

CLERGY SUPPORT HANDBOOK

Prepared by the Board of Ordained Ministry
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1. EXPECT GREAT THINGS IN PARISH MINISTRY

As we enter the parish ministry, there are always concerns about the expectations the church, the district, and the conference will have for us, as clergy, as a clergy spouse, and as a clergy family. The roles do carry some expectations with them, but fortunately, in this day and age, these expectations are things we can live with. Also, it works both ways. We, too, have expectations of the church, the district, and the conference. The trick is to balance all of these expectations in the real life of ministry!

AS THE PASTOR

You enter the parish ministry with joy, commitment, and much trepidation. The local church to which you have been appointed, the district, and the annual conference all have a calling on your life. Now add to that family and personal commitments and you find the need for balance. Where to begin?

One minister begins his ministry in a new parish with the following words in the first sermon. It is not “Here am I, serve me” or “Here am I, let us serve you” but “Here am I, let us serve Christ together!” With these words the stage is set for a shared ministry among the clergy and the laity. As clergy and clergy families become fellow servants *with* the laity, not servants *to* the laity, they become involved in ministry—not in isolation, but in fellowship with other believers.

Establish a Partnership in Ministry with the Laity of Your Parish. Sharing ministry together will set the model for understanding and mutual respect as you share the work of Christ together. Where there is mutual respect, there is understanding of the need for space and boundaries both for the clergy and the laity. Clergy can be just as demanding of laity as the laity is of the clergy.

Be Professional. Confidentiality is undoubtedly one of the most important factors in building a healthy, trusting relationship between you and your church family. Clergy will of necessity know many confidential things. Confidentiality is the foundation of your ministry. Think of this as a means of grace you can give your congregation--holding their trust inviolate.

Depending on the nature of the confidence, you may feel the need to share with another person. If you need help knowing how to deal with a specific confidence, consult your District Superintendent. If you have difficulty dealing emotionally with a confidence, consult a counselor. ***It is not appropriate to share a confidence with your spouse.*** This comment is not intended to be hurtful, harsh or a sign of mistrust of spouses. Rather, it's about parishioners being able to trust that confidences shared with a pastor remain confidential. When a parishioner speaks to a pastor, he or she shouldn't have to wonder whether the pastor's spouse, or anyone else, now knows whatever was shared. This also protects the pastor's reputation as trustworthy, and it protects the spouse from being drawn into conversations by other persons who may be seeking “inside”

information. To be able to say honestly, “I don’t know” can be a real gift to the spouse. It is especially important to be careful not to discuss confidential matters when and where spouses and other family members may overhear.

The State of Indiana requires you to report it if someone confesses to a crime. The state also requires you to report the following to the appropriate agencies/authorities: 1) Child physical or emotional abuse; 2) Child sexual abuse; 3) Elderly physical or emotional abuse; 4) Elderly sexual abuse; 5) Indication to do harm to self or others. Failure to do so is a felony.

Spouses and other family members should be taught the importance of maintaining any confidence they might overhear accidentally. It is equally important not to repeat conversations they overhear, even if they know them to be true. This is gossip.

Remember what is expected of the clergy professionally.

The words “Here am I, let us serve Christ together” help to establish the role of the minister in the local church as a fellow servant of God, not a slave to any one person or group of persons within the local church or as a person above the laity of the church. You are responsible for fulfilling the duties of leading worship, preaching, leading Bible study, visiting in homes and hospitals, pastoral care and counseling, conducting the business of the parish, relating to the many groups within the church, and leading within the guidelines of The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church. Do it well and in a timely fashion.

Church members want to be proud of their minister within the community. They expect you to dress professionally when representing Christ and the church in your professional role. However, you should feel free to dress casually in your private life.

NEVER UNDERMINE THE MINISTRY OF YOUR PREDECESSOR. ALWAYS BE POSITIVE ABOUT YOUR SUCCESSOR!

Be yourself. This is important for the whole clergy family. It says, as God is my helper, I will be the best me I can be, but I *will* be me. Being true to who you really are makes you an authentic person—warts and all! This will keep resentment from building as you feel pulled to be someone you are not.

Remember what is expected of you as a spouse and/or parent. The relationship you maintain with your spouse and children is as important as the relationship you have with your congregation. Your spouse is your life partner, not your associate. Never volunteer his/her time or services without permission. Do affirm her/him and insist upon your spouse’s right to his/her personal space, to be her/himself and to not have to conform to uncomfortable roles.

Never allow the church to make demands on the lives of your children. Set the example as parents by respecting your children's feelings and their privacy. Never use personal stories about your children as sermon material without their permission. What might seem amusing or insightful to adults might be embarrassing for the child.

Share the burden of personal family problems only as you are comfortable. Your church family can be a wonderful support for you, but it is your right to decide what is to be shared and in what way it is to be shared. A family might decide to lean on close friends and extended family or on the District Superintendent for support. It is your choice. Just remember there are places to turn for help.

Be Flexible. Life happens and you are called to respond. Parish ministry calls on the clergy and the clergy's family to change plans and bend rules when life's tragedies and emergencies come. Most vacations and other personal times can be rescheduled. You build strong bonds of love and respect with a congregation when you respond with love and integrity in times of their personal crises.

GENDER, AGE, AND RACIAL BIASES

Biases do exist. Some churches want only 35-year-old males with an supportive wife and three well-behaved children. Some churches do not want an Asian American, African American, or a woman as their minister. They do not always get what they want – especially since their attitudes rule out a large percentage of all the people whom God has called into the ministry. Trust the Bishop and the cabinet to send you to the church that will receive you well and let the Holy Spirit work through you and the congregation. There continue to be breakthroughs of these barriers across the conference each year. Rejoice in these breakthroughs and pray for those who seek to hinder the work of God through their prejudices.

If you are in a church that has members who are biased against women, African Americans, Asian Americans, or any other minority group, it is your responsibility to help prepare them for the acceptance of anyone that the Bishop and cabinet might conceivably appoint there. You can do this by inviting members of different ethnic groups or women to preach from your pulpit or to lead in Bible studies or other study groups. As churches are exposed to real people in these roles, their prejudices will be harder to maintain. Remember that the assumption is that each church is potentially eligible to receive any clergy regardless of race or gender.

BLESSED BY THE SMALL MEMBERSHIP CHURCH

As you begin your ministry in the life of the conference you may begin in a small membership church—a place where families have been a part of one church for generations or have recently arrived new in the community; a place where you hear the words “came here from” attached to people who were not born in the community; a place that changes little; or a place of transition and growth. Small membership churches exist in small towns, county seats, open rural areas, as

well as in urban and suburban settings. Many have aging memberships; some have mostly young families, and others have a mix of generations. Small membership churches have many gifts and graces. Often they are instrumental in helping new and inexperienced pastors get off to a good start in their ministry. Small membership churches share a profound pride in their communities and a real sense of how to do ministry in their special place, which opens up the possibility for real ministry in the community.

Small membership churches also allow a pastor the opportunity to get to know the members in a way that is not often possible in larger churches. They are not lesser churches, just smaller churches who need all that a good pastor can give: preaching, pastoral care, program development, and spiritual formation. Small membership churches also offer challenges. If you, as the new pastor, have only been a part of large membership churches, the small membership church will be a new experience. Even if your experience has been with a small membership church your appointment will not be to your home church and, as you will discover, not all small membership churches are alike. Each small membership church is unique with a history and a calling all its own. Time, love and patience are the keys to understanding and becoming a part of that history and uniqueness.

How do you begin in ministry to a small membership church?

You begin with respect and a genuine desire to serve where you are appointed. If you share a mutual respect for each other as you minister together, both you as the pastor and the congregation of your small membership church, can, with God's grace, become better than you ever dreamed you could be. It is important to remember as you begin to serve that God looks not on the size of the church, but on the souls to be served and the opportunities for ministry to be met. Always remember that you are called to be faithful in all things. This is the road to fulfillment and happiness amid the challenges you'll experience throughout your ministry.

FOR THE SPOUSE

Do you feel the need to have an open house? Are you planning three Bible studies to be held at the parsonage? Do you feel responsible to feed the District Superintendent at every Charge Conference? Do you spend the months of October and November preparing a Christmas gift for your congregation? Do you have four UMW/UMM events scheduled for the fall? Are you doing these things out of obligation? Are you confused over your role as a clergy spouse? Do you feel like Jell-O cooling in a mold of someone else's design? You may be suffering from the *Myth of Expectation*.

Where did this myth originate? Perhaps it comes to life as you are unable to assess your own gifts, and so take on the roles you have seen in mentors and other clergy spouses. Maybe they are roles projected by well meaning but misguided church members. Perhaps they come from a lack of understanding of

what your clergy spouse expects of you or from your need to please or your fear of rejection. Whatever their source, these myths—these rules of expectations—are often hand-me-downs whose origins are lost.

Take heart!! Think again of the vows you made as you became, not a clergy spouse, but a member of Christ's Holy Church. You promised to uphold the church with your prayers, your presence, your gifts, and your service. These are your unique gifts, and only you can prayerfully determine how best to use them in the service of Christ and His church. Only you can then chart your own special path to fulfillment. As you do, here are some things to think about.

It is easier today for clergy spouses to be themselves. This gives you many options as you seek to find your special place that blesses the church with your unique gifts. The church needs your special touch, but do not allow yourself to become a “two for one” unpaid assistant pastor. This can happen in subtle ways. When your clergy is away from the parish you may be called upon to respond to parish needs. Talk with your spouse before this happens and set clear standards for handling these requests. The key is to keep yourself open to respond as God calls you to be a dedicated layperson who just happens to be married to a clergy person.

Set boundaries with the church early. Some key boundaries should be established at the take-in interview. Everyone has permission just by being loved children of God to set limits in all relationships. Cherish for yourself, your spouse, and your family sacred times of Sabbath rest, privacy at home, time to nurture and enjoy children, protection for children from the fish bowl of parsonage life, time to play and vacation, as well as time for exercise and for personal spiritual growth and development. Set these boundaries in love seeking God's will, building not walls to shut out the church but clear boundaries that enrich the relationship of the clergy family to the parish. This will not be easy. *The myth of expectations is hard to shake!*

Expect the clergy to affirm and insist upon your personal space to be yourself and not conform to roles you are uncomfortable with. Find out what your clergy expects of you. Listen in love and then adjust these expectations to fit your gifts!

Maintain a healthy balance. *You do not have to be in church every time the door opens.* Don't forget, the ministry of Christ's Holy Church is not solely dependent upon the pastor or his/her family.

Take time to find your place in the life of the church. If there are a number of classes or fellowship opportunities available, visit several before deciding which you wish to be part of. Get to know lots of people. Find the right fit for you. Become a part of the church where you can find deep personal fulfillment. Your joy will be a great blessing for the church.

Find your place in the church with a deep, thoughtful sensitivity to the clergy's position. Some places in the church are difficult for spouses to serve in, and some may even be inappropriate (i.e. Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, Finance Committee, Nominations, etc.).

Never be intimidated by the roles of other clergy spouses, especially the spouses you follow. You are a unique person with unique gifts. Use them in a way that is compatible with your understanding of God's call on your own life.

Establish warm and loving relationships with your church family, finding ways to express the love that is natural and honest for you. Practice the art of hospitality in your own special and unique way. You might be an open house wonder, or having a weekly Bible study at the parsonage might meet a deep need. Maybe you would rather finger paint with four-year-olds, or drive senior adults to the mall or to doctor's appointments. A helping hand, a beautiful solo, a warm loaf of bread, a computer problem solved, a roof mended, a hug and a warm smile, a quiet display of concern, a kind word, a quick note, or a listening ear can all establish the "ties that bind our hearts in Christian love."

THE JOYS OF LIVING NEXT DOOR TO THE CHURCH

- You'll know where your spouse is. Of course, all of the church members will too.
- It will be convenient for her/him to eat lunch at home any time between 11:00 and 2:30.
- Members of the church may very well cut your grass and trim your bushes.
- You will save big money with those high gas prices.
- There's no reason to cancel church services when it snows 3 feet. The minister can always get to church.
- You are close to the church when the burglar/fire alarm goes off at 3 a.m.
- Remember you are not the extra kitchen or set of keys. You may have to be more rigorous about setting boundaries to maintain a sense of privacy for you and your family.

A Little Advice: Begin saving your pennies. As soon as possible, buy your own place anywhere you want. Use it as a vacation/get away for you and your family throughout your ministry. Improve and decorate it to your heart's content. It will provide you with an emotional outlet, a sense of ownership, at least one constant place for your family to call home, and it may even provide some tax benefits.

WHAT CAN YOU DO WHEN THE MINISTER YOU MARRIED IS UNDER ATTACK BY CHURCH MEMBERS?

- Support him/her at home. Listen to and love him/her. Pray for him/her and for the church members.

- Hold your head high and hold your tongue with church members. Trying to gain support from one corner of the church may divide the church into two camps, making reconciliation even harder.
- Seek support from other clergy families. They've all been through it!
- This is a time to go within for spiritual nourishment from prayer, Bible reading, and theological and spiritual reading.
- Work out your frustration through a healthy form of exercise.
- Keep in mind that it may be the personality of a few people in the church to make life miserable for every minister. Talk to the district superintendent (DS). If this is so, don't take it personally. Compartmentalize it and get on with your ministry. Just as there are dysfunctional families, there are dysfunctional churches.
- Examine how you and your spouse are relating to people and see if there are helpful changes that you can make. Usually, there are two sides to every disagreement.
- Remember that this is a work situation as well as your way of life. There are always tensions on a job. Dealing with people will always have its joys, as well as its heartaches.

DISTRICT EXPECTATIONS FOR THE CLERGY SPOUSE

There are none! You are more than welcome at any district function, and it is truly a delight to see you at district dinners and picnics. This can be a special time to get to know other clergy and their spouses. Not only will they keep popping up in your life throughout the years, but they will also understand and appreciate your life in ways that lay people cannot. Also, check to see if there is an active spouses group in your district. Participation is voluntary, but it's another good way to meet other spouses.

Be sure to make special times and find special places for you and your spouse to be alone. A romantic dinner, date-night, or a weekend away does wonders for a marriage. And, if the minister you married thinks it is romantic to each in a church hall, see the section on pastoral counseling!

CONFERENCE EXPECTATIONS FOR THE CLERGY SPOUSE

There are none! There is an annual Clergy Spouse Refresher held each year, and there is an annual gathering or luncheon for spouses in June during Annual Conference in Bloomington, but these are all completely voluntary. These are opportunities to make new friends and see old friends. The Refresher offers time away from the church with a spiritual emphasis, as well as fellowship with other clergy spouses. Look for information regarding these and other events in your Conference and District Newsletters.

Do you remember those membership vows? To uphold your church with your prayers, your presence, your gifts, and your service. Finding your own special path to service will be a blessing for you, your clergy, and your church wherever that

might be. This may not be easy, and at each stage of your life you may find your path changing, but the journey is one of blessing and fulfillment.

SUMMARY

Expect to:

- have friends, lay and clergy, all over the conference.
- have a funeral at least once on your wedding anniversary or during vacation.
- know every great casserole recipe that ever existed.
- remember only the best about each church you've served.
- sometimes feel as if you and your children are second to the church.
- demand at least a night a week for family. Require a date with your spouse at least one night a month.
- have your child reprimanded for running in the sanctuary and climbing on the communion rail.
- see the neurotics coming out of the woodwork during Christmas.
- cry on your last Sunday at a church and be overwhelmed with a warm welcome two days later.
- see your pet run away the morning the moving van arrives.
- have someone comment on the new color you paint your nails or dye your hair.
- have at least one person in each church who thinks every sermon preached was meant just for them.
- have the one person the sermon was really meant for be out sick that Sunday.
- sit in someone else's sacred seat on your first Sunday in a new church.
- meet the most troublesome person on moving day. He/she will be the one to stop you from unpacking while he/she dumps all sorts of emotional baggage on you when you are all tired and sweaty.
- have the details of your schedule known in small communities (e.g., when you go to the doctor, where you grocery shop, and maybe even what you buy).
- be loved by your congregation, even when you are not that lovable.
- live in a variety of interesting locales (some of which may even be on the map).
- fall madly in love with the church you really did not want to serve.
- acquire a great collection of church cookbooks, mugs, and mission trip T-shirts.
- be asked to pray a lot. Spouses, if you are uncomfortable with this, memorize two prayers, one for a blessing and one for opening a meeting.
- see an exhausted minister on Christmas Eve.
- have to force the minister you married to take two days off in a row.

- hear at least once, “ I sure wish I had a job where I worked only 1 hour a week!”
- be wary of those who criticize your predecessor’s spouse and children. They’ll also criticize yours. Unfortunately, it comes with the territory so don’t take it personally.
- be unaware of the number of lives whom you touch in a most profound way.
- have your children make lifelong friends at Youth Group.
- have your children never want to move.
- sit by the phone for one full week, waiting for the DS to call about your next appointment. He or she will undoubtedly call as soon as you have to leave to run a vital errand.
- wonder if the Cabinet has lost its collective mind when you hear about a colleague who is to get a \$15,000 raise. What you don’t know, however, is that he/she hasn’t had a raise at all for 3 years and that he/she will earn every penny of that raise. Professional jealousy is so tacky!
- hear about your new appointment from the “kitchen cabinet.” It is pure gossip – let it stop with you.
- be swamped with homemade Christmas goodies.
- collect monogrammed silver trays as you move from place to place.
- be awed by the spiritual depth of church people as they face difficult circumstances in life. Your own spirituality will be enriched.
- be nervous when the DS or Bishop comes to your worship service. Relax. They’re worshippers too.
- have an urge to apologize from the pulpit for your sermon when the DS or Bishop pops in. Don’t. Always give your best, even if your best is not as good as when you’ve had plenty of time for study.
- hear good things and bad things about the church you’re about to move to. Expect the best. How you relate to them *will* be different than any other pastor.
- feel like a single parent at times. Do you really believe your spouse would rather be at a finance meeting than at home with his/her family?
- have many “adopted grandparents” for your children all over the conference.
- look upon annual conference as a family reunion.
- praise God that you listened to his call.

2. SOUTH INDIANA CONFERENCE POLICIES GOVERNING ALLOWANCE FOR MOVING EXPENSES

The Commission on Equitable Compensation has responsibility for the administration of clergy and full-time professional staff moving expenses for the South Indiana Conference.

The Conference will pay moving expenses of persons who are appointed to or are supplying a charge, or who are appointed to a Conference clergy or professional staff position within the boundaries of the South Indiana Conference. Annual moving expenses to be paid by the Annual Conference are capped at \$100,000 to be reviewed and adjusted annual for cost of living. This includes:

- District Superintendents
- Seminary students entering the South Indiana Conference or one of its agencies (e.g. Council on Ministries Staff)
- Professional employees serving the South Indiana Conference in a staff position
- Local Pastors serving under full-time appointment
- Clergy under appointment serving the South Indiana Conference or one of its agencies
- Clergy retiring to their place of retirement within one year from the date of retirement, except for health reasons
- Retired clergy under full-time appointment
- Clergy accepting full-time appointment in the South Indiana Conference from outside the Indiana Area
- Clergy accepting full-time appointment in the South Indiana Conference from within the Indiana Area
- With regard to clergy who die while in full-time service in the South Indiana Conference, the spouse/primary dependent(s) will be moved to their permanent place of residence, subject to the limitations below:
 - Any clergy person who moves less than 50 miles and whose total move cost is over \$600 shall receive a 1099 for miscellaneous income at the end of the year for the cost of the move

The Conference will NOT pay the moving expense of:

- Clergy who accept special appointment with institutions or organizations not directly financed by the Conference
- Clergy who transfer out of the South Indiana Conference, except at retirement
- Clergy who move from one parsonage to another on the same charge

Moving Instructions and Limitations

- Any clergy person who moves less than 50 miles and whose total move cost is over \$600 shall receive a 1099 for miscellaneous income at the end of the year for the cost of the move

- The moving clergyperson will consult with his/her District Superintendent and forward an approved Clergy Moving Report Form to the Conference Treasurer prior to the date of the move. Two competitive bids **must be** submitted with the approved Clergy Moving Report Form
- The total for moving expenses in 2007 will be \$3100. Within this total, the limit for packing materials, such as barrels, wardrobes, cartons and labor is \$500
- An allowance up to \$50 for each pick-up and delivery will be allowed for a stop necessary at each church of a charge for ministerial items. Where there are separate parsonages at either the point of pick-up or delivery, the same provisions apply.
- The Conference will NOT pay for storage except by approval of the Cabinet and the Commission on Equitable Compensation
- For a move where the cost exceeds \$3100, including packing materials, the excess costs will be the responsibility of the moving clergy person(s) or the receiving church/charge, except when both persons are clergy, in which case additional costs not to exceed \$500 may be approved. Costs included in this amount are packing expenses, extra stops, washer/dryer unhook-reconnect, and waterbed takedown/setup.
- Guidelines for Self-Moves: Expenses will be reimbursed if substantiated by a receipt. These include: Cost of rental truck/equipment and fuel charges for the truck, packing materials up to \$500, fuel costs/mileage when using a personal vehicle, and labor costs for help. Total reimbursement shall be limited by the move limitations delineated elsewhere in this policy.

Insurance: A broad form transportation policy in the amount of \$3,100 per move (limit \$500 for packing) will automatically cover each authorized move. The premium carries a \$250 deductible clause. If a claim is filed, the deductible will be the responsibility of the claimant. Clergy are responsible for providing evidence of loss or damage of articles and insuring proper loading, off-loading and recording of contents on carrier inventory.

When clergy couples are serving separate charges and are occupying separate parsonages, special consideration with respect to the moving costs will be made by the District Superintendent and Cabinet in consultation with the Commission on Equitable Compensation. When distances between the charges or parsonages are significant, the move may, at the discretion of the District Superintendent and Cabinet, be handled as two separate moves.

Special situations not covered by these guidelines should be referred to the Cabinet and the Commission on Equitable Compensation for action.

Extenuating circumstances may justify a Red Carpet Move, if, and when, any of the following circumstances are apparent:

- Handicapping condition of pastor or spouse

- Temporary health related problems imposing physical or psychological limitations on pastor or spouse (recent illness or surgery)
- Pregnancy
- Under special circumstances identified by the Cabinet, extended moving expense allowance may be authorized as follows:
 - Packing of such items as dishes (fine china), mirrors, lamps, pictures, wall hangings, etc., except unique, one-of-a-kind items such as special collections, figurines and antiques requiring special handling
 - A Red Carpet move allowance does not include the cost of unpacking
 - The line haul cost for all Red Carpet moves is limited to \$2600

(Dollar amounts may change from year to year)

3. LIVING IN MINISTRY

PARSONAGE LIVING

The parsonage can be a wonderful place where you are received graciously and which becomes your home. It can also be a place where you feel out of control and discounted because you're in someone else's house. And yet it affords a comfortable, convenient place that is made ready with food and flowers for you without any investment of your energy in finding a place to rent or buy. It's their house but it's your home! (A copy of the current "Minimum Standards for the Parsonage" is provided in the most recent Conference Journal)

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

When you move in, hopefully you will find a clean house ready for you. If not, you will want to work with designated members of the Parsonage Committee or Board of Trustees to correct any problems you find. Church members will often make repairs. Fortunately there are usually very competent repair men and women in each church. Generally, if you address problems at the beginning and are very gracious about whatever you find, church members are more than willing to help you improve things at the parsonage.

The annual parsonage review (required prior to Charge Conference each fall) provides an excellent opportunity to work with the parsonage committee or trustees to evaluate the parsonage. This way they can keep up with the needs rather than having them pile up for years at a time and costing a bundle to repair all at once. Yes, you'll have to clean the house for them. Expect them to respond in a timely fashion to your needs, not necessarily to your wants. Keep in mind the church's financial situation and be creative with solutions. If you are able to do some work or improvements, check with the church to see if it will pay for the materials for the project you have in mind. Put people on the parsonage committee who have good taste in decorating their own homes, are handy with tools, or own a furniture or carpet store!

The parsonage yard—keep it trimmed! They will not notice, but you'll hear complaints if the lawn is shaggy all of the time. Some churches will have a work day at the parsonage to do heavy trimming or raking. You will have to decide if this oversteps some privacy boundaries for your family; it depends on your congregation and their respect for your privacy, as well as your desire to get some help on yard work.

WHAT THE CHURCH EXPECTS

They expect you to take care of the house as if it is your own. They do expect normal wear and tear. Feel free to change the function of a room if it suits your needs. When you move out, the church and conference expects you to leave the house clean.

PARSONAGE FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY

The previous parsonage family, before you arrived, is responsible for leaving the house

and furnishings clean (washed, scrubbed, waxed, shampooed—CLEAN!). You should be moving into a house with no garbage and no junk in the attic or garage.

- Have repaired at the pastor's expense any damage due to negligence of family members, guests, and/or pets.
- Make sure the utilities are on for the incoming pastor. Utilities, where practical, should be in the church's name with the parsonage address so that services will not be terminated.
- Pastors are responsible for lawn mowing and trimming of shrubs.

RELATING TO THE PARSONAGE COMMITTEE AND/OR TRUSTEES

- Remember to invite them willingly and joyfully into your home. Most committees are not white glove inspectors and would rather see us living as we really do—dust and all—than be made to feel unwelcome in the parsonage.
- These visits, while they should be welcoming, should be on your terms and at your convenience. It is your home.
- Be firm about a once-a-year required inspection. This is required and reported in the Charge Conference paperwork. This should be a walk-through to allow the committee to see how the house is being maintained and what repairs need to be done.
- When a committee—made up of laity who have their own homes to care for—spends time helping to care for the home they provide for you, it is both kind and good manners to show appreciation. A desert/coffee or a light supper once a year or so can say thank you in a very nice way.
- It is much easier to maintain a house if you have regular meetings to assess the condition of the parsonage. This way, things remain in a manageable condition. If some members seem to want to turn a blind eye, for their own good do not let them. A neglected house can become a real problem for clergy families and churches. They will thank you for insisting they maintain their property, and your clergy colleagues will love you.
- Enjoy your parsonage! Have huge family dinners, play ball in the back yard, invite friends over often, and plant flowers! If you try your best to love this house, the church will respond by appreciating your appreciation of what they have provided for you.
- Take pride in your parsonage home in all its imperfections. That is the only way you can honestly expect to work with the church to cure the imperfections and make the parsonage a home you can be proud of.

STRAIGHTEN UP! GETTING AND STAYING ORGANIZED IN MINISTRY

Clergy have to deal with a breathtaking amount of paper. We get 10 times the amount of mail that most people get. These include conference mailings and

publications, vendor mailings to your local church (in double or triple quantities if you serve a charge), newspapers, hardcopies of computer files, old sermons, old sermon illustrations, seminary notes, to-do lists, charge conference forms, end-of-the-year reports, district mailings, bills, correspondence, magazines—before you know it, you may be unable to find your desk. A disastrously messy desk does not signify that you are an extremely busy or important person. It says, instead, that you are disorganized, don't manage your time well, and are overwhelmed by current vocational responsibilities. Locating needed information takes longer than it should. Resourcing lay leadership and staff becomes needlessly difficult. Managing the paper you have to deal with can vastly improve the quality of your ministry. While everyone goes about the task of organizing differently, below are some suggestions for building a framework for getting—and staying—organized.

Reroute Messages and Papers

- Route as much paper as possible as soon as possible
- Purchase a message center from an office supply store and label each section with the names of staff and lay leadership
- When you get mailings for the UMW president or the lay leader, you will be able to route it immediately to the appropriate person, rather than having bundles of mail on your desk that you need to remember to give to someone. They can pick it up anytime they come to the church, without interrupting you.

Paper Flow Management –Don't Forget to Recycle

Put a simple paper flow system into place. Rather than piling paper on your desk or archiving it in boxes until the happy day when you will have time to go through it all, sort it immediately. Stephanie Culp, in her wonderful book, *Conquering the Paper Pile-Up*, suggests sorting paper into one of four categories: To Do, To Pay, To Read, or To File. Don't read, just sort.

- **To Do Pile.** Invitations, continuing education brochures, and meeting schedules—all contain information about something you need or want to do. Before putting such paper in this stack, though ask yourself: Do I really need to do this? Do I really want to do this? Will it matter if I do/don't do this? If not, toss it in the recycling bin. Also, toss anything out of date.
- **To Pay Pile.** Bills that need to be paid or bills with a problem that needs to be resolved go in this stack. Many people find that paying bills twice a month, on the first and fifteenth, for example, is adequate. Note the bills that need to be paid and put them in either the pile that needs to be paid by the first or the one for the fifteenth. Make a notation in your calendar to pay your bills on those days until you get into the habit of doing so.
 - Bills that have already been paid should be marked paid and filed. Highlight pertinent information before filing; for example, highlight business-related long-distance telephone charges before filing your

phone bill. For current tax year records, buy one or two 20-pocket accordion files, label each section with bill or receipt categories (bank statements, housing related expenses, credit statements, business-related entertainment receipts, etc.) and file accordingly. At tax time, your records will already be sorted. If you or your spouse is computer literate, consider keeping your checkbook balanced with a spreadsheet or one of the outstanding computer programs. With the latter your business-related expenses would automatically be tallied. Of course, you will still need to save your receipts.

- **To Read Pile.** Decide if there is material you need to read, want to read, or have time to read. Toss everything else. Also, toss catalogs and magazines that are more than 3 months old. Take what is left and go through it all with scissors and a stapler. Cut out all the newspapers and magazine articles you want or need to read. Staple them and put them in your reading basket; add new material to the bottom, not the top, of the basket. Make sure to grab an article or two from your basket when you know you're going someplace where waiting will be involved. Take articles home with you to read. Regularly make a dent in your reading pile or it will simply inspire guilt when you look at it.
- **To File Pile.** There are two kinds of files: archival files and current files. Archival files are legal and financial papers you are required by law to keep for a specific period of time, but that you do not use or refer to on a regular basis. Check with your accountant or tax advisor, attorney, or the IRS to evaluate what documents should be kept and for how long. Archival files can be stored in any clean dry, bug-free area in cardboard or hard plastic file boxes, both of which are available at office supply stores.

Current files include papers that you use or refer to on a regular basis, including treasurer's reports, church membership records, administrative council minutes, information about current programming, etc. These records will not only be helpful for you, but invaluable for your successor.

File Management

Your "To File" stack is likely to be the largest. Learning to file and staying on top of your filing is perhaps the most important part of having an effective paper flow system. Make sure that you do not archive paper unnecessarily. Before you file a piece of paper, ask yourself: Is this out of date? Is it a duplicate? How often will I actually use or refer to this information? Could I find this information elsewhere, such as the conference web site or district office? Does someone else have this document? If I had to live without this piece of paper for the next 2 years, would the information on it be irretrievable? Think twice about filing information you "might need" or "might read" someday—those magazine articles and sermon illustrations that, if filed, invariably stay filed—can become dated very quickly.

- Buy hanging files, which will mark the permanent place where a given file can be located. Never remove the hanging files from the filing cabinet.

- Buy manila folders, which will actually hold your papers. When you need to refer to a file, remove the manila folder from the hanging file; the hanging file will mark the place to which the manila folder should be returned. Manila folder titles can be typed on a label or written directly onto the tab. Titles should match hanging folder titles, even if the manila folder contains a breakdown of a larger category. For example, the hanging file tab might be labeled “Administrative Council Minutes,” and the manila folders labeled “Ad Council Minutes 2000,” “Ad Council Minutes 1999,” etc.
- Buy one of the new electronic devices (PDA, Palm Pilot, Blackberry, Treo, etc.) for keeping track of appointments, phone numbers and notes. If you are not comfortable with new technology, there is always the Rolodex and traditional calendar.

Keep It Simple

You may be a complicated person, but your filing system shouldn't be. Alphabetize your files; don't number or color code. You shouldn't need an index to access a file, and creating a new file shouldn't involve thinking through a color assignment. Similarly, it should be easy for others to locate files without having to understand your elaborate system. A simple alphabetized file system will be easy for you and everyone you work with to understand and will also remove the need to index or cross-reference files. File chronologically inside the folders with the most recent paperwork on top or in front. That way, when you pull the manila folder, the most current information will be the most accessible.

Portable Files

Large files that need to be portable should go in three-ring binders, for example, notes and minutes from a Conference Board on which you're serving that you need to bring with you to meetings.

Review Your Files Every Six Months

Most paper that is filed is never looked at again and could go into low-cost storage or simply thrown away. Go through your files twice a year and weed out information you don't really need or use, duplicates, and outdated information.

Leave Your Desk In Order At The End Of The Day

Sorting your paper into To Do, To Pay, To Read, or To File stacks, filing papers, and prioritizing tomorrow's work takes about 15 minutes and enables you to get off to a fresh start in the morning.

Create A Master File

If something happened to you, would your loved ones be able to locate important records and documents? A fireproof box is a good place to keep copies of important documents; originals should be kept in a bank safety deposit box. Such documents and information are: crucial address/ mailing lists, bank account numbers, birth certificates, car ownership documentation, credit card numbers, a

copy of your driver's license and car registration, insurance policies, account numbers (rental, home and automobile), investment records, license to perform weddings, marriage certificate, medical records, military discharge and veteran's records, pension information and account numbers, advance medical directives, power of attorney, safety deposit box information and numbers, social security number, earnings records, tax records (returns plus documentation—contact your CPA or the IRS for guidance), titles or deeds, and wills.

Calendar Management

- **Keep One Calendar.** Whether you use a Franklin Planner, a Palm Pilot avoid keeping more than one calendar. You'll avoid missing appointments or activities that you failed to copy from one calendar to another, and you'll save time, too. Your spouse may want to copy your schedule onto a home calendar so family plans can be made.
- **Forget Bulletin Boards.** You tell yourself that your bulletin board will house pending invitations, tickets, and other event-related information, but before you know it, you've got a big, hanging pile of paper—with cartoons, postcards, telephone numbers, as well as that current event-related stuff— all crucified in archeological layers. Often, a bulletin board is a place to put paper we can't decide to throw away.
- **For event-oriented information, set up a pending file:** two hanging files, labeled "pending," each with six months worth of labeled manila file folders inside. If you register to attend a continuing education event in April, put the brochure in April's folder. If you will need minutes for a Board of Pensions meeting in May, put them in May's folder. Record these events first in your calendar and put a notation, such as a circled P, next to the entry to remind yourself to retrieve the pertinent information from the pending file when the event rolls around. At the end of the month, all information from that month's pending file should have been retrieved and the file should be empty.

Record Management

Your district superintendent has information about the mileage logs and documentation you must keep for accountable reimbursement plans. You may also wish to keep visitation logs or information about ongoing pastoral care needs. Files which may compromise someone's privacy should be kept in a locked file cabinet, preferably at the parsonage and not the office. Also, pastoral record books for keeping track of the funerals, services for new members, weddings, and baptisms you are blessed to be a part of are a real treasure later; they are available at Cokesbury and other religious bookstores. **Keep your church membership books up to date.** It is easier to stay on top of membership changes than to research, 5 months later, the birth date of a child you baptized. Keeping a running list of membership changes each year, in addition to the official membership books, will make filling out charge conference forms much easier.

Books To Read

If you are in an area with a good library, use it. Some needed books are not available in local libraries, but many are. Take advantage of inter-library loans, and search for available library books on your branch's website. You do not need to buy every book you read. If you buy and read a book you are not likely to read or refer to again, pass it along to a colleague. Also, many bookstores allow you to sit and scan or read books without buying them.

4. CONFERENCE RELATIONS

Conference relationship is the designated relationship of a clergy person or diaconal minister to the annual conference. The first aspect of conference relationship is whether one is ordained (deacon in full connection, elder, or associate member), commissioned, licensed, consecrated, or retired.

FOR LICENSED PASTORS. Licensing is done annually based upon the recommendation of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry and the granting of an appointment by the Bishop. A license is usually first granted at the session of the annual conference and renewed by the district committee in the spring. A license may be granted between sessions of the annual conference if the person has attended Licensing School. A licensed pastor may be discontinued according to the provisions stated in The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church.

A second aspect of conference relationship is whether one is on active status or some kind of leave. These relationships are voted by the Clergy Executive Session annually at Annual Conference upon recommendation of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. Information in the following paragraphs is taken from the 2004 Book of Discipline (in ¶¶353-361, Changes in Conference Relationship).

To seek a change in conference relationship, you must make a written request to the Board of Ordained Ministry, stating the reasons for the requested change of relationship. Address your letter to the chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry and send copies to the Bishop, your district superintendent and the chair of the Conference Relations Committee, and the Office of Pensions. In most cases, clergy will be interviewed by the Conference Relations Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry. Licensed pastors will be interviewed by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry prior to a recommendation being made.

CHANGES FROM ACTIVE STATUS

The following are the different kinds of conference relationship changes you may request. Please refer to the 2004 Book of Discipline (¶¶353-361) for more details.

Leave of Absence. May be granted to clergy who are probationary, associate, and full members, as well as diaconal ministers, who are unable to perform the duties of full-time ministry. This relationship may be initiated by clergy persons as a voluntary leave of absence or by district superintendents as an involuntary leave of absence. Requests should be made at least 90 days prior to annual conference. This relationship must be approved annually and shall not be granted for more than 5 years except by special action of the Clergy Executive Session. (See The Book of Discipline, ¶354). Specific steps for returning to active status are also outlined in ¶354 of The Book of Discipline.

Family Leave. May be granted to diaconal ministers and any clergy who, because of an immediate family member's need for full-time care, are temporarily unwilling or unable to perform the duties of full-time ministry. This relationship must be approved annually and shall not be granted for more than 5 years except by special action of the clergy executive session. Persons on family leave are eligible for membership on conference committees, commissions, or boards. (See The Book of Discipline, ¶355.) Specific steps for returning to active status are also outlined in ¶355 of The Book of Discipline.

Maternity or Paternity Leave. May be granted to diaconal ministers and clergy who are local pastors, probationary members, associate members, and members in full connection and who so request it at birth or in connection with the arrival of a child into the home for purposes of adoption. This leave cannot exceed one-fourth of a year. The request should be filed with the committee on pastor/staff parish relations after consulting with the district superintendent at least 90 days prior to its anticipated beginning. Maternity or paternity leave of up to one quarter of a year will be considered as an uninterrupted appointment for pension purposes. (See 2004 Book of Discipline, ¶356.) Specific steps for coming off leave of absence can be found in The Book of Discipline, ¶354.

Incapacity Leave. May be granted to clergy who are unable to perform their ministerial work because of their physical or emotional disability. This leave must be recommended by the Board of Ordained Ministry and the Board of Pensions and approved by a majority vote of the Clergy Executive Session after a thorough investigation by the Joint Committee on Disability. This relationship may be initiated by the clergy member or by the cabinet with or without the consent of the clergy member. A detailed outline of the process for making this request is available from the Office of Ministerial Services and the Office of Pensions and Benefits. Receipt of disability benefits for those enrolled in the Comprehensive Protection Plan is determined by the General Board of Pensions. (See The Book of Discipline, ¶358.)

Transitional Leave. This is for Deacons in Full Connection Who Are In-between Appointments. The status of a deacon in full connection who is in good standing and who is in-between appointments shall be transitional leave. The purpose of transitional leave is to provide time for the deacon in full connection to seek and secure an appointable position. Upon the approval of the bishop and with approval of the Board of Ordained Ministry Executive Committee, transitional leave may be granted for up to one year.

Deacons on transitional leave may continue to serve on conference committees, commissions, or boards. If applicable, they may continue participation in the conference health program through their own contributions. (See The Book of Discipline, ¶357.)

Retirement. Retired clergy members are those who have been placed in the

retired relation either at their own request or by action of the Clergy Session upon recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry. Requests for retirement shall be stated in writing to the bishop, cabinet, and Board of Ordained Ministry at least 120 days prior to the date on which retirement is to be effective. See The Book of Discipline, ¶359, Retirement) for age and years of service required for retirement.

Honorable Location. May be granted to clergy members in full connection and associate members at their own request who intend to discontinue service in the itinerant ministry. They must be examined in their character and found in good standing by the Board of Ordained Ministry and approved by the Clergy Executive Session. An annual report to the Charge Conference and the Board of Ordained Ministry by the member on honorable location is *required* in order to be continued in this category. (See The Book of Discipline, ¶360.)

Withdrawal from the Ordained Ministerial Office. May be granted to ordained members in good standing who wish to unite with another denomination or terminate their membership in the denomination. When clergy members are accused of an offense and desire to withdraw, they are permitted to do so by withdrawing under complaints or charges. Credentials are surrendered to the district superintendent and retained on file by the Conference Secretary. (See 2004 Book of Discipline, ¶361.2.)

5. CONTINUING EDUCATION

The 2004 Book of Discipline at ¶351, Continuing Education and Spiritual Growth, and at ¶352, Sabbatical Leave, gives guidelines and support for pastoral study leaves, continuing education, and sabbaticals. In addition, ¶351.4 addresses the issue of financial support. The Book of Discipline states in ¶351.2, “A clergy member’s continuing education and spiritual growth program should include such leaves at least one week each year and at least one month during one year of every quadrennium.” These leaves are not to be considered vacation. Study leaves of up to six months may be taken by clergy who have held full-time appointments for at least six years. All such leaves are to be scheduled in consultation with the local church pastor/staff-parish relations committee, the church council, and the district superintendent.

Sabbatical Leave. May be requested for study or travel approved by the conference Board of Ordained Ministry. Associate members or clergy members in full connection, who have been serving in a full-time appointment for 6 consecutive years or in a less-than-full-time appointment equivalent to six consecutive full-time years, may be granted a sabbatical leave for up to 1 year. Written requests must be submitted to the Board of Ordained Ministry 6 months prior to the annual conference. See 2004 Book of Discipline, ¶352, for more details.

The following persons are required to meet minimum Continuing Education Unit (CEU) requirements each year.

- Elders & Deacons in Full Connection under appointment
- Probationary members
- Full-time & Part-time Local Pastors under appointment who have completed COS
- Diaconal ministers under appointment
- Certified persons
- Associate Members under appointment.

POLICIES FOR ISSUING CONTINUING EDUCATION GRANTS

Financial support is offered to all full-time clergy through the Ministerial Education Fund. Up to \$1200 per quadrennium—taken in \$300 annual increments—is available to clergy, probationary members, certified professionals and diaconal ministers who are under appointment. In addition, other sources of funding include Foundations, local church, district, and conference. Funds accumulated but not used in any given year, may be accumulated and drawn at one time as long as the total does not exceed the pro-rated total for that stage of the quadrennium—i.e. year 1 \$300, year 2 \$600, year 3, \$900 and year 4, \$1200.

For those serving part-time, the amount available is one half that for full-time persons. The total financial assistance available to any one clergy person shall be \$1200 per quadrennium, to be distributed in increments of \$300 per year. The

amount available for pastors serving less than full-time shall be \$600 per quadrennium, to be distributed in increments of \$150 per year. Funds accumulated but not used in any given year, may be accumulated and drawn at one time as long as the total does not exceed the pro-rated total for that stage of the quadrennium—i.e. year 1 \$300/\$150, year 2 \$600/\$300, year 3, \$900/\$450 and year 4, \$1200/\$600. Funds not used during the quadrennium shall not carry over in the next quadrennium. A copy of the annual Continuing Education Report to the Charge Conference is found on the conference website. (www.sicumc.org)

The Board of Ordained Ministry develops a list of opportunities for continuing education and posts them on the conference web site www.sicumc.org

6. WELLNESS AND WHOLENESS

WELLNESS FOR CLERGY FAMILY ENRICHMENT

“Wellness” is about how to take better care of ones self. Also, as the concept of wellness relates to all aspects of the individual human life—mind, body and spirit—it is included in this booklet in order to enhance wholeness in the clergy’s personal and family life.

THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS. One of the hardest lessons for young clergy to learn, possibly, is to apply the same concept of grace offered to others in ministry to one’s self and/or to one’s family. Remember, it is “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Clergy family members have to be considered “as others” sometimes to keep in perspective applications of Grace. Remember Christ’s challenge to, “Love thy neighbor, as thyself,” also applies to one’s own family. Clergy families can be neglected quickly. Too often, the minister goes to help others in difficulty but leaves one’s own family to care for themselves in isolation. But this isn’t what following Jesus means when he says to deny oneself and follow him.

ON INDIVIDUAL PERSONAL PRAYER LIFE. The phrase, “If you are too busy to pray, you are too busy,” emphasizes the importance of personal devotional life and spiritual wellness. One of the most dynamic spiritual life processes and experiences is the practice of meditation and self-guided imagery. Persons differ readily on personal prayer practices. John Wesley got up an hour earlier each morning for prayer. This type of prayer planning with small children in the house may be more of a discipline than a prayer experience. More frequent, yet shorter, periods of prayer each day may be more effective for your spiritual growth. When relating to God many times a day through meditation and imagery (usually Scriptural accounts with prayers of gratitude), you may experience a stronger sense of the continued presence of God’s grace throughout the day. What “grace” is more apparent everyday as a gift from God than each “breath” we have! For many persons, the breath prayer encompasses the holistic concept of “spiritual, emotional, physical and mental health” in a most dynamic form.

SELF-CARE FOR CLERGY. Even though ministry often seems to have no boundaries and people’s needs are 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, it is still your responsibility to care for yourself and your family as well. We cannot cover here all the applications of “mind, body, spirit” concepts for self-care in clergy families. But there are many writings that will offer insights and practical help. Some older works like Henri Nouwen’s *The Wounded Healer* may help to prevent some “wounding,” or at least help to understand the stresses of ministry. The best writings are surely the Holy Scriptures themselves. Worship is also an important part of self care.

It’s important to remember that clergy and their families need more “personal worship time” than just Sunday mornings and mealtimes. A worthy goal is always

to have undisturbed time—both for individual and family prayer time. Reading passages together as a couple or family can be the most meaningful personal worship clergy and their families can do to enhance “mind, body and spirit.” Try reading “I Corinthians 13” together each night for 2 weeks and see how this impacts your family life and personal relationship with God.

FRIENDSHIPS. Cultivate clergy and clergy family friendships, as a way to have “spiritual life” shared and enhanced. Be careful of talking too much in personal family groups about “church matters”—local, conference, and general conference. Don’t make a personal sharing time another “church business” session. Good energy may be drained, rather than the spiritual value of friendship increased.

PROFESSIONAL CARE. If professional care is considered, try to work through your hesitancy. If signs of clinical depression or “critical grief” (the prolonged mental, emotional, and spiritual acts of “letting go” of “something” that is gone forever) are present or staying with anyone in the family too long, seek a consultation on the with a professional. The clergy spouse is in a unique situation where sharing personal problems needs to be handled carefully and with confidentiality.

Counseling is available through our relationship with Clarian Health Partners and the Buchanan Counseling Center. These services are there for our benefit and for us to use. Do not hesitate to ask for help. It is completely confidential. The place to start is by calling the representative number on the back of your insurance card and inquiring if your plan has mental health coverage. If so, identify the type of coverage it provides, such as Clinical Social Worker, Licensed Professional Counselor, or Licensed Psychologist. If you do not have mental health coverage, most professionals offer costs based on a sliding scale.

Enjoy and cherish your ministry and your family life together, for it is in God’s grace that we live, move and have our very being in families who serve him.

WHOLENESS

Arriving at your very first appointment can be one of those wonderful holy moments; it can be the culmination of your prayers and preparation for ministry as pastoral family. Let the joy and excitement begin!

Some spouses have indicated that husband/wives are consumed that first year with the needs of the parish. Understandable! At times this can be to the neglect of the ones closest to them, who also are experiencing every situation for the first time. Not only is it a happy time, but it can be a lonely time as well. We know that we cannot hold others responsible for our happiness. So how do we manage that first year?

Wholeness of life can depend greatly on balances, keeping ourselves balanced

spiritually, emotionally, and physically. In a profession where we extend so much of ourselves for the nurturing of others, we are not likely to maintain the self-nurturing and balance in our lives that make for healthy lifestyles. We offer a few things to consider.

In the spiritual realm:

- Do you have an ongoing practice of selected study and devotions?
- Is there an ecumenical community Bible study (e.g., lunch-time lectionary study) in which you could participate?
- Are you depending on your clergy spouse to provide spiritual nourishment for the family?
- Are you too overwhelmed yourself to have a meaningful prayer life?
- Does your clergy spouse rely on you to critique his/her sermons, knowing well that your response will be glowing?

In the physical realm:

- We all know that proper nutrition, rest, and exercise are the keys to a healthy lifestyle. There are times when someone in our circle of friends or family needs to remind us of just how important they are.
- There are circumstances in life that we cannot change. How we approach them is our responsibility. How they affect our personal and family life is also our responsibility. A regular schedule of exercise through sports, walking, spending time at the gym, etc., is invaluable.
- Often the refreshment we receive from reserving time just for ourselves brings all of life into focus and clears our minds for new perspectives.

In the emotional realm:

- Often times the most meaningful relationships for our own self-nurture can come from someone unrelated to the church.
- Assess the activities (or commitments) in your life that offer the most fulfillment: hobbies, continuing education, developing new talents, volunteering in the community, etc., and then pursue them. Often personal growth has to be intentional.
- Possibly a lifelong friendship will emerge from such activities, a friendship built on trust and honest communication.
- Is your home the center of peace (an oasis) for your spouse? Is it for you?
- Is it possible to set aside one evening or day for private family time? Is this a time to which each family member (or the two of you) can be fully committed?
- Church members honor us with their requests for our involvement in the life of the congregation. They also want and need to minister to us. Balance in this area is of critical importance to our own emotional health. Learning to receive as well as give in friendship and ministry is equally important.

Balancing these areas in your lives offers an opportunity to receive and experience all the goodness (abundance if you will), which our Lord wants for us.

AREAS OF WELLNESS—SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Sabbath Time

Find some time other than Sundays. “One suggested way of Sabbath keeping is the setting aside of ‘an hour a day, one day a month, and one week a year’ for spiritual reflection, rest and renewal.” (Reuben Job)

Find a “spot” in your new home that will become a sacred place for reflection and time with God. Begin and/or end each day with quiet: journal, study the Bible, read, and restore.

Meditative/Reflective Time

Our breath is interconnected with our emotions and helps the nervous system move naturally toward relaxation. We can consciously breathe in the positive phrase, “God loves me,” and then consciously breathe out some negative thought we often entertain.

Family Time

Before a month begins, set aside time on your calendar just for family, and try to hold to it just as a paid work commitment would take priority. Try to find one meal a day where everyone is together.

Consider family meetings once a week to talk through tough as well as good times. Allow family members, from the youngest to the oldest, to take turns leading the family meetings. All agenda items to be presented at the family meeting could be given to the leader ahead of the meeting. This would be the only agenda allowed to be discussed during the family meeting. Encourage the family to pray together during family meetings.

Of course, it seems natural to remember special days in the family—birthdays, anniversaries, etc.—but never underestimate that how meaningful and important it is for the family unit to do these celebrations together.

Be open to your teenager. Drug abuse, alcohol abuse, sexual experimentation, and depression happen in parsonage families. The old adage—“*the preacher’s children always get into trouble to prove they are a part of a group*”—is often true. Listen to, talk with, and pray for your teenager. Your parenting is not over yet!

Physical Exercise

Regular exercise can be as simple as walking. Walking outside has many benefits. If you have outside limitations, try making use of the stairs in your home regularly for more exercise. Also, it is a good idea when going to the store to park further from the store for additional walking. Stretching exercises daily, as well as use of jump rope and light weights, are highly beneficial also. Find someone who enjoys your own preference for exercise and block out time each week for it.

Get a Life

It can be easy to get in a pattern of working all the time. Couple a passion for ministry with a vocation where there is always more to do, and workaholism (with the attending burnout) easily becomes a part of the equation. Find something that brings you great joy and cultivate your knowledge or practice of that activity. Observe Sabbath—but remember that rest doesn't mean collapse. Whether it's gardening or line dancing or something else that engages you, make sure that you involve yourself in activities outside the parish that replenish and revitalize you.

Vacation

Good vacation time benefits ministry. Since pastors are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, time away can bring renewal and refreshment for the tasks at hand. Churches continue to exist when clergy take off on some vacation, or just some fun time, with their families. Planning such events can be a great boost to family self-esteem. Of course, carrying out the plans is good for the family and for the church. Self-care for the clergy family means taking some time off together from the demands of active ministry. The minister and the family are really never away from “ministry.” Maybe, trading some coverage time with another clergy will benefit both families.

- The following is our vacation guideline for all pastors who are under appointment.
- Two weeks vacation should be taken the first year of full-time service.
- Three weeks vacation should be taken beginning the second year and through the fourth year.
- Four weeks vacation should be taken beginning the fifth year and thereafter.
- At least one day per week should be considered personal time, apart from vacation.

It is recommended that pastors in their first year of a new appointment refrain from taking vacation during the first month of that new appointment. It is also recommended that first-year vacation be distributed across the year, not taken all at once. On the other hand, it is recognized that pastors and their families, having just moved and under all the stresses moving can bring, certainly are entitled to, and should take, some vacation time during the first summer.

Continuing education for pastors is a requirement of our denomination, and time should be allowed for fulfilling this requirement, but continuing education is not to be considered vacation time.

On the following pages is a model of self care for what a healthy, balanced lifestyle for Conference clergy, diaconal ministers, and certified professionals might look like.

Covenant for Self-Care

For the benefit of my own life and the ministry to which I am called in Christ...

I will keep, as a regular practice, the following spiritual disciplines (beyond sermon and teaching preparation). List at least three:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

I will regularly set aside time for family meals (at least weekly) and family activities (at least monthly). "Family" denotes immediate family, extended family, and/or network of friends.

I will adhere to the minimum standards for vacation and days off as articulated in the "Vacation Policy for South Indiana Conference Pastors" adopted by the Bishop's Cabinet.

I will adhere to the "Guidelines for Continuing Theological Education" as required by the South Indiana Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

I will work towards achieving and/or maintaining personal conformity with medically- recognized health guidelines for height and weight unless such conformity is deemed unsuitable by my attending physician.

I will develop and/or maintain personal relationships with the following persons (friends, family, colleagues) to whom I can go for support in times of stress or difficulty. List at least 3 or 4:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

I will endeavor to establish/maintain healthy practices with regard to personal nutrition.

I will endeavor to establish/maintain healthy practices with regard to proper sleep.

I will participate in some form(s) of regular exercise appropriate to the particulars of my physical condition and with the knowledge and approval of my attending physician. Briefly describe exercise program: _____

I will order my personal administrative life through the establishment of legal documents appropriate to the particular circumstances of my relationships: e.g., a personal will, durable power of attorney, living will, and/or guardianship for surviving minor children. I will make known the location of these documents to the following persons (list at least two)

- 1. _____
- 2. _____

I covenant all of the above with the following peer-support person or group with whom I will share mutual accountability for our self-care as clergy (please list):

Signature _____

Date _____

SPIRITUAL RESOURCES

Consider a retreat at one of the United Methodist camp or retreat facilities. A list of

United Methodist camps and retreat centers can be found at www.sicumc.org.

Suggested Spiritual Resources:

A Journey Toward Solitude and Community by Reuben P. Job
Celebration of Discipline by Richard J. Foster
Connecting with God by Herb Miller
Contemplative Prayer by Thomas Merton
Finding God: A Handbook of Christian Meditation by Ken Kaisch
Heart and Soul by Larry Peacock
Hidden in Plain Sight by Avery Brooke
Journey Inward, Journey Outward by Elizabeth O'Connor
Prayer and Our Bodies by Flora Slossen Wuellner
Prayer, Stress and Our Inner Wounds by Flora Slossen Wuellner
Reaching Out by Henri J. Nouwen
Shaped by the Word by Robert Mulholland
Spiritual Friend by Tilden Edwards
The Other Side of Silence by Morton Kelsey
The Power of Holy Habits by William H. Hinson
The Spirit of the Disciplines by Dallas Willard
The Way of the Heart by Henri J. Nouwen
The Wounded Healer by Henri J. Nouwen
To Know As We Are Known by Parker Palmer
Weavings (The Upper Room)

7. BEING SINGLE IN THE MINISTRY

Being single in ministry definitely presents unique challenges. Navigating these challenges successfully, or having a plan to do so, can save one a great deal of grief and ensure that one's effectiveness in ministry is not compromised.

You may find that congregations that are familiar with having a larger clergy family—whether a couple or persons with children—will be a little unsure about how to respond to a single clergy person. There may be curiosity about your past, which you do not have to divulge. There may be disappointment that there is not a spouse or children. Some people feel awkward including a single person in a social event when they have been used to having a parsonage couple to invite. Some may feel sorry for you because you live alone and might try and “rescue” you.

If most of the church's ministry is with couples or families with children, awareness of single adults may be limited. This is a wonderful opportunity to help people understand that there are just as many single adults as married adults in our society. This may facilitate an automatic connection with those in your congregation who are living by themselves. Those struggling with loneliness, whether because of divorce, separation, or death of a spouse, will often turn to you and ask how you like living alone. Other singles may be encouraged to have you in the church, demonstrating that personal wholeness does not require a spouse. Single persons are not “less successful,” “less important,” or “less valuable” than married persons, yet there can be a subtle message in the church that singleness is less fulfilling than being married.

Unlike your married colleagues, whether you are male or female, you do it all: from mowing the lawn to fixing the casserole for the covered dish supper. Congregational members may sometimes forget that you are responsible for everything at home. You clean the parsonage and do the shopping and take out the trash and prepare the sermon and visit shut-ins. This means that time management and awareness of your personal limitations is important.

This may be a time to educate the Trustees and others about personal safety and privacy issues (particularly for single women clergy). Additional lighting, locks, or window coverings may be important for your safety. If the parsonage is on a very public street, for example, living room or bedroom windows without draperies or blinds can leave one vulnerable and at risk. Shrubbery should be trimmed away from carports and doorways. Exterior lighting at the church can be evaluated for everyone's safety. After dark, try to leave the church with others; ask them to wait for you if you are the last to leave, and encourage awareness of the needs of single persons alone at night.

Consider home repairs and maintenance according to your expertise and strength. You may need self-propelled lawn mowers, for example, or it may be

appropriate to ask someone in the church to take care of mowing the lawn or shoveling the snow. You may or may not be a “fix it” person, but learn all you can about the parsonage and its upkeep so that you can deal with Trustees.

Self-awareness is essential. In times of loneliness or discouragement, we need to be aware of our vulnerability. Most importantly, pay attention to personal spiritual development and stay grounded. Time off is not just to spend time with family—it is to spend time with ourselves for personal refreshment and renewal. It is most helpful to have a number of friends and colleagues one can contact outside of the congregational environment. As singles, the temptation to overwork is strong. Plan regular days off, away from the parsonage and community, and develop hobbies and interests. Don't be afraid to go out of town, even if it is just for the day. Talk about these things with the Pastor/Staff-Parish Relations Committee.

IT'S TOUGH OUT THERE. One of the biggest differences in being a single versus a married pastor is that, as a single pastor, you have no one to help you interpret things that happen within the church (e.g., “...did I hear that right?” or “...what do you think she meant when she said...?”). There are times when immediate feedback from a third party is helpful. For married clergy, a spouse can often fill that role. Single pastors need to rely on a trusted friend or colleague. Whether married or single, however, confidentiality is of utmost importance. ***Confidential concerns should never be shared with anyone, not even a spouse.***

SEEK OUT AND CULTIVATE A SUPPORT SYSTEM. Ministry can be isolating for both single and married clergy. Lectionary study groups, area ecumenical clergy groups, covenant discipleship groups, and friendships outside of the parish are good places to seek out nourishing, supportive relationships.

SET BOUNDARIES. There may be parishioners who drop by the parsonage, knowing you are alone. It is important that you establish boundaries and perhaps suggest meeting with persons in public places or with someone else present in the church while you do counseling in your office. Ask people to call before they stop by to visit. When visiting other singles who are alone, you may wish to invite someone to go with you. Visits to other singles of the opposite gender can be fairly brief and still effective. Always be sure to have a professional demeanor and dress appropriately—this will establish boundaries as well.

Parishioners are more likely to phone single pastors at home than married pastors. With married pastors, parishioners are likely to avoid phoning during the dinner hour or in the evening when the pastor may be helping to bathe children and get them into bed. With single pastors, the assumption is that they won't be interrupting anything. One pastor had a parishioner call at 6:30 p.m. on Thanksgiving Day when she had 15 people over for dinner; she talked (seemingly without breathing) for 25 minutes about acolyte practice. Since then,

the pastor has become much more adept at postponing responses to such routine concerns until the next workday.

Regarding telephone calls, invest in the caller-identification service from the telephone company and get a good voice mail system. Consider two features when choosing a voice mail system: the capability to obtain messages from a telephone not in your home and a display that tells you when there is a message. Don't answer the telephone when it is inconvenient.

CHERISH YOUR PRIVACY. Whether one is married or single, parishioners often ask questions that are personally invasive. Back over them mentally with a steamroller if you must, but avoid responding with defensiveness or anger—and don't provide more information than you are comfortable with confiding.

WHAT ABOUT DATING? Single clergy are often drawn to single members of their parish for many reasons—frequently they share similar values, goals, and interests. One reason it is not a good idea for single clergy to date members of their church is the considerable complexity of such “dual relationships.” Some of the ethical concerns can be addressed with a few simple safeguards, such as always talking to your District Superintendent and being certain the relationship is not secret. A simple policy may be best for you— don't date a church member if you are the pastor.

Single clergy sometimes attract parishioners who want to see them married off and who will go to great lengths to try to fix them up with various potential partners. Thank them, but suggest to such people that you would prefer to do your own social planning.

8. THE TWO OF US

WHO IS THE SPOUSE'S PASTOR?

The spouse needs a pastor. There are normal situations that arise throughout life in which regular lay people rely heavily upon their pastor for guidance. These times include periods of illness (personally or with member of the family), death of parents and grandparents, the loss of a job, problem teenagers, a spiritual crisis when God seems far away, times when one feels distant to their spouse, or loneliness and anger. Most spouses (and PK'S) feel that the minister in the family deals wonderfully with crises in everyone else's life, but when it strikes the parsonage family, sometimes there is not a convenient time or any extra emotional energy left for his/her own family. Often, too, the minister is dealing with his/her own emotions during the family crisis. Ministers' spouses feel as if there is no one for them to turn to during these trying times. Over the years, anger and resentment can build toward the profession of the ministry because of this felt alienation. You need be proactive concerning this issue and seek your own spiritual pastor. What are our options? What are the pros and cons in finding your own pastor?

- **District Superintendent.** If there are family concerns that might reflect negatively upon the parenting skills of the pastor, spouses may feel that this will have a negative impact upon the next appointment. The same holds true for marital and financial problems. However, the district superintendent may be very effective in dealing with crises that involve sickness and death. Let's face it; some superintendents are more approachable than others.
- **Another Minister.** Often it seems that friends you make among other clergy within the conference may become your natural confidants. Your spouse may not want the secrets of his family told to another minister, especially if there has been a history of gossiping between the two of them. This type of relationship with a clergy friend may cause some tension if the minister you married finds out that you confided in a peer. If you were fortunate enough to have grown up in a United Methodist Church, the pastor that you were closest to in your youth may be one that you can confide in when the going gets rough. If you select some clergyperson to be your pastor, make sure that all you say is confidential (and let your spouse know who it is). Most will honor this.
- **Church Member.** You want the church members to think highly of you and your spouse. If there are weaknesses in the parsonage family, there is the natural tendency to want to keep them private. Sometimes it seems that by the time you develop a really close friendship within the congregation it is time to move! If you are fortunate to find a soul sister/brother within your congregation that you trust with all of your secrets, by all means nurture that relationship. Be careful not to flaunt that relationship before the other members of the congregation and cause jealousy. Often it is after you have moved away from a church that this

type of relationship really blossoms. We do have to honor the “code” of not interfering in the ministry of the pastor that follows us, but continuing the important personal relationships that we all develop during the lifetime of ministry is very important to our emotional well being.

- **Other Clergy Spouses.** They are most understanding! These relationships are very rewarding, but it may take years to develop these contacts, especially if you work and don’t have the time or the inclination to attend spouses’ gatherings. Take time to find a kindred spirit among this group and you will have a special relationship throughout your ministry.
- **Retired Minister Friend.** This is a very viable option, if you know one well enough! Their experience is invaluable and their guidance reaches beyond age boundaries.
- **Associate Minister.** If you are in a large church that has an associate minister, or if you are married to the associate, the other partner of the ministerial team of that church may be your pastor. This may be workable providing both couples agree to the relationship.
- **Professional Counseling.** For those occasions when you need more than just a friend to talk with, consider one of the counseling options made available by the mental health benefits offered in the Conference Health Plan.

Clergy spouses have a great need to be ministered to. Since this is a built-in equation in the strange life of a parsonage family, no one should feel guilty about needing his/her own pastor. When you are in need of spiritual guidance or pastoral care, don’t hesitate to seek out help. You and your family will be stronger for it.

CLERGY COUPLES (If you are not part of a clergy couple, skip to page 43.

YOU’LL KNOW YOU’RE A CLERGY COUPLE IF...

- At her “Meet Your Pastor Meeting” they ask him, “Do you play the piano?”
- His church says, “Why doesn’t your wife attend here?”
- You try to alternate living arrangements between two parsonages, get up in the middle of the night and can’t remember where the bathroom is.
- For “Old Clergy Couples,” the above applies, but you may get up several times during the night and not remember where the bathroom is even during daylight hours!
- She is appointed to the Cabinet, and he becomes the “lawn boy” at the district parsonage.
- He belongs to the United Methodist Women and she belongs to the United Methodist Men.
- You would much rather preach it than have to listen to it.
- He gets invited to the Ladies Singles Group where the average age is 78.
- Each says, “I hate Charge Conferences,” and really knows why.
- “PMS” in your family stands for “Picking on Ministers Syndrome.”

- Annual Conference is the only time you're together.
- One of the kids answers the phone, the caller asks for "Rev. _____," and your child responds, "Which one?"
- If you can't think of a more exciting, frustrating career!

TOP TEN CLERGY-COUPLE QUESTIONS BY CONGREGATIONS

- Why can't the spouse help with Vacation Bible School? After all, we're getting two pastors for the price of one!
- How will emergencies be prioritized? My pastor might not be available in an emergency if her spouse's emergency in another congregation places me on a lower priority.
- Who is in charge of the house and children? Isn't one of them, in effect, part time?
- Where will the children go to church?
- Does a clergy-couple appointment mean a new charge has been created? We're not sure we want to share seasonal activities and events with another church.
- Why should a church with a parsonage pay the other church for the privilege of their pastor living with his/her family?
- Why can't one family live in two houses?
- Who decides where they will live?
- Do two appointments pay insurance for the same family...isn't that making double payments?
- Will we ever see the spouse at Sunday worship, UMW, UMM, and fellowship events?

LEARNING TO COMMUNICATE

- Well before the "clergy couple" dynamics engage, it's good to begin working on communication skills
- Take long walks together, talking and listening
- Pray together
- Learn to practice "active listening". Practice what you learned in psychology and Christian education classes
- Discover the wonder of forming Christian community in small groups
- Rediscover weekly the value of a regular "together time"
- Take advantage of professional listeners when you find communication difficult
- Marriage Enrichment and Marriage Encounter weekends can be helpful
- Work from a written schedule in order to divide fairly home and vocational time
- Listen carefully to your children's needs for both active involvement in church and for their freedom to choose which church activities to attend

TO WORK TOGETHER OR NOT WORK TOGETHER

One of the first decisions a clergy couple will make will concern taking separate appointments or working together in the same appointment. For some this is an easy decision. Perhaps you already know whether your gifts are complimentary and whether you would enjoy working together. Most clergy couples ask for separate appointments and serve an entire ministry this way. Others seek opportunities to work together in full-time or part-time appointments, or a combination of both.

Working together brings fulfillment and challenge! It is fulfilling to plan and execute ministry, lead worship, and attend fellowship functions together. If you have children, there are more opportunities to be together as a family. One of the challenges is communication: many of the details that one knows, the other must know, so that fewer things fall through the crack.

Working in separate appointments means that your lives will intersect much less frequently. Opportunities to work together in ministry must be intentionally sought. But your identity as individual pastors will be much clearer to your churches and your community. The female pastor will hardly ever be called the “preacher’s wife.” And working separately gives each of you the opportunity to develop skills and use gifts in all areas of pastoral ministry (when it is sometimes easy to rely on the other for things we don’t like or want to do).

Built-In Support

Whether you work in the same appointment or not, you share the same ups and downs of ministry. When one of you comes home from a stressful church council meeting, the other can say “I know what you mean” and mean it! The joy of an inspiring worship service or increased attendance is something you both can get excited about. Words of advice and support can be given when you both have similar experiences. Many good ideas have originated at home! There will be times when you both need support at the same time and may not find the other able to give you what you need. This is where other friends and colleagues are important sources of strength. The collegiality you share with your spouse should offer understanding and flexibility.

Time Together—Bedtime Is Off-Limits to Church-Related Discussions!

Spending time together requires planning and discipline. Usually time spent as a couple or as a family must be scheduled and kept free from last minute intrusions. There are always church things that need to be done. Try to keep these saved minutes, hours, or days for each other. Those who don’t will find it one of the most regretted decisions of their lives. Set certain times and spaces as off-limits for church-related discussions. Most couples agree that such topics should be discontinued when your heads hit the pillow. You may also want to exclude these discussions from meal times.

Children with Two Clergy Parents

Parents are encouraged to take maternity/paternity leaves that are provided for in The Discipline. Yes, your church can survive without you for that long. Going back to work can be gradual, and the laity can be very supportive at such times. The first Sunday back at your three-point charge will be difficult, you may wonder if your baby will decide to take the bottle after all. Given the flexibility of pastoral ministry, it might be possible to avoid full-time childcare if you both are able to adjust your schedules.

At some point the baby is ready to be brought to church. Hopefully you find some willing church member (paid or not) to care for your child on Sunday morning. This will be a concern well into the child's life. Establishing a pattern that the child is comfortable with will be important. If you are serving different churches, a decision must be made about where the child(ren) will go to church. Factors such as nursery, Sunday School, children's ministries, youth group, and other opportunities may be the deciding factor. Or it may be the personalities of caring adults, transportation, location, or time schedules that will support one choice over another. There will probably be one parent who does not have the joy of being with his/her children on Sunday morning—an unhappy necessity.

People may ask, "What if you both get called out in the middle of the night?" Though this is very unlikely to happen, there will be several caring church members who could be on call for such a possibility. Normal day-to-day schedules can be planned so that one parent is almost always at home after school and in the evening if a couple feels that this is important. Children benefit from having several church families—there are that many more supportive, loving role models for them as they grow up. And then there's the opportunity to be in two, three, or more different Christmas plays!

There is the risk that children with even one preacher for a parent will feel pressure from the congregation to be "perfect." One might assume that having two preacher parents would compound this problem. Be sure that participation in church activities remains a positive experience. Arrange to have other adults be leaders of your children's groups whenever possible. Don't expect your children to attend all church events, especially when you serve a multiple church charge. Continue to provide opportunities for faith development at home and outside the church so that "faith" is not just something you do at church but is a positive way of living.

THE MOVING DECISION

The decision to move is always a difficult one for everyone involved—pastors, spouse, children, and churches. When there are two clergy in the family, this decision may be especially hard. What if one pastor is ready to move before the other? This will probably always be the case to some extent. Communication throughout the years of the appointments is essential so that there are no big surprises. There will be times when the decision to move requires sacrifice on

the part of one of you—either in leaving before you are ready or taking an appointment that may not be exactly what you expected. Hopefully the sacrifice can be shared throughout your ministry so that both of you feel that your needs were met in a balanced way. Much of the time these decisions, couched in prayer, lead to fruitful ministry for both pastors. Our conference seems to work hard to provide appointments that work for clergy couples.

Though clergy couples have been considered a “challenge” over the years, that often means that our families’ needs have been taken seriously and have been a priority in the appointment-making process. It has also been evident that clergy couples are a valuable resource for ministry, and, as our numbers continue to grow, we find more creative opportunities are being made available to us.

WHEN THE NEST EMPTIES...REJOICE!

There is nothing new about “the empty nest”—we’ve heard about it and read about it for years. But when it happens to you, it is far more powerful and awesome than any book has ever described. Of course the nest empties for all married couples with children, not just clergy families. But there are some perspectives that are particularly appropriate for clergy and their spouses to consider and discuss. Through the grieving, letting go, and celebrating each child’s emancipation, you will have embraced refreshing joy with them, and with each other.

It should not be left unsaid that the nest must be emptied (except in cases when an adult child has profound needs that keep them in their parent’s care). Good boundaries and clear expectations discussed early in life are critical to maturation from child to adult, from dependent to independent functioning. The emancipation of each young adult is hard work for all concerned. Since we live in a society that tends not to work hard at good family dynamics, it is not surprising to see the trend toward longer seasons of dependency, with young adults returning “home.” As in so many other areas of our lives, we clergy families can quietly live out a good example of healthy relating and emancipating, as our children develop and start their own lives.

Once the nest is empty, there is both a quiet and a space that seems to be living with the two of you! Now is the season of re-adjustment. Children—especially in their teen-aged years—require lots of time, energy and effort, which parents must carefully prioritize among many other responsibilities. Although the parenting tasks and roles continue after the nest is emptied, the intensity greatly decreases—life feels more expansive, somehow.

Couples can re-adjust in many directions: greater investment in work, in other family members (aging parents), in the marriage itself, and in new interests for one or both of you. Of course there is no “right way” for everyone to re-adjust. Some suggestions:

- It may be easier to plan your days off together.
- Couples can enjoy greater spontaneity in every dimension of their relating.
- Spouses may try out some new involvement in ministry that interests them.
- Clergy may find a new involvement in their spouse's employment community.
- Couples may choose a new hobby or interest to pursue together.
- Opportunities to embrace any type of appointment in any location are now plausible or possible..

So much of the truth of Jesus' gospel is paradoxical (first shall be last, and the last, first; to save your life you must lose it). So it should not surprise us that the "good news" about the empty nest is also a paradox. When we live into all the newness and mysteries of this emptiness, we discover yet another blessing from God as life continues in a new fullness.

9. CHILDREN AND THE CHURCH

You have received your first appointment, and you will be arriving with children and all the joys and concerns that are a part of a parsonage family. Most churches will be thrilled that you have children who will become a part of their church family. Be sure to take pictures of their new home, church, school, and community. *The Berenstain Bears' Moving Day*, by Stan and Jan Berenstain (Random House, \$3.25), is a good book to share with younger children. Create a scrapbook with pictures of the old house, bedroom, friends, church, school, and teachers. Assure older children that they can stay in touch with old friends through letters, phone calls, and e-mail. Let each child pack (and decorate, if you have time) one special LOVE box with their most beloved personal items, to be unpacked as soon as you arrive. Remember, children mirror your emotions. If you are anxious and sad, your children are likely to feel this also. Certainly those are valid feelings, but if you can also treat this move as a new adventure that God is calling you to begin, the adjustment will be easier for all.

We are invited in Sue Downing's book, *Hand In Hand Growing Spiritually With Our Children*, to "come and discover the tremendous privilege and responsibility of sharing the Christian faith with your children." Learn creative ways to pray, read scripture, attend church and walk life's valleys with your children. "We cannot emphasize enough to our children that their lives are a gift from God, and that God created each one of them unique." With these words and this inspiring book we can move toward equipping our children to thrive in the pastoral ministry as children of clergy households.

INCLUDING CHILDREN IN THE CLERGY FAMILY MINISTRY

In helping our children adjust to the demands and upheavals of the itinerate ministry, it is very important to talk to your children about why serving God in this profession is so vital to your life, why you are willing to make such sacrifices as moving, living in someone else's house, and spending long hours away from home.

Include your children in ministry. Nursing homes love to see children, as do some shut-ins. Ring the Salvation Army bell together as a family at Christmas. In these and other family activities you can model your commitment to a servant ministry. Children who are included are more likely to understand, and less likely to resent, your calling. After all, you are raising disciples. Including your children in the clergy family ministry will go a long way to help at those times when you wish you could be there for them but cannot. Children need to be included in our faith and ministry.

INFANTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN

There are many pros and cons to moving in with or having children while in the ministry. In the mind of your members your children will become theirs, especially in churches where there are few little ones.

PRO: You will have a church full of grandparents, uncles and aunts and more baby sitters than you know what to do with. Take advantage of good sitters to provide needed adult time for you and your spouse.

CON: You won't want everyone who offers to baby-sit your child. Use the same caution accepting a member of your church as a sitter as you would choosing from someone in the community. It can be difficult to accept one person and refuse another without risking offending someone. Do not feel as if you have to compromise what you want in a sitter to assuage someone's feelings.

PRO: Your child may get more Christmas, birthday, "We got this on vacation," and "It just looked like something he'd like" presents than you can count. Use this wonderful opportunity to teach your child the value of thank you notes (scribbled picture with a line or two from you).

PRO: Small children can be such a blessing to your ministry because most everyone loves small children, and they will be inclined to pass those tender feelings on to you.

CON: Because everyone loves children they will want to hug and pick up your child. This can cause several concerns:

- It can be difficult to teach 'Stranger Danger' without offending people who don't consider themselves to be strangers."
- Young children will take an instant like or dislike to certain people for unknown reasons. Some people will be offended if they are not one of the chosen.
- Children have many different temperaments. Not everyone is as understanding of shy or withdrawn children, or colicky infants. Do not get into the habit of apologizing for your child. It implies that your child is at fault, when he or she just has a different temperament.
- Many adults do not respect a child's right to personal space. They would never dream of tickling an acquaintance who was having a bad day or picking up a stranger, but feel it acceptable to force these same attentions on a small child. You are your child's advocate, but you should also try not to offend. Pick an innocuous phrase that deflects unwanted adult attention from your child.

PRO and CON: As any new parent will tell you, you will get tons of advice on how to raise your child and criticism for your choices. Because your congregation feels a sense of attachment to you and your family you will get even more than from strangers. While this can be beneficial for new parents, it can also be very overwhelming and unwanted. Again, pick an inoffensive phrase and follow your own choices.

SPECIAL AREAS OF CONCERN

What are some special areas of concern that face you and your family as you begin this new phase of your life?

Children in the House

Hopefully, the cabinet has taken the needs of your family into consideration as they have made your appointment and you will not be moving with three children into a two-bedroom parsonage, located on a busy highway with no fenced in yard and a dirty carpet for your infant to crawl on! However, as you walk through the parsonage you may see things that will need attention. Will you need to child proof the house with covers for electric outlets, or secure kitchen and bathroom drawers and doors with safety catches? Do you need to install a stairway gate that attaches to the wall? If you have concerns about these or other housing issues, please discuss them with your District Superintendent during or following the “Meet Your Pastor” visit.

The following are special considerations when reviewing the parsonage:

- Lead paint.
- Radon testing.
- Carbon dioxide detectors as well as fire detectors.
- Mini blinds with lead.
- If parsonage has well water, check for a recent water testing report.
- It might be possible for safety features such as outlet covers and cabinet latches to be installed before you move. Do not forget to also do a safety check on the church where your child will attend.
- Bring a good friend to help unpack or watch your toddlers if family is not available.

Children in the Church

You have been appointed to a two-, three-, or a four-point charge and you know that your family cannot attend more than one worship service and Sunday School each week. How do you choose which church to attend without hurting the feelings of the churches not chosen? There are some things to consider as you make your choice.

- Which church has a safe, clean nursery with capable attendants?
- Does one church offer to have someone sit with your older children if they invite you to sing in the choir?
- Is child care provided for church functions?
- If you have teenagers, which church has the best or only youth Sunday School class or UMYF?

The religious growth and development of your family is very important so you will want to choose a church home that is child or youth friendly. If you choose to participate in one church on Sunday morning, it is very important that you attend special events and social occasions at the other churches so that the members have an opportunity to know and love the parsonage family. If you have no churches with children or youth, Christian education in the home becomes very important. Order an age-appropriate Sunday School curriculum from Cokesbury and have a good time learning together at home.

Small Children. There will be many different ideas of how a small child should behave in church and what the minister’s interaction should be with his or her children during the worship service. Some ministers will hold their young child

while singing a hymn or offering the benediction. Some members of the congregation love this as a sign of God's children being welcome in his house while others will say other people don't take their children to work with them. Some ministers and their spouses are uncomfortable with the tiniest squeak from their children disrupting the service and choose to leave them in the nursery or have the spouse stay home if there is no nursery. You cannot please everyone and should not try. You must find what works best for you and your congregation.

PK'S (Preacher's Kids). While you don't want your child favored because she or he is the PK, remember also not to penalize her or him. A two-year-old child will act out occasionally regardless of whose child she or he is. Do not have unreasonable expectations for your child because she or he is the PK. And don't let others impose unreasonable expectations on your child. Remember, you are your child's advocate. Just let your PK be a kid.

Be an Advocate for Your Child

Do not be afraid to claim your parental authority. If people really push their advice or attention on you or your child, find a way politely to ask them to stop. Always remember that you are your child's best and truest advocate. Consider:

To avoid unwanted attention to your child, say:

- He prefers a handshake or high five to a hug right now
- We're teaching her no adult can touch her or pick her up without our permission. She's safe here, we know, but it's such a dangerous world out there.

When given advice, say:

- How that has worked for you? (Talking about their own experiences deflects them from you and your child.)
- Thank you for your concern
- Thanks, but we need to do what's best for your child and your family

Try to remember, they really do care. When you really disagree with their advice or actions, state your position kindly, but firmly.

Also keep all of this advice in mind when dealing with other people's children.

Giving Birth

Before the baby gets here the congregation will worry every time you rest your hand against that kick boxer you are carrying, want to know what you are having and what you'll name him or her, and tell you more stories about their labor and delivery than you'll want to hear. They might throw you a shower, and you will probably get a week or two of meals brought to you after the baby is born. You'll have endless offers from sitters and tons of care and support.

Of course once the baby arrives, everyone will also want to touch and hold your new family member. While flattering, this can cause great concern for parents of an infant with a fragile immune system. If you are at a congregation a while

before you have a child, make sure you announce whenever anyone has a new baby a few guidelines for the congregation to keep in mind. Things like don't touch an infant's hands because hands frequently go in their mouth, please wash your hands and tell the parents before you touch the baby, and if anyone is sick please keep a safe distance for the sake of the baby's health. Then when you have a child people will not think you are criticizing them when you make the same announcement for your child. If there are no infants in the church before yours or you are entering a new church with an infant, talk to the PPR committee or lay leader and have them make a similar announcement. Remember this idea whenever you are moving also, so you can make this same announcement for a new couple coming in with a baby.

Have your back-up preacher chosen and prepped for a call anytime a few months before your due date; emergencies do happen, and labor is not usually planned or convenient.

Be familiar with what *The Book of Discipline* says about Family Leave (§355)

Education

Having your children happily settled in good, safe schools is certainly one of the most important goals for a new parsonage family. After your appointment has been announced, make appointments with the schools your children will attend. Often the guidance counselors are the best first contact for your child. They are, as a rule, caring persons with a real interest in your child. If your child has special interests, contact the teachers, coaches, or leaders in those areas. Search the Web page for your child's future school; then explore it together.

If you have a special needs child and you do not feel the public schools can meet those needs, be sensitive to the feelings of teachers and other parents in your congregation as you choose alternative forms of education. If you feel that your special needs child must have a certain type of education offered in some, but not all, school systems around the conference, it is your responsibility to inform your district superintendent during the appointment-making period. The cabinet will do its best to put you in a situation where that education is likely to happen.

A preschool may be difficult to find if you live in a rural area. Kindergarten teachers are often good sources of information about preschools, or you just might want to start one in your church as other clergy families have done. It helps your children, as well as the church and other children in the community. As you are looking for a preschool, remember that schools that are a part of the ministry of a church (especially United Methodist churches) are usually schools of quality.

If you have a high school student who needs to graduate from a particular high school within 2 years, the cabinet will be sensitive to this. However, there is no guarantee.

Child Care

If both parents are planning to work outside the home, finding good, affordable child care can be a challenge. Go slow in using someone from your church to provide care for your child. This can work quite well, but check it out carefully before making a decision. If it is not satisfactory, it could cause tension in your church, especially a small church. Other clergy, preschool teachers, or the public schools may be a good resource for suggestions on quality childcare.

Moving Day

If you have young children, try to have a grandparent, other relative, or a friend to help on moving day. They can either accompany you to your new home or invite your children to spend the day and night with them. If neither of these options is possible or right for your child, ask if there is a youth in the church who could help you while you are moving in. When loading the van, load your children's toys and beds last so they may be unloaded and put in place first, especially if your children are with you on moving day. As parsonage families, we are usually blessed with food in the refrigerator and delicious food for the first meal in our new home. Just in case the food is not exactly what your children like, bring along something you know they will enjoy or check out the fast food options. If you think it would be helpful for your children, at the "Take-In" visit ask if there are children in your new church who might stop by for a brief visit on moving day.

10. FINANCES

TITHING

On January 1, 2007, South Indiana Conference became a tithing conference. It is important for you as a clergy family to set the example for your congregation. You cannot encourage your congregation to live a model of discipleship you are not willing to model yourself.

Minister's Request to Accept Less Salary in Lieu of Tithe. There are serious concerns about not only the legality, but also the ethics of using this strategy. The information presented in this article has been reviewed by the legal department of the General Council on Finance and Administration.

First, there is a moral issue for the clergy who, as spiritual leaders of their churches, should set an example of sacrificial giving. Second, since this is a change in clergy compensation, Charge Conference approval would be required. It will also affect the salary upon which they would move to the next appointment, as well as the level of salary of the incoming pastor. Third, a pastor's re-labeling of a portion of his or her salary could directly affect the pension contribution on the pastor's benefit. It may reduce the amount a pastor can contribute as a voluntary contribution to his/her pension plan. Fourth, it is unethical to have one salary set by the Charge Conference and reported on the Master List salary of the clergy and another negotiated with the local church for personal tax purposes.

If this plan is already in effect at your church at the present time, contact the General Council on Finance and Administration to determine how to proceed.

ACCOUNTABLE REIMBURSEMENT PLAN

The Accountable Reimbursement Plan (ARP) allows clergy to set aside a portion of their compensation for reimbursement of travel and other business-related expenses. This reduces the compensation for both income tax and self-employment tax. The remainder of compensation after the ARP is taken out is referred to as base salary. The amount of the ARP should be presented by the Staff-Parish Committee for approval by the fall Charge Conference for the coming year. It needs to be reconfirmed or adjusted for each calendar year thereafter by fall Charge Conference action.

Under Internal Revenue Code Section 62 (a)(2)(A), gross income does not include adequately accounted reimbursed business expenses for employees. Internal Revenue Service Regulation 1.162-17(b) provides that employees "need not report on their tax return" expenses paid or incurred by them solely for the benefit of the employer to which they are required to account, and they do account to the employer including expenses which are charged directly or indirectly to the employer.

Further, IRS regulation 1.274-5(e)(4) provides that "an adequate accounting means the submission to the employer of an account book, diary, statement of expense, or similar record maintained by the employee in which the information as to each element of expenditure (amount, time and place, business purpose, and business relationship) is recorded at or near the time of the expenditure, together with supporting documentary evidence, in a manner which conforms to all the 'adequate records' requirements" as set forth in the regulation.

Any minister/staff person of a local United Methodist Church shall be reimbursed for ordinary and necessary business and professional expenses incurred on behalf of the church if the following conditions are satisfied:

1. The expenses are reasonable in amount;
2. The minister/staff person properly documents the amount, date, place, business purpose, and business relationship for such expense, and;
3. The minister/staff person provides such documentation of expenses to the church no less frequently than monthly. Expenses of \$75 or more must include a receipt to be attached to the document. Appropriate documentation, including receipts, canceled checks, and credit card sales slips, should also be included to substantiate the expenses. These documents should be photocopies, with the originals being retained by the minister/staff person.

Reimbursable business and professional expenses include:

1. Local transportation, parking and tolls, travel expense, (traveling while away from home overnight, including automobile or air or bus fares, taxi or limousine, and meals and lodging)
2. Meals and entertainment (related to church business)
3. Books, subscriptions, and periodicals (related to the performance of professional duties, including professional journals)
4. Office supplies, postage, equipment (including computer or software)
5. Professional dues
6. Continuing education and seminars
7. Religious materials and vestments
8. Long-distance telephone (related to church business)
9. Miscellaneous business and professional expenses

The following are not considered reimbursable business and professional expenses:

1. Mileage to and from church
2. Meals with friends at which church matters are discussed
3. Vacations
4. Spouse's travel unless spouse is required to attend
5. Computers used primarily by family members
6. Childcare/dependent expenses
7. Continuing education primarily for personal improvement

Reimbursements shall be paid out of church funds by a check separate from payroll checks and shall not be considered a reduction of the compensation of the minister/staff person. The church may establish annual budget limitations in advance, agreeing to reimburse the business and professional expenses only up to the budget limit.

The church shall not include in the minister's/staff person's W-2 Form the amount of any properly substantiated and reimbursed business and professional expenses as provided in this resolution, and the minister should not report the amount of any such reimbursement as income on his or her Form 1040.

Any church reimbursement that exceeds the amount of business or professional expenses properly accounted for by a minister pursuant to this reimbursement policy should be returned to the church within 120 days after the associated expenses are paid or incurred by the minister. They should not be retained by the minister. In no event should an expense be reimbursed if substantiated more than 60 days after the expense is paid or incurred by a minister.

If, for any reason, the church's reimbursements are less than the actual amount of properly substantiated business and professional expenses, the minister may deduct the unreimbursed expenses as allowed by law.

Under no circumstances should the church reimburse a minister for business or professional expenses incurred on behalf of the church that are not properly substantiated according to this policy. This requirement is necessary to prevent our reimbursement plan from being classified as a "non-accountable" plan.

As required by income tax regulations, it is further understood and agreed that budgeted amounts set aside for professional reimbursement, not spent in any calendar year, shall not be paid to the minister/staff person as additional wages, salary, bonus, or other compensation. Such an action on the part of the church automatically voids the **entire** accountable reimbursement plan, and the IRS will rule that **all** reimbursements will be considered taxable income for the employee.

Once this resolution is approved by the local church council, it continues in effect until it is modified by a subsequent action of the local church council.

All forms related to Accountable Reimbursement Plans may be downloaded from the Conference Web Site (www.sicumc.org).

HOUSING ALLOWANCE GUIDELINES

Internal Revenue Code Definitions

Minister (Pastor) – In order to be considered a “Minister” by the IRS for tax purposes, the minister must be ordained, commissioned, or licensed, and must satisfy at least two of the following four factors:

1. Administer sacraments

2. Conduct religious service
3. Hold management responsibility in a local church or religious denomination
4. Be considered to be a religious leader by a church or denomination

Housing Allowance (Pastor Owns/Rents His/Her Own Home) - The portion of the Pastor's Church compensation that is designated in advance as a housing allowance to the extent that the minister's expenses incurred in maintaining his/her home equals or exceeds the allowance and does not exceed the fair rental value of the home (including furnishing and utilities).

Parsonage Allowance (Church Owns the Home) - The portion of the Pastor's Church compensation that is designated in advance as a parsonage allowance to the extent that the minister's out-of-pocket expenses incurred in maintaining the parsonage (including furnishing and utilities) equals or exceeds the allowance.

Housing Exclusion - The amount of the housing allowance the Pastor can actually exclude from his/her gross income. The church sets the allowance at the beginning of the year, and the pastor excludes at the end of the year what he/she has actually spent on housing during the year.

Housing Expenses to Include in Computing the Housing Allowance Exclusion:

- Down payment on a home
- Mortgage payments on a loan to purchase or improve your home (including both interest and principal)
- Real Estate Taxes
- Property Insurance
- Utilities (Electricity, gas, water, trash pickup and local telephone charges)
- Furnishings and appliances (purchase and repair)
- Structural repairs and remodeling
- Yard maintenance and improvements
- Maintenance items (household cleaners, light bulbs, pest control, etc.)
- Home Owner Association dues

All forms related to Housing/Parsonage Allowance and/or Exclusions are available on the Conference Web Site (www.sicumc.org).

TAXES

Tax deductions and tax laws are different for clergy. Educate yourself about all possible deductions. Keep all relevant receipts. The website for clergy tax information is <http://www.gcfa.org/taxinfo.html>.

Federal and State Income Taxes

Clergy are considered employees for federal and state income tax purposes. Although permissible for clergy to have these taxes withheld, most clergy file estimated taxes. Estimated Federal, State and Local Income taxes must be paid quarterly. Use Form 1040 ES and IT 40ES.

Exclusions from Federal and State Income Taxes

If the pastor has a housing allowance, the Pastor may exclude from his federal gross income, the lowest of the following three amounts:

- The housing allowance designated at the beginning of the tax year by the employing church.
- The Pastor's actual expenses related to his/her housing.
- The fair rental value of the home, including furnishings.

If the pastor has a parsonage, the Pastor may exclude from Federal Gross Income the lesser of the following two amounts:

- The parsonage allowance as designated by the church at the beginning of the tax year.
- The Pastor's actual out-of-pocket expenses incurred in maintaining the parsonage (including furnishings and utilities).

In preparing the Pastor's W-2, the church treasurer should reduce the Pastor's wages by the amount of the housing allowance set by the employing church.

- The Pastor's taxable wages should be reported in box 1 of the W-2.
- The Housing/Parsonage Allowance/Exclusion should be reported in Box 14 of the W-2 with a notation of Housing Allowance or Parsonage Allowance. If the pastor's actual housing expenses are less than the housing allowance, the pastor must add back as other income the amount that he/she did not spend.

Self-Employment Taxes

Clergy are considered self-employed for Social Security and Medicare purposes. This means the rate is 15.3% (double the 7.65% for employees). One-half of this payment may be taken as a credit on Line 27 of the IRS 1040 when filing income taxes. Social Security and Medicare Taxes may not be withheld from clergy paychecks. Estimated Social Security and Medicare taxes must be paid quarterly using Form 1040ES along with Federal Income Tax estimates.

1. While Pastors may exclude their housing allowance or parsonage allowance from their gross taxable income in computing their federal income tax, they may not exclude either of these amounts in computing their self-employment tax.

2. Housing Allowance – When computing Pastors’ self-employment tax, the amount of their housing exclusion must be added back to their gross income.
3. Parsonage Allowance – In computing the self-employment tax, Pastors must add back to their gross income the amount of the parsonage exclusion that they excluded for federal income tax purposes.
4. Fair Rental Value of Parsonage* – In computing the self-employment tax, the Pastor must also add in the fair rental value of the parsonage that was provided.

() The “Fair Market Rental Value” of the parsonage or home in which a clergy lives has traditionally been a limiting factor on the amount that salary can be reduced for housing-related expenses. A tax court case in May 2000, referred to as the Warren Case, threatened to declare the housing allowance exclusion to be unconstitutional. On 20 May 2002, President Bush signed legislation previously passed by both houses of Congress that clarifies the tax treatment of the clergy housing allowance. It confirms that clergy can continue to exempt the fair rental value of housing from their income taxes and should stop [the Warren] court case.... The rationale for the clergy housing tax exemption is that clergy use their houses for church business. Clergy are expected to be available to their congregants at all hours of the day and night in response to personal crises, and their homes are frequently used for church functions. Moreover, most clergy are paid modestly and therefore are dependent on their churches to provide or pay for their housing. By protecting the tax exemption Congress avoided a drastic alteration in the financial well being of many clergy that most church members are ill prepared to make up. Source: “Press Release - Bush Signs Clergy Housing Legislation,” Barbara Boigegrain, General Secretary of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of The United Methodist Church, 21 May 2002.*

For estimated tax purposes, the year is divided into four payment periods. Each period has a specific payment due date. If you do not pay enough tax by the due date of each of the payment periods, you may be charged a penalty even if you are due a refund when you file your income tax return. The following chart gives the payment periods and due dates for federal estimated tax payments:

Federal Tax: For the Period	Due Date: On or Before
January 1 through March 31	April 15
April 1 through June 30	June 15
July 1 through September 30	September 15
October 1 through December 31	January 15 next year

Calculations for the amount upon which SE taxes should be paid should include the following:

- Projected income
- Housing/Parsonage Exclusion or Fair Market Rental Value of Parsonage

MINISTER'S RETIREMENT FUND

The Ministers' Retirement Fund is an endowed funding resource administered by the South Indian. Its predecessors have funded the needs of retired clergy families through loans for first-time housing purchases, for emergency relief, and even for raising funds to put clergy in the Reserve Pension fund. Applications for assistance should be directed to the Foundation.

FINANCIAL EMERGENCIES

Financial emergencies are a part of the life of clergy families. The recognition of these special needs spurred the creation, more than a century ago, of the Preachers' Relief Society. From its founding, the society has assisted clergy families by making grants to meet the most urgent needs, and in so doing, to strengthen the bonds of ministry.

Each year the society receives requests initiated by the district superintendents who endorse the needs of clergy and present the circumstances in an objective way. The grants, though modest in amount, are intended to alleviate immediate needs, to provide a measure of relief from financial stresses, and to offer an opportunity to improve financial planning.

COLLEGES

There are three United Methodist Colleges in Indiana—DePauw University in Greencastle, the University of Evansville and University of Indianapolis. They offer a variety of financial aid options for children of United Methodist clergy. For detailed information contact the University's Financial Aid Office. Phone numbers are listed in the Conference Journal.

KEMBA Credit Union

Available to all United Methodist Clergy for any and all banking needs; i.e., checking, savings, loans, CD's, IRA's, etc. To be eligible for KEMBA Credit Union services you must become a member. A \$5.00 savings deposit establishes memberships. For further information, contact KEMBA at 317-351-5235 or 800-366-0013 or visit the website at www.kembain.org.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact the Conference Treasurer, Jennifer Gallagher (1-800-919-8160 or 812-336-0186 or jgallagher@sicumc.org) or the Conference Pension/Benefits Officer, George Hunsaker (1-800-919-8160 or 812-336-0186 or ghunsaker@sicumc.org).

The information in this chapter is not intended to be a full and complete disclosure of any and all regulations. For more detailed information consult the appropriate agency for full compliance.

11. 2008 CLERGY BENEFITS SUMMARY

Compensation = Base Salary plus Housing Allowance (OR 25% of parsonage value)

2008 GENERAL BOARD OF PENSIONS BENEFITS

CRSP – Clergy Retirement Security Program

Defined Benefit/Church Contribution – 9% Plan Compensation. Maximum contribution is \$7,565.94 per year paid by church or charge.

Defined Contribution/Church Contribution = 3% Plan Compensation. There is no maximum. Paid by church or charge.

UMPIP – United Methodist Personal Investment Plan

Optional personal contribution plan. May be pre-tax or after tax; subject to IRS limitations. Paid by the pastor as a payroll withholding item.

CPP – Comprehensive Protection Plan (Long-term Disability and Death Benefits)

3.4% of Plan Compensation. Paid by church or charge.

2008 HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS

Medical Benefits, including prescription, benefits are with HealthFlex, administered by the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits. This is a fully insured plan. Each church or charge pays 100% of the church insurance allocation of \$1,424/month in 2008. This is a blended rate, meaning it is the same regardless of the coverage a pastor elects (family or single).

Pastoral Surcharge is 1% of cash compensation. This is to be paid as a pre-tax payroll withholding for the clergy in the plan.

Coverage is in a co-pay structure where physician visits are paid with a \$15 co-pay and specialists are paid with a \$40 co-pay. No deductible applies for these visits. Individual deductible of \$500 and family deductible of \$1,000 are applicable for in-patient services and lab services. Insurance pays 85% and participant pays 15% after deductible has been met on applicable claims. Specific coverage can be found at the South Indiana Conference website (www.sicumc.org) under the Resource section.

Dental coverage remains under Principal Financial. Specific coverage can be found at the above referenced website. Vision benefits are available through the VSP network. \$10 co-pay provides a free eye exam with discounts on lenses and frames at in-network providers. Benefits are also available for Lasik procedures when done in-network.

A Flexible Spending Account is available for clergy to tax-shelter out-of-pocket medical expenses. This is done as a pre-tax withholding item from clergy payroll. Annual maximum is \$2,500. Annual election period is November of each year.

12. Behavioral Health Guidelines

These guidelines were developed by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry in consultation with legal, psychological, pastoral and financial advisors. They have been adopted by the South Indiana Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. Although these guidelines were developed for use in evaluating candidates for ministry, they are appropriate for clergy in all stages of ministry as together we live out our covenant to be accountable to our churches and one another.

In using these guidelines, the Board assumes that candidates for commissioning and ordination will be familiar with these guidelines and adhere to them. When a candidate presents behaviors that do not adhere to these guidelines, the Board will be supportive and pastoral in helping the candidate to seek care.

Physical Health

Standard:

The candidate is of sound physical health sufficient to perform the essential duties of the office, has no current or recurrent disqualifying impairment, and demonstrates no obvious physical health concerns.

Rationale:

Neglect of physical health is known to impair function in pervasive ways. Responsible preventive health care maximizes the functional abilities of the individual and minimizes the health care costs to the annual conference.

Recommendations:

Candidates should be able to articulate their plans for physical health care. Candidates with *non-disqualifying* medical problems should demonstrate medical consultation and cooperation with treatment plans.

Management of Personal Finances

Standard:

The candidate is not in debt so as to embarrass the church.

Rationale:

While this may not, on the surface, seem to be a behavioral health issue, personal financial management has to do with general maturity, including the ability to set priorities, maintain discipline and delay gratification. Difficulties in this area raise concerns about judgment and impulse control. However, we do recognize that all debt is not bad debt. Since all candidates for ordained ministry are required to have completed an undergraduate degree program, as well as a seminary master's degree, some educational debt load is expected. We will keep this fact in mind as we evaluate each candidate's financial health.

Recommendations:

If the candidate has a history of having been reported to the credit bureau, then three years of a good credit history is recommended. If the candidate has a history of a personal bankruptcy, then five years of good credit is recommended.

If the candidate has a history of money judgments, then it is recommended that the judgments be satisfied prior to continuance.

Mental Illness

Standard:

The candidate has no current or recurring disqualifying psychological impairment.

Recommendations:

The more severe the psychiatric impairment, the more important the need for direct consultation with the treating mental health practitioners. The Board may wish to bring in its own mental health consultants in order to evaluate the candidate's situation.

The candidate has a history of remission from any moderately-to-severely impairing conditions for not less than five years without necessity for psychiatric hospitalizations, though treatment may continue.

The candidate has a history of responsible management of any mildly-to-moderately impairing conditions for not less than five years, and has an effective treatment program in place.

Alcohol Abuse/Dependency

Standard:

The candidate demonstrates no present abuse or dependence upon alcohol.

Rationale:

Alcohol abuse (short-term intoxication) and/or *alcohol dependence* (repeated intoxication and/or alcoholism) are mental disorders known to impair functioning in pervasive ways. Candidates who suffer from these disorders will have greatly limited effectiveness and are at risk for professional misconduct.

Recommendations:

Consider requiring a minimum of one year's sobriety prior to certification for candidacy.

If *any* of the critical behaviors are recent (within five years), then consider requiring a formal "substance abuse evaluation" by a certified chemical dependency treatment specialist.

If there is clear evidence of alcohol dependence *at any time*, then consider requiring participation in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or equivalent program and continued involvement in such a program for not less than five years prior to certification for candidacy.

Chemical Abuse/Dependency

Standard:

The candidate demonstrates no present abuse or dependence upon either non-prescribed pharmacologic agents or prescribed medications.

Rationale:

Chemical abuse and/or dependence are mental disorders known to impair functioning in pervasive ways. Candidates who suffer from these disorders will have greatly limited effectiveness and are at much greater risk for professional misconduct.

Recommendations:

If the history reveals occasional and/or experimental use limited to an *adolescent* period, then consider requiring not less than five years of sobriety prior to certification for candidacy.

If the history reveals any adult use of illegal substances, or any misuse of a prescribed pharmacological agent, then consider requiring a formal chemical dependency assessment from a credentialed chemical dependency treatment specialist. A period of not less than five years of sobriety prior to certification for candidacy would also be appropriate.

Legal

Standard:

The candidate shall be respectful of the law and evidence legal responsibility in personal habits.

Rationale:

This may not, on the surface, appear to be a behavioral health issue, but similar issues around maturity, discipline, and judgment come into play. In addition, one's approach toward the law often is a barometer of one's respect for authority generally, and unresolved authority issues may significantly hamper clergy effectiveness.

Recommendations:

Candidates may have no more than three moving violations (traffic) within the preceding three years.

A history of arrest for any misdemeanor or felony requires investigation of the circumstances of the arrest including review of the offense (police) report. Results of the investigation may require an appropriate period without history of difficulty or further arrest prior to certification for candidacy or continuance.

A history of conviction for any felony is, under most circumstances, permanently disqualifying.

Family Violence

Standard:

The candidate has a history of resolving family conflict in a nonviolent manner.

Recommendations:

The candidate shall ordinarily have not less than three years without reports as described.

The presence of any critical behaviors requires an investigation into the facts and circumstances, and an appropriate period may be required prior to certification for candidacy or continuance. The candidate shall acknowledge his/her behaviors and may have entered into family counseling or other appropriate treatment.

Divorce or Infidelity

Standard:

If the candidate has been divorced, or if there is evidence of infidelity, the candidate must have done sufficient exploratory and reparative work to demonstrate and/or articulate the impact of the health of married life on quality of ministry.

Recommendations:

If there is a recent divorce (within 2-3 years), then the candidate should be able to articulate any dysfunctional patterns in intimate relationship and have taken steps to safeguard current or future marriage covenants.

If there is insufficient evidence that sufficient exploratory or reparative work has been done, the Board may wish to recommend or require a course of psychotherapy and/or other conditions, such as a delay of one year.

Sexual Misconduct

Standard:

The candidate has no history, or complaints, of sexual misconduct or charges of sexual harassment having been brought against him/her.

Rationale:

Candidates must model in their personal life and behavior a healthy and sacred view of sexuality so as not to misuse the clerical office.

Recommendations:

Consider further assessment.

The Board of Ministry should explore in an interview with the committee the steps the candidate has taken to identify and understand and deal with the psychological vulnerabilities that contributed to the behavior, and what safeguards the candidate has put into place to guard against the possibility of similar behavior in the future.

The candidate should have no evidence of sexual misconduct for a minimum of three years.

A candidate must articulate a plan to insure that such behavior is unlikely to recur. This plan may include intensive psychotherapy and/or ongoing supervision, or other conditions required by the Board.

Sex Related Crimes

Standard:

The candidate shall have no history that poses risk of sexual harassment, sexual assault to adults or children, nor history of any sex-related offense.

Recommendations:

If the candidate has committed a sex-related crime, he or she should be permanently disqualified.

Certainly the candidate is entitled to be considered innocent until proven guilty, so a written accusation or arrest alone is not sufficient for disqualification, but either one would raise significant questions which the Board would need to explore in depth.

The recommendation for permanent disqualification reflects the massive legal exposure an Annual Conference were to take on were it to place in ministry a known sex offender. Beyond that reality, however, is the awareness that current available treatments for such offense are of limited utility, with high rates of recidivism.

Definitions of Inappropriate Sexual Conduct:

Sexual Harassment:

Includes solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct consisting of a single intense or severe act, or of multiple persistent or pervasive acts, by a candidate toward another individual, that are sexual in nature and occur whether in connection with the candidate's clerical activities or personal life, and that are unwelcome, offensive, or create a hostile environment for the affected individual.

Sexual Impropriety:

Sexual impropriety is deliberate, repeated and/or unwelcome comments, gestures or physical acts of a sexual nature that include, but are not limited to:

- Behavior, gestures, or expressions which may reasonably be interpreted as inappropriately seductive or sexually demeaning.
- Making inappropriate comments about an individual's body.
- Making sexually demeaning comments to an individual.
- Making comments about an individual's potential sexual performance.
- In a counseling relationship, requesting details of a person's sexual history when not clinically indicated for the type of consultation.
- Requesting a date.
- Initiating conversation regarding the sexual problems, preferences or fantasies of either party.
- Kissing of a sexual nature.
- Sharing or displaying pornographic material with another person.

Deviant Sexual Behaviors:

Deviant sexual behaviors include, but are not limited to, behaviors such as pedophilia, exhibitionism, or use of sexual paraphernalia, and preoccupation with pornographic materials for sexual stimulation and gratification.

Pornography. There is general concern about the problem of clergy who are addicted to pornography and its result on the clergy, his/her family and the church. Conversations resulting from this concern include our desire that our care of clergy be pastoral and grace-filled, while maintaining a high level of professional accountability.

The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) has guidelines that have been approved by the South Indiana Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. They were developed by a consortium of clergy, laity, pastoral counselors, addiction specialists and legal experts. Counselors of various denominations all recommend removal of clergy from the church (for both substance abuse and sexual deviancy) for a minimum of three years. The GBHEM recommends, as do other denominations, that the 3 year minimum includes three years prior to commissioning. In accord with these guidelines, the following recommendations are made for clergy addicted to pornography:

1. Clergy would begin counseling after acknowledging that recovery is an ongoing, lifelong process
2. Steps to be followed include:
 - a. Minimum 3 year Leave of absence
 - b. Ongoing counseling with certified addictions counselor for minimum of 3 years
 - c. Active participation in pornography specific 12 step program
 - d. Maintain covenant with clergy peers (see number 5)
 - e. Daily devotional reading on the theology/spirituality of addictive behavior
 - f. Daily personal moral inventory
3. For clergy to be returned to appointment:
 - a. Regular attendance with pornography specific 12 step group
 - b. Sponsor relationship
 - c. Daily devotional reading
 - d. Daily personal moral inventory
 - e. Meetings with sexual misconduct team (see number 5)
 - f. Psychological assessment
4. Career-long requirements
 - a. Annual accountability to BOOM
 - b. BOOM to make annual recommendation to Cabinet, with report to remain in clergy official file
 - c. Periodic psychological testing, with reports to remain in clergy official file
5. Develop a sexual misconduct team to deal with addicted clergy

- a. Three trained clergy and three trained laypersons, with a professional consultant
 - i. Training is yearly
 - ii. Work in teams of two, one clergy and one layperson
- b. Individual team members demonstrate professionalism, confidentiality, covenant understanding
- c. Intervention team to meet with addicted clergy
 - i. Monthly meetings to support clergy in healing
 - ii. Meetings with clergy after return to ministry
- d. Meet each year with new clergy, possibly as part of RIM curriculum
- e. Remove evaluative piece from cabinet to sexual misconduct team

13. ETHICAL GUIDELINES BETWEEN APPOINTED AND RETIRED CLERGY

For Appointed Pastors

- Welcome the newly Retired Pastor to the congregation and affirm their ministry career.
- Be aware that the new Retired Pastor & Spouse may be going through a stressful time of adjustment in their lives and may need pastoral care in that regard.
- If the Retired Pastor is interested in continuing service in any area of ministry, agree upon and establish an informal covenant regarding these areas of responsibility. Be sure to share that covenant with the Staff Parish Relations Committee.
- Remember that the Retired Pastor's spouse and family are laity with the same opportunities for service as any other layperson.
- Be sensitive to the need of the Retired Pastor to use his/her gifts and talents in service to the congregation.
- Respect the wishes of some pastors to really be retired from the ministerial functions.
- Do not be hypersensitive to the Retired Pastor's pastoral care for friends or colleagues.
- Remember that you are the primary person responsible for the care of the congregation and don't shift too much of that pastoral care to willing Retired Pastors.
- With the permission of the Retired Pastor, report to the District Superintendent any illness or death in the Retired Pastor's family.

For Retired Pastors

- Remember you are not the Appointed Pastor of this congregation or charge.
- Let the Appointed Pastor know of your desires as to leadership responsibilities within the church. Except for special circumstances, Retired Pastors should not accept official church structure offices—i.e. charring boards or committees which rightly belong to the laity.
- Establish a covenant between the Appointed Pastor and yourself regarding agreed-upon responsibilities, and share that covenant with the Staff Parish Relations Committee.
- Priestly functions and associated counseling are the responsibility of the Appointed Pastor. In special circumstances, and at the invitation of the Appointed Pastor, Retired Pastors may assist at or perform funerals, weddings and baptisms.
- Retired Pastors shall not perform worship services, baptisms, weddings, and/or funerals within the bounds of a pastoral charge without permission of the Appointed Pastor or District Superintendent.

- If the Retired Pastor is a former pastor of the parish, do not pass on any negative opinions about persons or the church to the Appointed Pastor. When the Appointed Pastor asks for information, respond to those questions as fully as you wish.
- If the Retired Pastor feels their Appointed Pastor is in error, talk to the pastor. If an adequate response is not received, talk to the District Superintendent. Never discuss issues related to the Appointed Pastor with the laity. If you feel you cannot continue under that Appointed Pastor's leadership, change churches.
- Be tolerant of different styles of ministry and be tolerant of occasional mistakes and errors by the Appointed Pastor.
- Encourage parishioners to talk to the Appointed Pastor in pastoral care situations. You may support them as a Christian friend, but they should use the Appointed Pastor as pastor. In limited situations referral to the Retired Pastor by the Appointed Pastor may be appropriate.
- When visiting in pastoral care situations, you should make it clear that you are representing yourself and not the church or Appointed Pastor. It is appropriate to make hospital calls as a friend anytime.
- Before making a hospital or nursing home visit that may be construed as a pastoral call, give the Appointed Pastor a chance to make the first call.
- Do not expect to use church facilities without going through proper channels.
- Make annual reports to Charge Conference and Cabinet.