastor and/or DS
- Pastor shall be present unless s/he excuses self. The SPRC may meet with DS without the pastor or appointed staff, but the DS must inform the pastor afterwards
- SPRC shall meet in closed session and all information shared is confidential!



Communication must be multidirectional, including the pastors, the S/PPRC, the appointive cabinet, and the congregation. The word relations in the title of the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee is meaningful because their primary work is relational, so the committee's communications should be as much about listening as talking, like in any healthy relationship....



In the healthiest transitions, the S/PPRC or transition team serves as a two-way interpreter between the congregation and the new pastor: clarifying expectations and feedback, identifying the congregation's sacred cows and blessed traditions, and connecting the new pastor to the congregation and community with intentional introductions.



Monthly Meetings



Arkansas Staff Parish Relations Committee Annual Timeline 2021-2022

Remember that meeting minutes are a public document. They should be read by the members of the congregation at their next meeting. Consideration of the minutes is a responsibility of all members of the congregation.

July

- Hold an appointment meeting (appointments, offers, a Director for Discipleship, lay members, and other staff appointments) and a transition meeting (pastor's last meeting, transition, and other staff appointments) in the month of July. The appointments should be made by the end of July.
- Hold a meeting to review the minutes of the SPRC. The minutes should be reviewed by the end of July.
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August

- Hold a meeting to review the minutes of the SPRC. The minutes should be reviewed by the end of August.

September

- Hold a meeting to review the minutes of the SPRC. The minutes should be reviewed by the end of September.

October

- Hold a meeting to review the minutes of the SPRC. The minutes should be reviewed by the end of October.

November

- Hold a meeting to review the minutes of the SPRC. The minutes should be reviewed by the end of November.

December

- Hold a meeting to review the minutes of the SPRC. The minutes should be reviewed by the end of December.

Arkansas Staff Parish Relations Committee Annual Timeline 2021-2022

January

- Hold a meeting to review the minutes of the SPRC. The minutes should be reviewed by the end of January.

February

- Hold a meeting to review the minutes of the SPRC. The minutes should be reviewed by the end of February.

March

- Hold a meeting to review the minutes of the SPRC. The minutes should be reviewed by the end of March.

April

- Hold a meeting to review the minutes of the SPRC. The minutes should be reviewed by the end of April.

May

- Hold a meeting to review the minutes of the SPRC. The minutes should be reviewed by the end of May.

June

- Hold a meeting to review the minutes of the SPRC. The minutes should be reviewed by the end of June.

<https://arumc.org/pastors-in-transition/>

Communicating with the Congregation and Community

Depending on church size and context, the SPRC and New Pastor should use the tools available (such as video and shareable social media) to communicate:

- a prayerful approach towards saying goodbye & hello
- the appointment and clergy transition process
- the congregation's welcome of the new pastor
- the authentic personality and spiritual heart of the incoming pastor
- a narrative of missional momentum



Pause Video for Discussion

1. How will the board or S/PPRC make communication with clergy more transparent, timely, and clear?
2. How will you support and encourage healthy communication with the board and pastor among your fellow disciples in the pew?



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PART 3

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**Download
Resources
for the
Pastoral
Transition**



**Expectation #4:
Take the Opportunity for
Missional Impact!**



“ The arrival of a new pastor is an amazing opportunity for the congregation to mobilize for IMPACT.



Receiving a new pastor creates a window -- often a fleeting moment -- for your fellow members to look at your church with fresh eyes, assess its culture, and use the opportunity for some cultural shifts that could impact the congregation in your community.”

You can be intentional in how you describe your community, your mission field, and your church's culture to the new pastor.



An Early “Big Win”

- Think strategically about the opportunity created when receiving a new pastor
- Plan now for an opportunity to build momentum
- Example: A back to school “Bridge Event” where all the new pastor needs to do is show up and meet folks (“Have you met our new pastor?”)



Pause Video for Discussion

1. How will you encourage a culture of “Let’s make an impact for Christ” during a clergy transition when some church members are taking a “Let’s wait and see” approach?
2. What is an early “Big Win” that could help your new pastor start well and make a congregation-wide IMPACT in your community?



Expectation #5: Speak the Truth in Love Ephesians 4:15



Relational Skills for the SPRC



1. Don't avoid issues - information is everyone's friend, even when it "hurts"
2. Listening and feedback vs. polling for complaints (*no anonymous complaints*)
3. Maintain confidentiality
4. Create a climate of effectiveness
5. Make facts known vs. rumors.
6. Provide professional, constructive feedback in a system of evaluation
7. Be aware of the conference rules on sexual misconduct. Report any allegations directly to the DS immediately
8. Engage conflict well (Matthew 18)

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



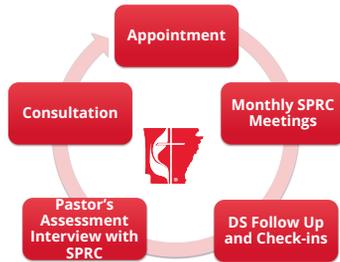
- ◆ **Step 1: Communicate**
 - If A has an issue with B, A must address B
- ◆ **Step 2: Companions**
 - If A and B cannot resolve the issue, then someone from SPRC can sit with A and B while they continue to dialogue.
- ◆ **Step 3: Council**
 - If A and B and someone from SPRC cannot find resolution,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

Confidentiality/Integrity Issues



- No Secret Meetings without Pastor* (Disciplinary exception for meetings with the DS)
- Issues are discussed during meeting, not between meetings
- All matters under discussion are kept in strict confidence, i.e., a "safe", confidential space
- All input brought to the meeting is held in confidence, but is "owned" input (no anonymous complaints)
- May invite someone outside the committee to speak but individual may not stay for deliberations
- Minutes and evaluations are confidential. It's recommended that the chair collect and keep this material.
- There should be careful reporting to the Church Council of each meeting, ensuring that confidentiality is maintained.
- Be transparent about Processes, but not Deliberations
- All members need to leave the meeting on the same page

Annual Assessment Cycle



Reasons for REGULAR Evaluations



- To establish and maintain good working relationships between the congregation and pastor
- To provide an opportunity for the congregation and pastor to confer at periodic intervals on his or her performance.
- To offer a procedure for comprehensive and dispassion appraisal in a setting other than during a time of crises.
- An annual Assessment and an annual Consultation involve the DS/Bishop/Appointive Cabinet

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

Pause Video for Discussion

1. How are you going to describe the current state of church and the community to the incoming pastor?
2. What is the leadership and ministry style of the incoming pastor? How will you make space in the church's systems for the new pastor's gifts?
3. How will you help encourage healthy transformation of the inevitable conflict that will arise with a new pastor?





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See the Pastors in Transition
Webpage for Resources and Downloads:
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