

Appointment Policy (Pen Del Handbook)

Par 57, Article X –The bishops shall appoint after consultation with the district superintendents, ministers to the charges; and they shall have such responsibilities and authorities, as the General Conference shall prescribe.

Article X, quoted from the 1988 Discipline is the primary authority for the itinerancy in the Constitution of the United Methodist Church. (The Constitution can only be changed by 2/3 vote of the Annual Conferences. All the other Discipline paragraphs quoted in these pages are in Part IV, organization and Administration, and require only a majority vote of the General Conference to change. This constitutional delegation of responsibility and authority cannot be negotiated or modified. All pastors accept this as part of their ordination and Conference membership vows, and all United Methodist churches are by covenant and law so committed.

Par.437 – The Itinerant System – The itinerant system is the accepted method of the United Methodist Church by which ordained ministers are appointed by the bishops to fields of labor. All ordained ministers shall accept and abide by these appointments.

Par. 530 – Responsibility – Pastors and clergy in appointments beyond the local church shall be appointed by the bishop, who is empowered to make and fix all appointments in the episcopal area within which the Annual Conference is a part. Appointments are to be made with the consideration of the gifts and graces of those appointed, to the needs, characteristics and opportunities of congregations and institutions and with faithfulness to our commitment to an open itinerancy. Open itinerancy means appointments are made without regard to race ethnic origin, gender, color or age, except for the provision of mandatory retirement. Through appointment making, the connectional nature of the UM system is made visible.

Par. 412.2 – Both men and women are included in all provisions of the Discipline which refer to the ministry.

B. Church profile required

Par 531 – Consultation and appointment-making – Consultation is the process whereby the bishop and/or district superintendent confer with the pastor, and the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, taking into consideration the criteria of Par. 532, a performance evaluation, needs of the appointment under consideration and mission of the church. Consultation is not merely notification. Consultation is not committee selection or call of a pastor. The role of the SPRC is advisory. Consultation is a continuing process and a more intense involvement during the period of change in appointment. Consultation is not negotiation or voting upon the appointment of a pastor. It is information sharing and advice to the cabinet and bishop prior to the bishop fixing the appointments (Par. 531.1)

Par 533.1 – Process of Appointment Making –

1. A change in appointment may be initiated by a pastor, a Staff-Parish Relations Committee, a district superintendent, or a bishop

The Staff Parish Relations chairperson and or pastors are asked to make such requests by using the evaluation form, which is required to be sent annually to the DS by **November 1st**. The SPRC is to represent the charge in the appointment-making process. The chairperson is the designated officer through whom the charge contacts the district superintendent and through whom the district superintendent contacts the changer

Par 533.2 – The Bishop and the Cabinet shall consider all requests for change of appointment in light of the criteria developed for each charge and the gifts and evidence of God’s grace, professional experience, and family needs of the pastor.

Par 533.3 – When a change in appointment has been determined, the district superintendent should meet together or separately with the pastor and the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee where the pastor is service, for sharing the basis for the change and the process used in making the new appointment.

This meeting will provide the pastor the opportunity, in the presence of the district superintendent, to declare his/her acceptance of the change of appointment, stating his/her reasons for responding to the new opportunity and thereby to facilitate the grief process of the pastor and for the congregation.

Par 533.4 – All appointments shall receive consideration by the bishop and the district superintendent and the Cabinet as a whole until a decision is made. We interpret this to mean that all appointments require the participation of the entire cabinet. This is to insure that all ministers of the Conference are considered whenever there is an opening.

Par. 533.5 – The process used in making the new appointment shall include:

a) The district superintendent shall confer with the pastor about a specific possible appointment (charge) and its congruence with gifts, graces, professional experience and expectations, and the family needs of the pastor identified in the consultation with the pastors (Par 532.2)

Only “open” charges (churches) shall be considered by the Cabinet. A charge (church) becomes “open” by virtue of its pastor’s retirement, change of appointment, leave of absence, sabbatical leave, disability, location, death, or withdrawal from the UM ministry. In certain situations the Cabinet, with written agreement of the present pastor and the knowledge of the SPRC may declare a charge “open” for appointment purposes.

Par 533.6 – The district superintendent shall confer with the receiving SPRC about pastoral leadership (Par. 532.1)

Par 533.7 - When appointments are being made to less than full-time ministry, the district superintendent shall consult with the minister to be appointed and the SPRC regarding proportional time, salary, and pension credit.

Par. 533.8 – If during this consultative process it is determined by the bishop and the Cabinet that this decision should not be carried out, the process is to be repeated until the bishop, basing his/her decision on the information and advice derived from consultation, makes and fixes the appointment.

Par. 533.9 –A similar process on consultation shall be available to persons in appointments beyond the local church.

Par 533.10 – When the steps in the process have been followed and completed, the announcement of that decision shall be made to all parties directly involved in the consultative process, that is, the appointment Cabinet, the pastor, and the SPRC (of both charges) before a public announcement is made.

Par. 532 Criteria –Appointments shall take into account the unique needs of a charge in a particular setting and the gifts and graces of a particular pastor. To assist the bishop, Cabinets, pastors and congregations to achieve an effective match of charges and pastors, criteria must be developed and analyzed in each instance and then shared with pastors and congregations.

1. Congregations – the district superintendent shall develop with the pastor and the SPRC of all churches, profiles reflecting the needs, characteristics, and opportunities for mission of the charge consistent with the church’s statement of

purpose (Par. 520.1). These profiles shall be reviewed annually and updated when appropriate to include:

- a) The general situation in which a congregation finds itself in a particular setting: size financial condition, quality of lay leadership, history
- b) The convictional stance of the congregation: theology, perspectives, spiritual life, etc.
- c) The ministry of the congregation among its people for the sake of the community: service programs, basis for adding new members, reasons for losing members, mission to the community and the world, forms of witness.
- d) The qualities and functions of pastoral ministry needed to fulfill the mission and goals of the congregation

C) Pastoral Gifts Identified

1. Pastors – The district superintendent and the pastor shall identify the pastor's gifts, graces and professional experience and expectations and the needs and concerns of the pastor's spouse (if applicable) and family.
 - a) Spiritual and personal sensibility, personal faith, call and commitments to ordained ministry, work through the institutional Church, integration of vocation with personal and family well-being, life style.
 - b) Academic and career background: nature of theological stance, experience in continuing education, professional experience, record of performance, age
 - c) Skills and abilities in church administration, leadership development, worship, liturgy, preaching and evangelism, teaching and nurturing, counselling and group work, ability to work in cooperation and ability in self-evaluation, and other relational skills.

d) Family situation – health and educational needs of the family, and the spouse’s career.

D. Annual Evaluation

Par 269.2.f.8)The duties of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee shall include the following: to confer with the pastor and/or other appointed members of the staff if it should become evident that the best interests of the charge and pastor(s) will be served by a change of pastors(s). The committee shall cooperate with the pastor(s), the district superintendent, and the bishop in securing clergy leadership. Its relationship to the district superintendent and the bishop shall be advisory only.

It is also vital that the committee understand that its relationship to the district superintendent and bishop is advisory only, and that it is to represent the needs of the entire charge. Members of the Staff Parish Relations Committee must understand how the itinerant system of the UMC functions to fulfill their responsibility faithfully.

Par. 269.2e– The committee shall meet only with the knowledge of the pastor and or the district superintendent. It may meet with the district superintendent without the pastor being present; however, when the pastor is not present, the pastor, or any member of the staff under consideration, shall be informed prior to such a meeting and immediately thereafter be brought into consultation either by the committee or by the district superintendent.

Par 269.2.f.3 – The Duties of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee shall include the following: to evaluate annual the effectiveness of the pastor and staff, based upon criteria, processes, and training developed by the Board of Ordained Ministry and Cabinet.

Par. 444 – Evaluation – Evaluation is a continuous process which must take place in a spirit of understand, acceptance

1. The pastors in local churches shall receive evaluation annually from the Committee on Staff-Parish Relations for use in an ongoing effective ministry and for identifying continuing education needs and plans (Par 269.24(2)), using criteria processes and training developed by the BOOM and cabinet.
2. Clergy serving in appointments beyond the local church will undergo annual evaluation by their immediate supervisors, engage in annual self-evaluation, and include copies of these evaluations, in the annual report submitted to the bishop, district superintendent and the BOOM.

E Timeline for appointment making

1. Fall and early winter – District superintendent make an informal inventory and evaluation of their charges (churches) and pastors including a review of the criteria. They are available for consultation with the Staff-Parish Relations Committee and pastor, and in some instances may initiate such contacts. The official contact person for the charges is the chairperson of the charge Staff-Parish Relations Committee.
2. Deadline for request for change in appointments, including retirement by Dec. 1st. The Staff-Parish Relations Committee and or pastors are asked to make their requests and recommendations to the cabinet by using the annual evaluation form. The reasons a change appears desirable shall be included. Initiating a request for change is not to be interpreted as an automatic guarantee that a change will be made. All requests will be treated with integrity by the bishop and cabinet. Persons planning retirement must also observe the above date. Notification of intent to retire must be in writing with a signature.
3. January 1 – Cabinet needs to begin the appointment making process. Requests for change will be carefully reviewed. When neither the Staff Parish Relations Committee nor the pastor has made a request, the Cabinet, however, has the prerogative of initiating changes of appointment which are deemed to be

for the good of the charges or the pastors of the program and missional strategy of the Conference.

a) "Open" charges (churches) will be determined and the district superintendent will meet with the Staff-Parish Relations Committee to gather all available data about the charge and its pastoral needs and present pastoral support including parsonage compliance with Conference policies.

b) The Cabinet determines which available pastor best fits the needs of the charge. Note: The present pastor is to remain neutral in all appointment proceedings concerning his/her successor.

c) The district superintendent of the "open" charge contacts the prospective pastor and consults with him/her, supplying essential data and information about the "open" charge, community setting and time frame for the prospective pastor's response.

d) When the pastor-designate is determined, the district superintendent then contacts the chairperson of the Staff Parish Relations Committee of the "open" charge and arranges a time for the pastor-designate and the committee to meet. This meeting is an introduction of and to the pastor-designate and not an interview. The district superintendent will preside at this meeting.

The purpose of the meeting is:

- 1) To aid the district superintendent and the Cabinet, through consultation, in their responsibility to the appointment process.
- 2) To verify the appropriateness of the proposed appointment, matching local needs and pastoral aptitudes.
- 3) To initiate the process of getting acquainted with the pastor-designate.
- 4) To arrange for the moving and receiving the pastor-designate and his/her family.

The district superintendent will bring the meeting to a close with an appropriate summary of his/her insights and understandings. It is understood that barring prohibiting factors which may become apparent in the conversation with the

Staff-Parish Relations Committee, the pastor-designate will be appointed to the “open” charge.

e) When the results of the meeting have been shared with the Cabinet and the appointment has been fixed by the bishop, a public announcement shall be arranged through the office of the district superintendent.

F. Retirement Policy

Mandatory Retirement – Pastors who attain the age of 72 before July 1 must retire as of July 1 of that year.

Voluntary Retirement – Voluntary retirement is available to those who attain the age of 65 or complete 40 conference years of service before July 1.

Voluntary retirement is also available at a reduced annuity rate to those who attain the age of 62 or complete at least 35 conference years of service before July 1

A pastor may also retire after 20 conference years of service with some benefits* beginning the first to any month after the session of annual conference in the year which the minister attains the age of 62 before July 1.

*At the time. Full health benefits are only offered to those with 30 years of service. The amount of benefits is a sliding scale depending on actual years of service. This can change by vote of the annual conference at any given year so that full benefits may not be offered in the future.

All ministers who qualify or voluntary retirement must indicate in writing (with a signature) by December 1^s their intent to activate this option. Otherwise, the cabinet will assume their continued eligibility for appointment.