

## **FAQS (Frequently Asked Questions)**

### **FOR PASTOR/STAFF-PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEES**

Prepared by the Cabinet<sup>1</sup> of the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference

## **INTRODUCTION**

This document is intended to be of assistance to Pastor/Staff-Parish Relations Committees (P/SPRC) by setting forth some of the practices and policies of the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference, which are not outlined in the United Methodist *Book of Discipline* or readily available in written form from other sources. Furthermore, it will address the practices and procedures involved in changing a pastoral appointment. If, after reading this statement or at any other time, you have questions, please contact your superintendent, who will be happy to discuss them with you. He or she is also available to meet with your committee if that is preferred.

The responsibilities of the P/SPRC are listed in *The Book of Discipline* (2020/24) in ¶ 258.2. In addition, Cokesbury publishes a helpful “Guidelines for Pastor/Staff-Parish Relations Committees” every four years, coinciding with changes made by the most recent General Conference to *The Book of Discipline*. Every member of the P/SPRC should have a copy of the “Guidelines.” In the “Guidelines” is an example of a year’s agenda. Only by meeting regularly can the P/SPRC and pastor develop the partnership necessary to serve the congregation effectively.

## **APPOINTIVE PROCESS PRINCIPLES Framework:**

A significant responsibility of the Cabinet is to enable the ministry and mission of the congregations of the Annual Conference, utilizing the itinerant appointive system creatively and faithfully. The Cabinet’s methodology follows the appointive process as described in *The Book of Discipline* (2020/24) in ¶ 425-430.

### **Process:**

1. Every appointment is made annually by the bishop and is subject to annual review and evaluation.
2. Appointments shall consider the unique needs of a charge, the community context, and also the gifts and evidence of God's grace of a particular pastor. (*The Book of Discipline* (2020/24), ¶427)
3. The appointment process begins with the missional opportunities and needs of the congregation and then proceeds to finding the most appropriate pastor available for the congregation.
4. The Cabinet is committed to a consultative process in which it confers with the Committee on P/SPR and the pastor.
5. The role of the Committee on P/SPR is to advise the bishop of local Church concerns and needs relative to appointment-making. The committee does not choose or hire its pastor.
6. The superintendent annually shall develop with the pastor profiles reflecting the pastor's gifts, evidence of God's grace, professional experience and expectations, and also the needs and concerns of the pastor's spouse and family. (*The Book of Discipline* (2020/24), ¶427.2)

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<sup>1</sup> The Cabinet is comprised of the Bishop, District Superintendents, and Superintendents.

7. The superintendent shall develop church profiles in conjunction with the pastor and the committee on P/SPR of all churches. These profiles will reflect the needs, characteristics, and opportunities for the mission of the charge consistent with the Church's statement of purpose. (*The Book of Discipline* (2020/24), ¶427.1)
8. Appointments are made without regard to race, gender, age, marital status, or handicap.
9. The Cabinet treats all matters of appointment with utmost confidentiality. It is expected that pastors, spouses, and members of Committees on P/SPR will also practice strict confidentiality.
10. When the Cabinet has determined the intended appointee, the superintendent will meet with the Committee on P/SPR and the intended appointee for an introduction.
11. The final decision regarding appointments rests with the bishop.

## TIME AWAY FROM THE CHURCH

### Days Off

Pastors are professional people, subject to the call of God and confirmation of their worthiness by the Annual Conference. As such, hours worked and consideration for time off are not the same as they might be for persons in other occupations. Generally speaking, the average full-time pastor works well over 40 hours a week. One of the functions of the P/SPR Committee is to counsel with the pastor in regard to the use of time, so that the needs of the Church, a sense of fulfillment in ministry on the part of the pastor, the personal needs of the pastor and his or her family are all taken into account and brought into proper balance.

It is important for clergy to have a regular time away each week. Each clergy is encouraged to establish a schedule that includes at least one day a week, and preferably two, in which the clergy is not involved in pastoral duties. Such days off should be scheduled so that the congregation and the staff will know when such days are to occur.

Sometimes, a pastor wishes to participate in continuing education in a formal setting, such as a seminary or university, on an ongoing basis, without this counting as study leave. We generally assume that a person can handle 3-credit hours per semester without interfering with their Church or other responsibilities. **Beyond this, it is something that needs to be negotiated with the P/SPRC and the superintendent.**

Because full-time Church ministry is essentially a seven-day-a-week, 24-hour-a-day responsibility, pastors in full-time appointments may not be employed elsewhere. Exceptions may be made for certain teaching responsibilities and chaplaincies. All exceptions must be approved by the local church P/SPRC and the superintendent.

We offer the following in keeping with the themes of “BEing Well” and “Go and Do Likewise.” With it, we are not abandoning our call to do no harm and to do good. Instead, Being Well is our call to be as Christ would have us be in this time and space. Being well emotionally, physically, spiritually, and ecologically is a daily pursuit. When we intentionally include space to look inside and around to identify

and amplify structures, policies, and behaviors that support being well and well-being, we are actively doing good and wisely dismantling harm.”

To help local congregations and pastoral leaders to “Be Well” while traveling the M.I.L.E., the Cabinet of the Greater Northwest Area shares this information concerning expectations for our pastoral leaders.

We understand hours of work per week in ¼ FTE increments: 10 hours for ¼, 20 hours for ½, 30 hours for ¾, and 40 hours for FT. **We encourage everyone to remember that during any given week, unforeseen events will happen that will require pastoral attention. We want to emphasize that discussions around “normal” work weeks should consider a 35-hour limit for FT (adjusting for other FTEs as well) to leave space for these unexpected needs.**

The following is a guideline for how the Cabinet sees these hours breaking down in a normal week:

	¼ FTE*	½ FTE*	¾ FTE	FT
Worship & Sermon Preparation	7 hours	8 hours	8-10 hours	12 hours
Meetings	1 hours	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours
Classes/Bible Studies & Prep	1.5 hours	1 hours	2 hours	3 hours
Lay Leadership Development	0 hours	1-2 hour	2 hours	3 hours
Visitation	0.5 hours	1-2 hours	2 hours	3 hours
Strategic Planning, etc.	0 hours	2 hours	3 hours	5 hours
Hands-on mission work	0 hours	0 hours	1 hours	2 hours
Denominational work	0 hours	0 hours	1 hours	1 hours
Community engagement	0 hours	1 hours	2 hours	2 hours
Office Hours	0 hours	2 hours	3-4 hours	5 hours
Total Hours	10 hours	20 hours	30 hours	40 hours

## Vacation

Every minister under Episcopal appointment whose salary-paying unit is a local church within this conference, or the Annual Conference itself, is entitled to **4 full weeks** of vacation at regular pay during the Conference year, July 1 through June 30 (to include Sundays). Vacation time should be scheduled during periods of the local church program year when the pastor’s absence will be least disruptive. Unused vacation time does not accrue from year to year. Absences from the parish in fulfillment of one’s professional responsibilities are not to be considered vacation time *(1971) Journal, p. 149.*

The pastor, in consultation with the P/SPR Committee, is responsible for securing coverage for pastoral care and preaching during their vacation.

There is often confusion over the matter of vacations when pastors are newly appointed. Although vacations may be taken at any time after consultation with the P/SPRC, they are usually taken during the summer months. Accordingly, since our appointments become effective on July 1, the pastor coming to a new appointment is entitled to his or her annual one month's vacation within the next twelve

months. It should be noted that unused vacation time is not normally carried over from year to year. Requests for exceptions should be discussed with the P/SPRC and the superintendent. In addition, the church does not pay the departing pastor for any unused vacation.

### **Continuing Education & Spiritual Renewal Leave**

In accordance with ¶351.1 of *The Book of Discipline* (2020/24), each full-time clergy shall have at least one week in each annual conference year for a program of continuing education and spiritual renewal. In addition, our conference rules expand the Book of Discipline allowance for continuing education/spiritual renewal leave to two weeks per year and one month per quadrennium for each minister for a program of continuing education and spiritual growth. These times of continuing education are not to be considered as vacation time.

### **Sabbatical**

*The Book of Discipline* (2020/24), ¶352 provides that an associate or full member of the annual conference is eligible for up to a full year of sabbatical for travel, study, or other justifiable reasons after having completed six years of service in an appointment (part-time service must be the equivalent of six full-time years). An application for a sabbatical should be made well in advance to the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, after consultation with the superintendent. The appointment to sabbatical leave is made by the bishop. The sabbatical year usually begins and ends with the Conference year.

### **Illness of the Pastor**

In the event of extended pastoral illness, the superintendent will work with the congregation to determine the best method of caring for the pastor's needs, as well as the ongoing needs of the local church. The Church is expected to continue to provide clergy compensation, benefits, and pulpit supply until otherwise agreed to by all parties and the superintendent. If there are circumstances that make this impractical for the Church, the superintendent will negotiate with the Church regarding the payment of these costs.

The superintendent shall support the ongoing ministry of the Church and interpret to the P/SPRC and the congregation expectations around recovery time, the coverage for pulpit and pastoral care needs of the Church, and the financial obligations of the Church and/or Conference. The superintendent shall also ensure that ongoing pastoral care is provided to the clergy person and their family.

### **Maternity and Paternity Leave**

*The Book of Discipline* (2020/24), ¶356 Maternity or paternity leave is available to any local pastor, provisional member, associate member, or clergy member in full connection who requests it at the birth or arrival of a child into the home for purposes of adoption, with approval of the Cabinet and Board of Ordained Ministry. Requests for leave should be filed with the committee on P/SPRC after consulting with the superintendent at least ninety days prior to its beginning, to allow adequate pastoral care for the churches involved to be developed. The first eight weeks of leave are paid while the final four are unpaid.

During the leave time, pastoral responsibility for the church or churches involved will be handled through consultation with the committee on P/SPRC of the local church or churches and the superintendent.

### **Ministries Beyond the Local Church**

The United Methodist Church is a connectional denomination, and every pastor is a member of the Annual Conference rather than a local church. In addition to responsibilities to the local church, it is expected that every pastor will carry their fair share of responsibilities within the connection. This includes activities at the district, annual conference, and general church levels in addition to local ecumenical and civic responsibilities. Time spent in these endeavors is not considered time off or time apart from work. These are part of the regular duties of the pastor and include attending meetings, workshops, and counseling in our summer camp programs, as well as participating as a leader or participant in other workshops and retreats. Part of the responsibility of the P/SPRC is to counsel with the pastor and develop a plan to promote a balanced ministry for the church, connection, and community. The committee should take into account that, from time to time, a particular pastor might be more heavily involved in Annual Conference committees or boards, general church or district activities than at other times. We try to provide for this by rotating office assignments and limiting the time a person serves as chairperson of a given committee.

### **EVALUATION OF THE PASTOR**

Pastoral evaluation is the responsibility of the P/SPR Committee and should be conducted annually, with the results forwarded to the district service center. Instruments to assist in evaluation are available from the superintendents. In all cases, it is imperative that the evaluation of the pastor be done in the context of the church's faithfulness in ministry.

### **SALARY**

As you will see from Paragraph 258.2g(16) of *The Book of Discipline* (2020/24), the P/SPRC is charged with making annual recommendations to the Church Council for the pastor(s)' salary and other matters of compensation and support, reporting budget items to the committee on finance. The Pacific Northwest Annual Conference has established a minimum salary for which a full-time pastor is to be paid each year. It should be noted that this salary is not intended to be a standard salary, but rather a minimum. Where a local church is unable to pay the equitable salary, then, in consultation with the superintendent, the Conference may be requested to supplement the salary. The decision to support full-time pastoral leadership resides with the Bishop and Cabinet.

Churches that are financially able are urged and encouraged to pay salaries commensurate with the professional training and experience of their pastors, and in keeping with salaries paid to similar professionals, including other clergy in their community. It is a matter of justice, fairness, and respect.

It is the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference policy to include in total cash salary all remuneration provided by the local church, such as cash allowances to cover Social Security, annuity payments, additional health/life insurance, childcare, housing exclusion (utilities and furnishings), scholarships for children, bonuses for vacation, etc. If full-time, the total cash salary must be at least the minimum salary of the conference. Eligible clergy per denomination and conference rules are provided retirement, disability/death benefits, and health insurance subsidy if full-time. Fringe benefits provided are not part of the pastoral compensation package and should be established in a separate section of the church budget.

Although not part of the salary, churches are expected to pay the entire amount of their apportionments in order to maintain full-time pastoral leadership. Accordingly, all apportionments must be paid before giving raises in salary to pastors who are being paid more than the conference minimum.

### **Non-Salary Reimbursements**

*The Book of Discipline* (2020/24) in ¶258.2g (8) also requires churches to establish means to compensate pastors for their professional responsibilities. This amount includes reimbursement for automobile mileage expenses (these are established annually by the IRS – consult the IRS website for the most recent figure – [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) for “standard mileage rate for business miles”), continuing education and spiritual growth expenses, books and journal subscriptions, registration fees for annual conference, denominational meetings, and other costs attendant to pastoral ministry. Churches should also be mindful of the extra costs to pastors who serve more than one church and/or who participate in the denominational Course of Study and share them to the fullest extent possible. Consult with your superintendent as to the most appropriate amount for your local church if you have any questions.

Office expenses (stationery, telephone, computer systems and supplies, postage, etc.) are to be provided for in the church’s budget and not as part of the pastor’s professional reimbursement account.

### **Health Insurance**

The annual mandatory funding of health insurance is directly billed to the local church (salary-paying unit) for each appointed full-time pastor. In 2016, a new health plan for non-Medicare participants, called HealthFlex Exchange, was introduced. Participants are given a choice between six medical/pharmacy plans, three dental plans, and three vision plans. The pastors will be given a premium credit, a sum of money, to be used to help pay the monthly costs of the elected health benefits. The premium credit amount is 72% larger for those clergy who cover their family (3 or more covered) through HealthFlex Exchange. If the premium credit amount is lower than the cost of the selected plans, the salary paying unit will be charged the difference, which will be paid through salary reduction from the pastor. If the premium credit exceeds the cost of the selected plans, the balance will be added to either their health reimbursement account or health savings account. The premium credit is funded by the local church’s mandatory charge and the Conference Board of Pensions budget.

### **Retirement**

In May 2024, General Conference voted to create a new mandatory account-based retirement plan for U.S. clergy called **Compass**, which begins January 1, 2026. Accordingly, effective December 31, 2025,

the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) will become the predecessor plan. All benefits earned under CRSP are preserved, meaning clergy retain all their earned benefits. With an account-based, defined contribution (DC) retirement plan, each clergy member has their own account—the money in that account belongs to that individual, to keep for the rest of their lives—and any remaining balance can be left to family members, or to a church, charity, or other beneficiaries after the clergy member dies. A DC account grows over time by investing in the financial markets.

Compass will not change the benefits being received through the legacy retirement plan, Pre-82, and Ministerial Pension Plan. Clergy who earned pensions through Pre-82 or MPP will retain these benefits. The move to Compass does not impact any benefits that have already been earned.

The UMC will make three types of contributions to each eligible clergyperson's Compass account:

- **For a full-time appointment, the flat-dollar contribution is \$150 per month** (increasing 2% per year, rounded down to the nearest \$5 increment).
- **For a  $\frac{3}{4}$  time appointment, the flat-dollar contribution is \$112.50 per month.**
- **For a  $\frac{1}{2}$  appointment, the flat-dollar contribution is \$75 per month.**

The Conference Board of Pensions, through its budget, will pay 75% of this cost. 3% of the clergy's compensation, with a \$1 for \$1 match on up to 4% of the clergy's compensation, based on the clergy's contribution to Compass. The salary paying unit will be charged the full 4%. Compass eligibility is available only to clergy appointed half-time (50%) or above.

Compass does not offer an option for  $\frac{1}{4}$ -time appointed clergy. They will remain covered under the current United Methodist Personal Investment Plan, where the salary paying unit will contribute 6% of plan compensation and a 2% match if the pastor contributes at least 2% to the UMPIP. The salary paying unit will not be charged the 2% match, if applicable. It will be paid for by the Conference Board of Pensions budget.

## **Welfare Plans**

The Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP), which includes disability and death benefits, is only available to full-time appointed pastors. CPP is a self-insured plan through Wespath. The cost is 3% of plan compensation. For  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{3}{4}$  time appointed, ordained, provisional, associates, and deacons, there is coverage provided through UMLife Options. It is a program through Wespath and is fully insured through UNUM. Disability and death benefit coverage is provided. The cost is charged to the local church (the salary paying unit) as a percentage of plan compensation, even though the cost is age-based. The cost is currently 2% of plan compensation.

## **Taxation**

In addition to paying federal income taxes on their salaries, pastors are also required to pay self-employed taxes for both Social Security and Medicare programs. This means the pastor pays both the employer's and the employee's portion of the tax. For social security earnings computation, the pastor includes taxable salary, honoraria, plus the fair rental value of the parsonage or the amount of housing allowance, plus the amount for utilities/furnishing through housing exclusion.

Pastors are also reminded that the equivalent rental value of the parsonage plus costs for utilities/furnishing, and any other housing allowance must be reported as income on Schedule SE of the Internal Revenue Service tax report. However, this amount is not included as income as wages or salaries on Form 1040. Not included in box 1 of the W-2 form that pastors receive from the local church.

**Please note:** If your appointed pastor is a layperson (Lay Minister or Lay Person Assigned), the church is required to withhold Income and Social Security taxes as it would any other lay employee, and they are not eligible to receive housing benefits.

### **Compass and United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP)**

Compass and UMPIP for a pastor's personal contributions are an Internal Revenue Code section 403(b) voluntary retirement savings plan designed to supplement one's employer-sponsored retirement plan. Compass and UMPIP are administered by Wespeth but billed and collected through the annual conference. Any before-tax contribution to Compass or UMPIP by a pastor is reduced from the income used to determine their self-employment tax earnings. There is also a Roth option available.

### **Parsonage (Housing)**

While every full-time pastoral appointment is made by the bishop, each church is expected to provide its pastor with a parsonage. If a church does not own a parsonage, it is expected that a housing allowance will be provided in accordance with the Church-owned Parsonage Standards (see 1980 Discipline, Par. 266.2 f) (4) A The House. For the exact nature of the parsonage requirement, please see the "Parsonage Standards" below. In addition, Section 107 of the IRS Code of 1986 provides benefits to clergy whose churches designate a portion of compensation as "parsonage or housing exclusion." It is expected that local church trustees and P/SPRCs will inspect the parsonages specifically to determine safety concerns. If necessary, they should provide/install deadbolt locks, security systems, or address other safety measures. Pastors should note that local church insurance policies typically do not cover the pastor's personal goods; therefore, pastors will need to secure their own policies for items such as furniture, clothing, and other personal belongings.

Pastors are also reminded that the equivalent rental value of the parsonage plus costs for utilities/furnishing, and any other housing allowance must be reported as income on Schedule SE of the Internal Revenue Service tax report. However, this amount is not included as income as wages or salaries on Form 1040. Not included in box 1 of the W-2 form that pastors receive from the local church.

### **Parsonage Standards**

If a congregation has a parsonage, it must meet the standards outlined by the annual conference. Parsonage standards for the PNW Annual Conference can be found on the conference website ([pnwumc.org](http://pnwumc.org)) on the Treasurer's Office Downloads page and are titled "Ministerial Housing Policy and Standards," as published in the *1984 Annual Conference Journal*. It is recommended that a yearly inspection



be conducted by the Trustee, P/SPRC, and the Pastor. Parsonage inspection forms are available on the website, <https://www.pnwumc.org/charge-conference-forms/>.

### **Housing Allowance Exclusion for Pastors**

The “Clergy Housing Allowance Exclusion” (sometimes referred to as parsonage allowance, furniture and furnishings allowance, etc.) is a way in which clergy who live in parsonages can receive the benefits of an IRS-approved income tax exclusion for housing costs they pay. Section 107 of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code (IRC) of 1986 states that a pastor’s gross income does not include the amount paid “as part of compensation, to the extent used to rent or provide a home.” This includes, but is not limited to, tenant insurance; furniture, appliances (TV, VCR, etc.), repairs to the same, decorating accessories (drapes, pictures, linens, lamps, etc.), lawn care, snow removal, tools, plants, etc.

To take advantage of this provision, the allowance must be established in advance. It is not possible to create this relationship retroactively. A resolution by the church’s council declaring a portion of the pastor’s compensation to be an “allowance for housing/furnishing” is necessary. Many churches adopt such a resolution at the time of approving the pastor’s salary for the coming year as a matter of routine. In addition, to qualify for the housing exclusion, the funds must actually be expended for the intended purpose; unused amounts are taxable as ordinary income. As an exclusion (as opposed to a deduction), the allowance for housing/furnishings should NOT be reported as income on a church- provided W-2 or a 1099. Although it is not necessary to provide church treasurers with receipts or other proof, pastors should keep careful records of all housing/furnishing expenditures, should they be audited. In spite of the fact that such an allowance is excluded from income for income tax purposes, it is subject to self-employment tax.

Pastors are wise to consult tax experts regarding the limits of this exclusion. A conservative rule is that this annual housing exclusion allowance should not exceed the fair rental value of all furnishings in the parsonage unless higher costs are expected for that year. Further information can be found in IRS Publication 517, <https://www.irs.gov/publications/p517>

### **LIABILITY AND PROFESSIONAL MALPRACTICE INSURANCE**

Directors’ and Officers’ liability insurance protects the church, its pastor, and officers. Professional malpractice insurance protects the church’s pastor in the event of an accusation arising from the conduct of ministry. Both policies are included in the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference Insurance Program. If a church is not enrolled in the conference insurance program, these provisions should be added.

### **OTHER CHURCH STAFF**

Secretaries, administrative assistants, education directors, choir directors, organists, custodians, and other paid church employees are part of the ministry of the church and should be paid just compensation and benefits. Attention should be paid to the following:

- **Social Security:** Churches are required by federal law to pay Social Security for employees other than clergy.
- **Allowance for Cost of Living:** If possible, cost-of-living salary increases should be given in addition to merit increases. Check with local businesses, the Chamber of Commerce or the American Management Association for fair salary guidelines for support staff.
- **Retirement:** Many church employees have no retirement benefits. Consideration should be given to establishing a tax-sheltered retirement account for employees who have worked for a period of years. Retirement plans for local church employees are available through Wespath Benefits and Investments. For information, call: 800.851.2201.
- **Continuing Education:** Lay employees of the church, as well as clergy, need opportunities to learn to serve better. All continuing education proposals must be approved by the church's Committee on P/SPR.

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Churches are required by Washington and Idaho state law to provide workers' compensation for all church employees. While the pastor is appointed by the bishop, he/she is considered a church employee for W-2 (income form) and workers' compensation purposes.

## PASTORAL TRANSITIONS

Appointments made within the PNW Annual Conference are for a year and typically span from July 1 to June 30.

When an announcement of the intended new appointment is made, it is done simultaneously in both the sending and receiving churches. The date for this announcement is coordinated by the superintendent. The P/SPR Committee has the responsibility of teaching the congregation about the issues of pastoral leadership. This is particularly important during the time of transition. An article or series of articles in the church newsletter, alerting members of the congregation to the emotions and issues associated with a pastoral transition, may be helpful. For example, there is a grief process on the part of both the clergy and the members of the congregation, losing their pastor. This is true even if the pastor-parish relationship has been less than ideal. Accordingly, in the time between the announcement of the leave and the actual leaving, the transition and its issues need to be talked about openly. Clergy should not put off saying goodbye. Clergy should not act as if nothing has changed. Something is changing in the clergy's life, and something is changing in the congregation's life. This needs to be acknowledged and worked through.

A congregation-wide farewell event should be held. This can be close to the actual move time. However, this is not the only time that goodbyes are expressed. Additionally, a ritual of transition during Sunday worship can be beneficial to all concerned. If the departing clergy is retiring or transitioning to another

vocation or ministry other than pastoral, both the outgoing and incoming pastors can be present for such a ritual. The following are two *Book of Worship* orders you may wish to use if appropriate.

- An order for the celebration of an appointment - <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/book-of-worship/an-order-for-the-celebration-of-an-appointment>
- An order of farewell to a pastor or deacon - <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/book-of-worship/an-order-of-farewell-to-a-pastor-or-deacon>

Of course, the grieving process does not end with the pastor's actual departure. The grieving continues and can affect the development of relationships with the new pastor. Moreover, the new pastor is also grieving her or his loss of a congregational family. Both the congregation and the pastor need to be aware that these dynamics are at work, that pastors have different leadership styles, and congregations have diverse personalities. Pastors and P/SPR Committees need to be aware that these are normal issues of transition. Above all, remember: the new pastor is not expected to be a clone of the former pastor.

The Pacific Northwest Conference provides training for clergy and laity to support them in pastoral transitions. Your superintendent will provide you with information about these events, which are highly recommended for the congregation and mandatory for the clergy.

The outgoing pastor and the Committee on P/SPR have the responsibility to inform the congregation of the ethical considerations related to the transition. They should clearly state that the former pastor can no longer serve as their pastor. Events that cause the most misunderstanding are funerals and weddings. Church members need to be told that former pastors may return for funerals, weddings, and other functions only at the invitation of the current pastor, who must be consulted first. When former pastors are invited to participate in such events, they do so in an assisting role. Not least, it is expected that parishioners will not follow the former pastor for counseling or other pastoral functions.

All PNW clergy are expected to uphold the *Guidelines for Appropriate Conduct by Current and Former Pastors*. (available to download from the conference website)

### **Practical Issues of Transition**

- The date of official transition is most typically 1 July.
- Salary, pension, and reimbursement are paid through the month of June by the sending church.
- Health Benefits continue the same from pastor to pastor.
- Churches and pastors should aim for the actual move to be accomplished, ideally, by the end of the first week in July. Moving dates need to be closely monitored so that a pastor can move as soon as the parsonage they are moving to is vacant. This will speed up the process behind each pastor as the line of moves can be lengthy.
- If the parsonage is rented, ensure the lease renewal or ending date aligns with the July 1<sup>st</sup> appointment year.

- In most cases, maintenance and upkeep need to be done after the move, even though this can be inconvenient. For our process to work, moves cannot be held up by painting, etc. If major work needs to be done on a parsonage to make it livable, temporary living arrangements must be made for the pastor and their family.
- The cost of the move is paid for by the receiving church. The Annual Conference has a policy of reimbursement based on the distance of the move. Information and reimbursement forms can be found on the [pnwumc.org](http://pnwumc.org) treasurer's page or by calling the conference office.
- Conference policy entitles clergy to the moving of their furniture and household belongings by professional movers. Packing or the cost of packing is a responsibility of the clergy.
- The parsonage is the property of the church, but it is the home of the pastor and her or his family. Accordingly, the tastes and wishes of the parsonage family should be considered in choosing decorations and/or replacement of required furnishings and appliances.
- If damage has occurred in the parsonage which is beyond normal wear and tear, the parsonage family is responsible for repairing or paying for the necessary repair. If necessary, the superintendent should be consulted to negotiate disagreements.
- A caring way to send your pastoral family off is to help with the cleaning and preparation of the parsonage for the next family.