There shall be elected annually by the charge conference in each local church a committee on pastor-parish relations or staff-parish relations (P/SPRC).... The committee shall assist the pastor(s) and staff in assessing their gifts, maintaining health holistically and work-life balance, and setting priorities for leadership and service (¶258.2).

Committee Membership

- Consists of at least five, but not more than nine members who represent the total charge
- Shall be divided into three classes
- One member shall be a young adult and one member may be a youth
- The church lay leader and a lay member of the annual conference shall be members and are exempt from the three-year term
- No staff member nor immediate family member of a pastor or staff member may serve on the committee
- Only one person from a family residing in the same household shall serve on the committee
- In charges that include more than one church, the committee shall include at least one representative and the lay leader from each local church

Organization and Requirements of the Committee (¶258.2)

- Meets quarterly or more often at the request of the bishop, the district superintendent, the pastor, any other person accountable to the committee, or the chairperson of the committee.
- The pastor shall be present at each meeting of the P/SPRC except when he or she voluntarily excuses himself or herself.
- The committee shall meet only with the knowledge of the pastor and/or the district superintendent.
- The committee may meet with the district superintendent without the pastor being present. However, the pastor or appointed staff under consideration shall be notified prior to such meeting with the DS and be brought into consultation immediately afterward.
- The committee shall meet in a closed session, and information shared in the committee shall be confidential.
- P/SPRCs that are in cooperative parish ministries shall meet together to consider the professional leadership needs of the cooperative parish ministry as a whole.
- The P/SPRC’s ministry is carried out by laypersons with the pastor/staff and district superintendent for the fulfillment of Christ’s mission.
Responsibilities of the P/SPRC

- Establish structures of support and accountability for the pastor and staff.
- Ensure the faithfulness and competence of the P/SPRC in order to provide a framework for the health and effectiveness of the staff and the local church.
- Engage in ongoing training as the composition of the committee, the clergy leadership, and the church’s ministry changes and develops.

Training of P/SPRC: Components

The cabinet and the board of ordained ministry share in the responsibility of equipping the P/SPRC for their ministry.

- Review the committee's responsibilities
- Review ¶ 258.2a-d in The Book of Discipline pertaining to the election, composition, and terms for members of the P/SPRC
- Explain frequency of meetings and requirements regarding pastor’s presence at meetings (¶258.2e)
- Review relationships and responsibilities of the P/SPRC regarding the following

  Ministerial Candidates

  - Emphasize the importance of clergy and P/SPRC in helping individuals hear a call to ministry.
  - Describe the ministries of deacon, elder, local pastor, and certification in specialized ministries. Affirm that these ministries are open to women and men of all races and cultures, and to those with disabilities.
  - Explain the committee's role in the process of recommending candidates for ministry (¶310.1d).

  Pastor/Staff Support and Accountability

  - Discuss and explain the role of the P/SPRC in ministry assessment, evaluation, and continuing education with the pastor and staff (¶¶258.g(5)).
  - Emphasize the importance of establishing clear expectations, standards, and covenants for pastor and staff.
  - Provide resources for developing job descriptions and personnel policies (see resources at the end of this chapter).
  - Provide guidelines outlining the committee's responsibility and process for recommending compensation for pastor and staff.
  - Establish standards for professional ethics and make the committee aware of the disciplinary process for handling Administrative Process (¶363) and Complaints (¶364).

  Cabinet and District Superintendent

  - Explain the relationship between the P/SPRC and the district superintendent.
  - Review the appointment process of the UMC and the theological basis for the process (¶¶428-30).
  - Review the committee's responsibility of consultation, interpretation, and support during pastoral and other staff transitions (¶¶426.1-2).
  - Explain the roles of the cabinet, pastor, and the P/SPRC in the process of appointment making.
  - Explain the meaning and purpose of open itinerancy (¶¶338, 425.1-2).
  - Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are made in response to increasing racial and ethnic diversity in the church and in its leadership. These are appointments of clergy to congregations in which the majority of their members have different racial/ethnic and cultural backgrounds from the clergy’s. Annual conferences shall prepare clergy and congregations for cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments. When such appointments are made, bishops, cabinets, and BOMs shall provide specific training for clergy so appointed and for their congregations (¶425.4).
Congregational Covenants

- Explain ways to develop processes for handling conflict within the congregation and provide resources for establishing behavioral covenants (see resources at the end of this chapter).
- Review P/SPRC role and responsibility in developing and recommending guidelines for Safe Sanctuaries.
- Explain the purpose of the Ministerial Education Fund, including its uses and how it is funded. Emphasize the P/SPRC’s responsibility for explaining the Ministerial Education Fund to the congregation.

Resources (available from www.cokesbury.com)

Relationships and Responsibilities of Staff Parish Relations Committee

Vocational Discernment and Candidacy

*Beyond the Burning Bush: Hearing and Answering God’s Call* (ISBN# 9780938162810)
*The Book of Discipline* (¶¶304, 310-314)
www.explorecalling.org
*The Ministry Inquiry Process* (ISBN# 9780938162827)
*Ordained Ministry in The United Methodist Church* DVD (Item# X534642)

Pastor/Staff Support and Accountability

*Guidelines for Leading Your Congregations 2009-2012 – Pastor-Parish Relations: Connecting the Pastor, Staff, and Congregation* (Item# 9780687647811)
*Guidelines for Leading Your Congregations 2009-2012 – Pastor-Parish Relations: Connecting the Pastor, Staff, and Congregation*, Download Edition (Item# 9780687466245)


Congregational Covenants

Works Cited


