

2017 PASSING THE BATON MOVE PACK

A Guide for Pastors in Transition



I laid a foundation...but someone else is building on top of it. -1 Corinthians 3:10 CEB

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INTRODUCTION



For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. —Jeremiah 29:12 NRSV

Introduction

Dear Pastor and Pastor Parish Relations Committee:

The United Methodist system of itinerant ministry roots itself in John Wesley’s vision of spreading scriptural holiness across the land, utilizing both clergy and laity in the fulfillment of this mission. This means we are a sent-system of clergy deployment. God calls ministers to enter United Methodist ministry and sends them from then on. In the Missouri Annual Conference, we practice missional appointment-making. The Bishop and the Cabinet work to place pastors with the gifts and graces to serve a particular community for a particular season of time.

And yet, over the years, we have lost our sense of missional purpose connected to this system of deployment. Our congregations and clergy both have been known to grit their teeth, and with a Midwestern sense of duty, pledge to “get through this.” We would like to encourage a mind shift in the midst of pastoral transitions, suggesting that local churches have an opportunity to grow through the pastoral transition itself. We believe that even through a pastoral leadership change, local churches can grow. Whether expected or unexpected, every pastoral transition affords us the opportunity to pass the baton and participate in a successful handoff of leadership responsibilities while deepening our focus on the mission of the Church.

This is not to say that pastors and congregations will not experience grief and anxiety associated with change. The call to ministry for all Christians comes with great sacrifice and giving. We, the Missouri Annual Conference Clergy Support Team, understand that. We are made up of clergy and laity, all of whom have experienced transitions in ministry – some that were eagerly welcomed and others that aggrieved us and our loved ones. We realize that the process of itineracy and the anxieties that a pastoral change can bring about challenge even for our healthiest clergy and congregations. We also know that the changes felt by our clergy who have been called to this work and pledged to a covenant are also experienced by family and friends who have not been called to the same commitment.

We hope that this guide will help in the process of making a healthy transition in ministry. One guidebook cannot include everything one will experience transition, but we want to provide pastors and their families, as well as Pastor Parish Relations Committees (PPRCs) with resources to be better equipped for the change.

Ministry transitions were common in Scripture, some incredibly beneficial and wisely handled, others not so much. In the spirit of Moses passing the mantle to Joshua, we pray you feel the comfort of the Lord’s presence during this time, remembering that it is the Lord himself who “goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you” (Deut. 31). May this new season of pastoral ministry be a fruitful one for you, the congregation and the whole body of Christ.

In Christ,


Rev. Nate Berneking
Director of Finance & Administration


Tom Ventura
Clergy Support Team chairperson

Passing the Baton to Your Pastoral Successor¹

In a relay race, there is an “incoming” and an “outgoing” runner. At different times, and in different races, runners must play either part. So it is in pastoral transitions. At various times in a typical ministry career, any given pastor will either be handing off the baton or receiving the baton. Pastoral leadership requires competency in both roles.

In the relay race, the incoming sprinter carries the baton and hands it off to the outgoing runner in the changeover zone. Who carries the baton in the pastoral transition? The outgoing pastor! He or she must grasp it firmly, charge full speed into the changeover zone, set aside ego, and realize that if the baton is dropped or the transition is poorly executed, it hurts everyone. Exiting pastors must come into the changeover zone with a 100 percent commitment to success in passing the baton! They will enthusiastically put in the time, work, and effort to make it a smooth and seamless handoff.

At various times in a typical ministry career, any given pastor will either be handing off the baton or receiving the baton. Pastoral leadership requires competency in both roles.

The daunting reality is that, most of the time, pastors in the changeover zone are saying “goodbye” and “hello” simultaneously. Unless the outgoing pastor is retiring or otherwise leaving pastoral ministry, that pastor is at the same time preparing for a new church and learning about a new congregation, culture, and ministry setting. Time demands, attention, and focus are stretched during this pressure-filled juggling act. Fortunately, this relay race is a sprint, and not a marathon.

If you are an outgoing pastor entering into the changeover zone, these five specific behaviors can increase your chances for success:

Engage

Engage the congregation in both a personal and professional way. Personalize the transition and make it real. Own the situation, but never blame the transition on external forces. Be honest and positive about your approval of the change. People in the pews are used to job changes. Draw on that common experience in a positive way, saying things like: “What I’ll be doing next...,” “What I learned here that I’ll take with me...,” “What you folks taught me...”

Professionalize the transition the way anyone in the congregation would want to see in their career life. Like the runner charging into the changeover zone, charge into your concluding days with intentionality and gusto. Make sure loose ends are tied up and records and statistical data are in order. Attend to ministry projects so that things won’t drop through the cracks.

Enrich

This is a great teaching moment about how pastoral changes are made within your polity. It’s not a time to apologize for it, or blame it. Continue to cast vision for the church’s future under new leadership as you pass the baton. This enrichment function must be done publicly in your closing sermons, Bible studies, and meetings, as well as in personal conversations and other settings.

¹ Jim Ozier, “Passing the Baton to Your Pastoral Successor” at [Leading Ideas](#). Accessed 14 January 2017. This article is adapted from *The Changeover Zone: Successful Pastoral Transitions* by Jim Ozier’s book that he co-authored with Jim Griffith (Abingdon, 2016).

Endear

Endear the congregation to the new pastor. In your role as the exiting pastor, you can do this better than anyone else. Provide as many personal introductions of your successor as possible, in as many ways as possible. For instance, appear with your successor in introductory videos to be shown during worship and at church meetings and gatherings. Make them creative, funny, interesting, and compelling. Many churches use simple techniques like “Five Fun Facts” or “Two Truths and a Lie” in morning worship for three or four Sundays leading up to the new pastor’s arrival. As the master of ceremonies for this brief, fun, interactive time, you should take every opportunity to brag on your successor. Personally escort your successor on a tour of the community and to meet key leaders. Take “selfies” with the new pastor along the way to show on screens, post on YouTube, and include in written communications.

Encourage

Acknowledge that there will be some natural stress and anxiety as the church enters the changeover zone. Encourage people to love your successor in the same way they loved you. Encourage them to meet the challenges of the future, to continue vital ministries and to start new ones. Organize some especially hospitable folks to put together welcome baskets filled with coupons, movie tickets, and other small gestures of greeting to ease your successor’s arrival.

End

Bring to a close your relationships with parishioners. This can be painful for all, including you. But it must be done. Do this within the context of worship, and in all personal and public settings. Honor and respect the friendships you’ve made, but also be mindful of how you have to end the current dynamic of relationships to help your successor get off to a good running start!

How Incoming Pastors Can Navigate the Changeover Zone²

In a relay race, the two runners exchanging the baton run in tandem in their changeover zone lane of 20 meters. For most runners, this distance is covered in about seven steps while the receiving runner grabs hold of the baton and sprints out on the next leg of the relay. If you are an arriving pastor entering into the changeover zone, these six specific behaviors will increase the odds of a smooth and successful transition.

Acquaint

Get to know the church, the community, and the people by every means possible. Conduct a listening tour in which the church, through a series of small group gatherings, has a chance to answer specific questions designed to help you get a deeper grasp of the church's culture. This listening tour is not a "meet and greet," nor is it a time to hear the pastor's vision of the future. It is a time for the new pastor to listen and learn. Sprinkle bits of what you've heard throughout your first months of sermons. This lets the congregation really know you were listening! In addition, study church and community websites, and immerse yourself in the community by visiting important people, places, and events. And while you are there, take "selfies" to share! If you are an arriving pastor, these six specific behaviors will increase the odds of a smooth and successful transition.

Accentuate

Accentuate the positive. Never criticize or second guess your predecessor, or speak poorly of the church or previous pastors. Stay positive and appreciative. Show gratitude in every public setting, especially on Sunday morning. Express thanks effusively to someone or some group every Sunday in worship and at meetings or events during the week.

Analyze

Study the church, its context, community needs, and the impact of the church to date. Analyzing is not the same as judging. Be objective, clear, non-judgmental, and humble in analyzing your context. Find strategic ways to involve others in this analysis. The smartest and safest way is to quickly lead the church into some kind of well-structured process of learning together.

Anticipate

Be ready for the anxieties, concerns, fears, and worries of the church and individuals within the church as they receive you as their new pastor. Put yourself in their shoes. There will be grief, and, in some cases, jubilation. Keep your radar up. It is often helpful to mention in worship the stages of grief that people, and congregations, go through at times of change or loss. Realize that some people going through the stages of grief will "act out," just as a child might do at the loss of a parent or sibling. Guard against internalizing such behaviors or taking it personally, as doing so will interfere with your ability to guide congregants through the stages.

Ask

The questions you ask are critical to understanding the culture of the church. At this point, asking the right questions is more important than giving the right answers. Ask, ask, ask. Show by the very nature of your curiosity and interest that you care about where the church has been, what it is about, and what the community needs. Inquiry can be a new pastor's best friend.

² By Jim Ozier on April 27, 2016 [Leading Ideas](#).

Set aside daily self-reflection time to ask yourself honestly: “How am I coming across?” “Am I being genuine and authentic?” “Am I being sensitive, gracious, and courteous?” “Are my behaviors what I hope to see in others?” One of the most often voiced complaints heard in times of transition is, “Our new pastor just doesn’t seem very self-aware.”

Answer

Respond to the many questions that will come your way in a humble, but transparent way. Avoid answering from a position of authority. You have to earn authority, and that takes time. Instead, respond from a self-revelatory position that indicates: “It’s not my personal agenda, but the church’s agenda and the mission field’s agendas, and I want to do everything possible to learn more about both.”

“All Things New”

As I was driving back to my office after taking my husband to the airport, I was a little worried because he was flying on an airline that had had a plane crash the day before. My concern prompted me to reflect on my life as I sped along. “I love my life!” I thought to myself.

I was driving my beloved 10-year-old car. I thought to myself, “I like my car!” I couldn’t imagine getting a new one. I thought about the

As a society, even the church, we minimize the grief, sadness, and loss that all of us experience when we move — whether it’s a planned and accepted move or not.

house that my husband and I had owned for 13 years, and after all the work we’d put into it, it was just the way we wanted it. “I like my house!” We had owned the house for the last 13 years because I had served the same church for that long, and, yes, “I love my church!” All of this was motivated by my original concern for my husband, so I concluded my litany by saying, “I love my husband of 21 years!” (You can tell from this litany that I’m not quick to change major components of my life!)

I dared to think out loud, “What a wonderful life! What could go wrong on a day like today?” I no sooner walked into my office than I was handed a message requesting me to call the bishop. After reaching him, I discovered that everything in my life was about to change — except my husband.

Within weeks, the house was sold. I purchased a new car. (My old sports car wasn’t going to do well out in the hills where I was to be the new district superintendent.) I said goodbye to my wonderful church and all my friends, and I moved away from the city I had lived in for the last 20 years.

“I am making all things new,” it says in the scriptures (Revelation 21:5). I discovered that “all things new” can be a painful experience. Suddenly I had a new address and phone number (which I frequently forgot) and a new home (where I didn’t always know where things were). I had a new car with features that were a mystery to me at times. (One night I couldn’t find the switch to turn on the bright headlights.) I had a new job in a new office in a new town with a new set of people to work with and to develop into friends. Quite frankly, “all things new” brought a new experience of many tears and frustrations, loneliness and uncertainty.

Throughout the experience, the greatest discovery for me was how much we as a society, even the church, minimize the grief, sadness, and loss that all of us experience when we move — whether it’s a planned and accepted move or not. As a pastor, I know that people are forever dealing with their anger in one way or another. I learned that some anger is really redirected and unresolved sadness. It’s a lot easier to be mad than sad. Some people encouraged me to be mad because it’s not as scary as sad — but I’ve just felt sad.

None of the things on my list of “all things new” was life threatening, but all of them brought a sense of loss and a corresponding sense of grief. I cannot bring myself to say that everything is all right. It probably will be, but I am not there yet. Psalm 30:11 says that God will turn our sadness (mourning) into joy. I wait upon the Lord.

~ By Sally Dyck on June 10, 2009 at:

<https://www.churchleadership.com/leading-ideas/all-things-new/>.

Prayer and Scripture Resources

Prayer for Times of Transition and Change

May today there be peace within.

May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.

May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.

May you use those gifts that you have received,
and pass on the love that has been given to you

May you be confident knowing you are a child of God.

Let this presence settle into your bones,

and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love.

It is there for each and every one of us.

~attributed to St. Thérèse of Lisieux and St. Theresa of Avila

Dear God,

On this day I ask You to grant this request?

May I know who I am and what I am,

Every moment of every day.

May I be a catalyst for light and love,

And bring inspiration to those whose eyes I meet.

May I have the strength to stand tall in the face of conflict,

And the courage to speak my voice, even when I'm scared.

May I have the humility to follow my heart,

And the passion to live my soul's desires.

May I seek to know the highest truth

And dismiss the gravitational pull of my lower self.

May I embrace and love the totality of myself?

My darkness as well as my light.

May I be brave enough to hear my heart?

To let it soften so that I may gracefully

Choose faith over fear.

Today is my day to surrender anything that stands

Between the sacredness of my humanity and my divinity.

May I be drenched in my Holiness

And engulfed by Your love.

May all else melt away.

And so it is.

~Debbie Ford

Gentle One,

Guard us in our sleep.

Guide us in our days.

Grant us in your peace.

Give us your ways.

Gentle One, go with us. Amen.

Gracious God,

Today I am reminded of my ordination vows. I promised to go where appointed. Just as Abraham moved from Haran, just as Ruth and Naomi moved to Bethlehem, just as Jesus' disciples were called to move and follow him, so may I remain faithful to your call upon my life to serve your people. For you have promised to be with me at all times and in all places. "I will go...if you lead me." Amen.

~From the East Ohio Conference's "A Guide to a Good Move for Pastors and Families

God of Love,

You are with us in every transition and change.

As we enter into this new era with excitement and even some anxiety,

we recall your deep compassion, presence, and abounding love.

We thank you for the gifts, talents and skills with which you have blessed us.

We thank you for the experiences that have brought us to this moment.

We thank you for the work of others that gives breadth and depth to our own work.

Be with us as we move forward, rejoicing with you and supporting one another.

We ask this in your Holy Name. Amen.

~Joseph P. Shadle

"In Times of Transition"

In life and death

we belong to God

from the joys of new birth

to the grief of a final breath

from a morning's farewell

to an evening's welcome

from one place

to another

God make Your presence known

Amen.

~Bruce Reyes-Chow

Open wide the window of our spirits, O Lord,

and fill us full of light;

open wide the door of our hearts,

that we may receive and entertain thee

with all our powers of adoration and love. Amen.

~Christina G. Rossetti

Searching the Scriptures

Reading scripture in pursuit of meaning is a spiritual discipline called *lectio divina* or holy reading. Choose a passage below or choose one of your favorites. You will read each passage four times.

1. **Lectio:** *Listening to the Word of God or Reading of God's Word*
In your first reading, become aware of any word or phrase that catches your attention – a word or phrase.
2. **Meditatio:** *Reflecting on the Word of God*
As you listen to the Word of God for the second time, be aware of any reflection or thought that you become aware of as you listened – a reflection or thought.
3. **Oratio:** *Responding to the Word of God – Affective Prayer*
On the third time, be aware of any prayer that rises up within you that expresses what you are experiencing in this Word of God.
4. **Contemplatio:** *Resting in the Word of God – Contemplation*
For the fourth and final time, sit with the Word of God and allow God to speak to you in the silence of your hearts. God's first language is silence.

Psalms 4, 5, 103:1-5, 121, 130, 131, 139
Proverbs 3:5-6
Jeremiah 29:11
Matthew 6:25-34, 13:31-33
Mark 1:16-20, 6:30-44
Luke 1:46-55, 9:1-6
John 15:1-11, 21:15-19

Romans 8:28-30
I Corinthians 1:3-9
Ephesians 2:10
Colossians 3:12-17
1 Peter 2:9, 21, 5:7
2 Peter 1:3-11

Liturgies for Sending/Receiving

The United Methodist Book of Worship provides [An Order of Farewell to a Pastor](#) (BOW 598) and [An Order for the Celebration of an Appointment](#) (BOW 595). It is strongly encouraged that the Pastor Parish Relations Committee take responsibility for designing and leading these components of worship.

Initial Contact with New Church

1. The District Superintendent will usually introduce the new pastor to the Pastor Parish Relations Committee for a time of getting acquainted and sharing basic information. This is an introduction, not an interview.
2. A mutually convenient time will allow the new pastor to visit the new parsonage (if applicable). A representative of the Pastor Parish Relations Committee and/or Trustees might also visit with the incoming pastor to discuss moving arrangements and other parsonage related details (see #1 under Moving Days 2017).

The District Superintendent will work with the incoming pastor to review the salary support package. The incoming pastor and the chair of Pastor Parish Relations Committee must sign the new pastoral support form. At least 50% of the Professional/Continuing Education expenses should be available to you as the new pastor (and you should ensure that 50% is available to the pastor moving into your current appointment).

3. The chair or a representative of the Pastor Parish Relations Committee could also provide helpful information and resources that are important to new people in the community, i.e., health care, pharmacy, schools, contacts for repairs and services, local media and other services.
4. Any formal meeting, other than the introductory meeting of the Pastor Parish Relations Committee should wait until after the appointment has been officially “fixed” at Annual Conference (June 9-12, 2016) and after the physical move has occurred.

Moving Days 2017

1. The official Last Sunday will be **June 25** and the first Sunday will be **July 2**. Move Out Day will be no later than **Tuesday, June 27** and Move In Day will be **Wednesday, June 28**.

The receiving church is responsible for moving costs for full-time pastors. The incoming pastor should get at least two bids for moving. It is suggested that the moving pastor make the arrangements with the mover only after consultation with the Pastor Parish Relations Chair of the receiving church. Most movers require a certified check or cash BEFORE unloading, so previous arrangements with the church treasurer should be made by the Pastor Parish Relations Committee.

While the church is responsible for basic moving costs (up to \$5,000) of normal household items, it is not responsible for: packing or special handling of extraordinary items (animals, collections, large libraries, exotic birds, etc.). Neither should churches reimburse for meals to or to pay volunteers. The IRS considers these as inappropriate.

Bids for moving by a commercial mover are helpful in making the selection. While there are occasions when U-Haul trucks and volunteer help may be negotiated, it is never appropriate to move household goods in a private stock truck.

2. Pay period for new pastors begins **July 1, 2017**. Pay period for moving pastors ends **June 30, 2017**. All payments due to a moving pastor should be made by that date, even if his/her last

Sunday is the week before. Accommodation should be made by local churches receiving a pastor in a first time appointment.

3. The Annual Conference has fund available for moving expenses for full-time pastors under appointment. Up to **\$1,500** can be reimbursed to churches meeting the guidelines outlined in the Missouri Conference Journal (see 2016 Moving Policy, F41).

Common Moving Courtesies

- Moving is a good time for the local church to have the Pastor Parish Relations and Trustees Chair inspect the parsonage with the present residents at a mutually convenient time. List and arrange to repair all things that require attention.
- Leave a clean, “ready-to-move into” parsonage, the way you would like to find it. If you cannot clean the house yourself, make sure someone has cleaned thoroughly before your successor arrives. Mow the lawn, trim the shrubs and dispose of all trash!
- Leave a list of idiosyncrasies of the house you are leaving. The new residents may need to know where all the hidden switches are, which cabinet doors don’t open, who owns the friendly Great Dane. Note where the water and gas shut-off valves are located and where you keep the garage door opener, hidden keys, etc.
- Make sure the utilities are ON. Utilities should be in the name of the church so that there is no interruption in service or need to pay a deposit.
- Assure continuation of telephone service to the parsonage. You may sign a release at the phone company to allow the new resident to have the same number. The bill will be sent to the new pastor. This allows the listing to be in the pastor’s name.
- Pay all of your bills before leaving or make arrangements to do so. Not to do so reflects upon the ministry and handicaps your successor. There should be at least 50% of your Professional/Continuing Education Expenses remaining in the church budget for the new pastor.
- Damage to the parsonage beyond the normal wear and tear is the responsibility of the outgoing pastor. Pastors will be billed for excessive damage caused by family or pets.
- Plan to be out of the clean house you are leaving no later than **Tuesday, June 27**. This will allow the incoming pastor to tell the mover when to arrive. If this is not possible, make arrangements with the incoming pastor and the District Superintendent well before moving day.

GOOD IDEAS FOR THE MOVE



*Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own insight.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths. -Proverbs 3:5-6*

Good Ideas for a Move³

Before the Move Checklists

Prepare the Way

- Prepare the way for your successor. Help provide him or her with information and introductions to key areas and persons in the life of the church and the community. Begin to prepare the congregation to welcome and receive the new pastor gladly.
- Meet with the new pastor when possible to give an overview of the church's ministry, goals and vision. Utilize the time together to answer questions and share information that will contribute to the health of the church. (Time and resources are limited so it is encouraged to utilize technology creatively such as video calls if meeting in person is not possible.)
- Resist any desire to share information that may prevent the incoming pastor from being free to express his or her own vision for the church. Allow yourself to surrender any unfulfilled dreams you have for your ministry with this particular church so the incoming pastor can find a receptive environment to nurture his or her own dreams.
- Recognize that both of you are colleagues in ministry and both are experiencing a move. Consider how you might mutually support one another.

Who's Who

- Discuss with your successor what you can do to be helpful.
- Remember some new pastors appreciate background on congregational members either from you or a trusted source in the congregation while others want to approach new people with no preconceptions (work this out during your meeting with the new pastor prior to the move).
- Do your best when you are discussing people to provide only necessary information in an unbiased way.
- Do not share information that will not contribute to the health of the church.
- Do not prejudice the incoming pastor by making specific comments about specific members.
- However, do walk through lists of members who may fall into certain pastoral care or at-risk categories (see below).
- Provide a list of churches in the community. Include the pastors' name and phone numbers; highlight the names of those in charge of the ministerial association or those on-call when a pastor is out of town.

Administrative Checklist

The following items should be prepared for the incoming pastor to facilitate a smooth transition. Enroll the assistance of church leaders to spread out the administrative work and to ensure everything is current and in order for the incoming pastor.

Membership & Other Records

- Be sure the membership roll is current and up-to-date.
- Provide a list of all changes to the roll since the last charge conference.
- Provide an accessible record of baptisms and marriages.
- Provide a list (and walk through in detail) any active or former member(s) that has been flagged (e.g., restraining order, no trespass letter, sexual offender covenant, revoked Safe Sanctuaries certification, etc.).

³ Adapted from East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church Commission on Pastoral Care & Counseling, "Move Pack: A Guide for a Good Move for Pastors & Families," (2001).

- Provide pertinent files: Charge Conference records, Year-End reports, record of apportionment payout, etc.

Pastoral Care

- Provide a list of those needing close pastoral care due to serious illness, recent deaths, etc. (Suggest on this list who should be visited during the incoming pastor's first week).
- Make a list of homebound members, phone numbers and addresses. Share if there is a pastoral care plan in place (i.e., Stephen Ministry or lay pastoral care team).
- Provide a list of scheduled weddings requiring premarital counseling.
- Provide a list of area hospitals and nursing homes with their phone numbers and information about how to obtain clergy identification, if needed.
- Provide a list of members in college or in the military. Include addresses and any notes that may be helpful.

Personnel/Church Leadership/Volunteers (non-paid staff)

- Provide names and positions of persons employed by the church and terms of their employment.
- Provide a list of who is responsible for the weekly order of worship/bulletin, newsletter, social media platforms, website, etc.
- Provide a list of governance board leaders.
- Provide a list of Sunday School or small group leaders/teachers, youth leaders/workers, etc.
- Provide a list of individuals available for pulpit supply.
- Provide a list of retired clergy (of any denomination) that may be in the congregation.

Policies

- Leave a copy of all church policies – for child safety (local Safe Sanctuaries policy), building use, weddings, funerals, personnel, etc.
- Leave information in reference to any ongoing arrangements with individuals or groups – AA, Boy or Girl Scouts, etc.

Church Schedule

- Provide a meeting schedule for all governance boards, committees, UMM, UMW, youth, community worship services (e.g., 5th Sunday of the month at the local nursing home), etc.
- Provide dates for events scheduled by the church. Include annual events such as Christmas Bazaar, Soup Kitchen, Mother-Daughter dinners, etc.
- Provide information pertaining to pending legal matters – wills, possible liability situations.
- Provide a list of continuing ecumenical experiences such as community Thanksgiving service with the local churches rotating as host church.

The Church Building

- Leave your set of keys, well identified.
- Provide name(s) and phone numbers of those who open/close the building(s) on Sundays and through the week.
- Put together a file of any warranties, maintenance contracts, and manuals on all office equipment, heating/cooling systems, etc.
- Be sure the pastor's office is cleaned thoroughly and in good repair.
- Leave a list of any maintenance items requiring attention or a schedule of things on the docket.

Parsonage

- Leave a set of keys, well identified.
- Put together a file of all appliance manuals and warranties – refrigerator, dishwasher, washer/dryer, heating/air conditioning unit, etc.
- Identify switches or fuse box circuits.
- Leave your new address and phone number in the parsonage and church office in the event any mail needs to be forwarded to you.
- Consider leaving the incoming pastor a note of welcome that includes your favorite things about the neighborhood and community (e.g., favorite take-out place, best place for frozen yoghurt, nearest movie theater).

After the Move Checklists

- Get settled in your home first before throwing yourself into the work of the church. Work on getting at least one room or section of your living quarters settled.
- Get maps of the local area to begin getting oriented.
- Schedule some drive time to see your new hometown. Stop in some local shops and businesses; tell the people you are new in town and ask what you should check out in the area.
- Subscribe to the local paper if available. Begin to watch for activities that might interest you and your family and would allow you to become acquainted with your new town and perhaps meet some people.
- Be mindful, if you have children, they depend on adults to help them figure out how to adapt to a new environment. Encourage their involvement in the activities and opportunities that include other children or teens.

MAKING THE CHANGE



He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. -1 Corinthians 1:8-9 NRSV

Coping Strategies

Defining Grief⁴

Grief is a process inherent in transition or change. Any pastoral change and move will bring on feelings of grief and loss among the pastor and family, church congregation and community. Understanding how grief may feel to us and how it may express itself in our lives may help us cope with the emotions we will experience.

Types of Grief

Preparatory Grief: Sometimes also referred to as “anticipatory grief,” i.e. “in anticipation of an event which means loss/separation.” Preparatory grief references the possibility of an event—a move—that is likely to be known early in the process only by the pastor, pastor’s family, SPR team, District Superintendent, and Bishop. It is a time of “wondering” if it will happen and if so, what it will be like if and when it does happen.

Intense Grief: An announcement of the event “expected to happen” has occurred. That means loss/separation begins to occur and the pastor, pastor’s family and parishioners’ behavior is affected by the event. There may be open expression of feelings and thoughts which may be positive or negative or of mixed emotions. There may be withdrawal and avoidance as one begins the “grief process” and feelings begin to intensify.

Acute Grief: Experienced during the short time before and after the event of loss/separation. Most of all experiences are for a first or last time, i.e. the last council meeting, last baptism, last worship service, or the first worship service, first meetings. This time and experience is unique in that it overlaps the time before and after the move.

Subsequent Grief: The experience of “mourning” that follows the event of loss/separation. “Mourning” refers to a process of recovery and adjustment to the loss of significant relationships/experiences in one’s life. “Mourning” is a time of regaining control of and stability in emotions. This is an experience of “bringing to closure,” of letting go of what has been and welcoming what is to be.

Grief Work: The “work of grieving” any and all dynamics that inhibit or facilitate those experiences which make for grief resolution.

⁴ Adapted from East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church Commission on Pastoral Care & Counseling, “Move Pack: A Guide for a Good Move for Pastors & Families,” (2001).

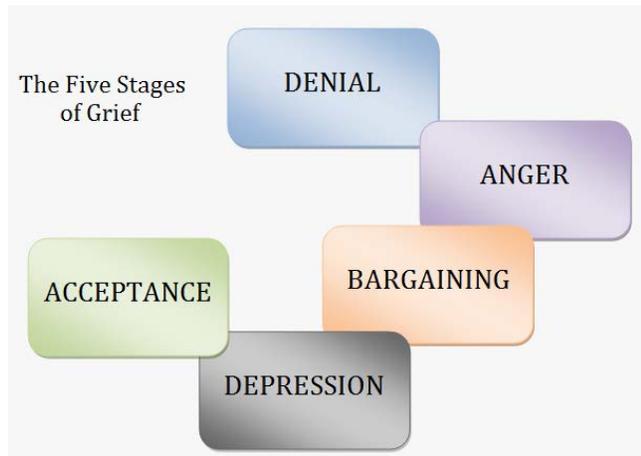
The Stages of Grief by Kübler-Ross

Denial: Characterized by phrases such as, “It’s not true. There must be some mistake!” Even when the pastor has requested the move, some of the dynamic of denial prevails.

Anger: Characterized by phrases such as, “Why me? How could this be happening?” Even when a pastor requests a move, anger is often present in the form of: “How come it had to happen this way?” “Why couldn’t something be done to make it different or better?”

Bargaining: Characterized by phrases such as, “Yes, but...” or “If only I had...” This stage involves the attempt to postpone in our mind the inevitable and may include bargaining with God and with each other. There may be wishful thinking.

Depression: Characterized by phrases such as “Yes, me.” “It really is happening,” and strong feelings of sadness, despair, sense of helplessness. This stage is likely to occur even when people are faced with a change that is positive and perhaps even exciting as well as with a change that is sad and brings clear feelings of loss.



Acceptance: Characterized by words such as, “Yes, me. It’s a real part of life.” This is the time when we have come to terms with the reality of our situation—the reality of saying goodbye in order to say hello.

Grief Awareness

- Moving is a tangible loss so allow yourself to grieve.
- The experience is cyclical and goes back and forth, in and out of the various stages.
- Grief or loss connects us to other times in our lives when we experienced loss. Pay attention to old losses as they may compound your experience of grief.
- How we experience grief can be compared to the waves of the ocean in that we cannot always anticipate how strong or how gentle each wave may be. During this ongoing process of letting go and moving forward, our emotions may be unpredictable to us.
- Goodbye rituals can help you feel and acknowledge the sadness.
- Talk with others about your grief.
- Appreciate and allow for individual styles and timing as members of our personal family and church family process their own grief. This will prevent additional stress and unnecessary pressure. Be careful not to shame anyone in your family system who may not work through the grief as quickly as others might.
- Recognize your busyness is an attempt to avoid dealing with the loss you feel. Be mindful of your grief.
- Healing from a loss or significant change requires time and compassion. Try to be patient with yourself and those around you.

Transition Strategies for Pastors⁵

Take time to process the change and all its pros and cons, real, possible and imagined. Identify possible supports for this journey. Consider the use of a journal to capture feelings, thoughts, and experiences. Give special attention to your spiritual disciplines. Access your support network to help your process grief, feelings and experiences during this transition.

Take time to reflect on your service within your current appointment. Identify areas that you think went well and areas you wish had gone differently. Identify any areas that you would like to grow in during your next appointment.

Provide opportunities to acknowledge the change in your sermons, conversations and in meetings.

- Acknowledge that a change external as in a pastor leaving or the next pastor arriving. A transition is internal, a process that occurs more slowly.

Prepare the congregation for the transition.

- A pastor can utilize some of his or her remaining time to recall some of the high points of ministry.
- A pastor can remind the local church about their focus on the mission of the church that must continue during this transition time as guests will continue to attend.
- Spend time publicly educating the congregation regarding your involvement in the lives of church members after you leave the appointment. Be clear that you will not be returning to the church for visits, weddings, funerals, or other events. By addressing this topic publicly through your words or in notes from you in a newsletter or bulletin, all will be prepared to make a place to welcome their next pastor.
- Educate and support the congregation in the grief process.

Acknowledge the grief process for yourself and your family members.

As you enter your next setting establish clear boundaries related to your schedule, renewal and self-care. Communicate these boundaries with the PPR team.

Additional resources for transition support:

- Utilize the “Good Ideas for a Move” found in this packet on pg. 17-19.
- Utilize “50 Ways to Improve Pastoral Transitions” found in this packet on pg. 24.

⁵ Adapted from East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church Commission on Pastoral Care & Counseling, “Move Pack: A Guide for a Good Move for Pastors & Families,” (2001).

50 Ways to Improve Pastoral Transitions⁶

Pastors moving from one church to the next need to focus on how they can effectively conclude their ministry in the church they are leaving, paving the way for their successor, and on how they can get off to a good start in their next church.

Concluding Ministry in One Setting:

Maintain good successor relations

1. Work with the congregation to prepare the way for your successor.
2. Work with your successor to provide good information about the congregation.
3. Spend significant time with your successor with an agreed-upon agenda.
4. Talk about your successor only in positive terms.
5. Avoid making comparisons between yourself and your successor.

Approach the move with a generous and graceful spirit

6. Share ownership for the move, and avoid blaming others.
7. Avoid making inappropriate use of closure to address unresolved problems.
8. Be gracious to everyone, especially those with whom you have had difficulty.

Provide good records and administrative wrap-up

9. Prepare essential lists for your successor, and be sure important files are up to date.
10. Make sure church bills are paid through the month you leave.
11. Ensure that denominational giving is up to date.
12. Never leave any unpaid personal bills in the community.
13. Do not take church records with you.

Plan for appropriate goodbyes, grief, and closure rituals

14. Provide adequate rituals to mark your leaving and the coming of your successor.
15. Find appropriate ways to say goodbye and grieve with the congregation.
16. Encourage loved ones to grieve the transition, and grieve with them.
17. Grant and ask for forgiveness where needed, and tell the people you love them.
18. Arrange personal visits and write personal notes where appropriate.

Clarify your new relationship with the church

19. Clarify in spoken and written communication your new relationship with the people.
20. Be clear that you will not be returning for pastoral roles.
21. Take time to teach the congregation about closure and boundaries.
22. Affirm love and friendship while releasing persons from pastoral relationships.

Keep working

23. Continue vital ministry, avoid emotional withdrawal, and do not initiate major new programs in the closing months.
24. Settle as many hanging difficulties as possible, including (and especially) staff difficulties.
25. Leave the parsonage and office clean and in order.

⁶ Originally found at Lewis Center's Leading Ideas: <https://www.churchleadership.com/50-ways/50-ways-to-improve-pastoral-transitions-2/>. © Copyright 2015 Lewis Center for Church Leadership. See also: The Right Start video-based training resource for clergy preparing to begin ministry in a new setting. Visit <https://www.churchleadership.com/tag/pastoral-transitions/>.

Beginning Ministry in a New Ministry Setting:

Learn about the new church and community

26. Allow 6–18 months to get to know the people and community.
27. Demonstrate willingness, and make the effort, to learn the history of the congregation.
28. Learn the mission and vision of the congregation and their place in the life of the people.
29. Study data (worship and financial statistics, community demographics, etc.) to understand the church and community.
30. Make careful assessments of strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities.

Spend time with people and build relationships

31. Make building relationships your highest priority, visiting as many people as you can.
32. Visit people with pastoral needs and also those with key leadership responsibilities.
33. Ask everyone you visit to suggest others with whom you should be talking.
34. Meet with the pastoral relations/personnel committee early and regularly.
35. Pay particular attention to pastoral care and preaching.
36. Meet community leaders including other clergy. Be visible in the community.

37. Develop a plan to get to know the people, communicate that plan, and stay faithful to it.

Be cautious about making immediate changes

38. Do not change things at first, especially worship.
39. Listen and observe with an open mind to discover strengths and needs.
40. Earn the right to change things before initiating changes.

Build trust

41. Express joy in being in your new ministry setting.
42. Be authentic, honest, and genuine.
43. Let people get to know you, and allow the congregation time to learn to trust you.
44. Focus on the congregation and its future, not your agenda.
45. If you introduce yourself in writing, have others read what you write to make sure you are not communicating unintended signals.

Honor your predecessor's ministry

46. Do not criticize the former pastor, even if criticism is warranted.
47. Honor the progress and achievements accomplished before you arrived.
48. Assure people it is all right to grieve the loss of their former pastor.
49. Honor traditions long enough to understand the positive motivation behind them.
50. Throughout it all, keep in mind: Avoid talking about your previous congregation. Do not complain, criticize, or make excessive demands. And be patient.

Single Pastor on the Move⁷

As a single person the details related to moving are for you to decide. For some, this may feel overwhelming so identify ways you can manage the possible stress by adequately planning and preparing ahead of time. You may be the first single pastor to your new church or you may be one of several single pastors to serve the church. If you are the first single pastor, be prepared to educate the congregation about the needs of a single person rather than a pastor with a spouse or family. Recognize that some congregations may need time to adjust to not having things the way they were before.

Leaving

- Acknowledge your grief as legitimate and allow space to work through the process. Face all the feelings of saying goodbye to people, places, and things in your current environment.
- Good bye rituals can help you acknowledge the loss and sadness.
- Get acquainted with the new area prior to the move by exploring online articles of the town, subscribing to local newspaper, viewing school websites, identifying local places of interests.
- Invite friends or family members to help you pack.

Arriving

- Invite individuals to help you get settled in your new setting.
- Invite people when you are ready to visit or meet for coffee or dinner. Building relationships and becoming familiar with your surroundings will increase your comfort in your new surroundings.
- Create good boundaries for your life. Ministry is a people business but save a piece of life for yourself. Remember to nurture and care for yourself.
- Create social outlets and support networks outside of the church. Building relationships and friendships outside the church is important for all clergy.
- Educate the church members that not every single person is looking for a date. Help your members realize privacy and a personal life is a vital part of an individual's life.

⁷ Ibid.

Family on the Move⁸

Members of the family may have similar or different feelings about moving. It is important to be aware that reactions to a move may surface upon hearing the news, during the move or months after the move. While you may have no experience or multiple experiences in moving, each time you move is unique as it occurs in this season of your life. You may be newly married, with children or children have grown and aren't making the move with you. You may be moving from rural setting to the suburbs. As a family. You may be searching for a home or moving into a parsonage. Whatever the case, significant change is ahead of you. Pay attention to feelings and encourage one another. Be empathetic to one another as this can be a stressful time for all family members. Remember that all members of a family grieve but do not all grieve in the same way and in the same time frame. It is important to allow each member to grieve in his or her own way about the move.

Supportive Suggestions for Supporting Spouses

- Acknowledge your spouse's feelings about the move and provide time for conversations about the upcoming changes for the family. Feelings about the move may differ between pastor and spouse.
- Support your spouse in feelings associated with leaving a job or finding a new job.
- Spouses will need space for grief work related to leaving a familiar space, leaving friendships and possibly leaving a job.
- After the move, continue conversations with your spouse to explore reactions to the move.
- Acknowledge any anxiety your spouse may experience about finding a place in the new church.
- As a pastor in a new appointment you will be filled with anticipation and will want to get involved quickly. Take time to build a home with your spouse and/or family. In the first few months be intentional in spending time at home and engaged in activities with your family to support the transition.

Supportive Suggestions for Moving with Children and Teens

- Have family meetings to talk through feelings, details of the move. Children may not voice many feelings but still provide them a space to share. Teens may be more vocal about their feelings. Listen without trying to fix things.
- Be patient and supportive through your words, gestures and actions.
- Share with the personnel at school that you will be moving so they can provide support to your children/teens and inform you of any changes in behavior.
- Visit the local library for resources about moving if you have children. Reading books together about moving can help family members identify feelings and can also initiate helpful family discussions.
- Be aware that children and teens vary in their reactions to grief and change.
 - Some possible reactions include: Behavioral changes, irritability, isolation, withdrawal, sadness, crying, clingy, inattention, somatic complaints, disrupted sleep or appetite
- Provide education about using coping skills and encourage your children/teens to use them.
- Give the children/teens an opportunity to help pack and create travel plans for any family pets.
- Provide a space for children/teens to celebrate friendships and say goodbye. Identify a plan for staying in touch with friends.

⁸ Ibid.

- Moving during middle school and high school brings its own unique challenges. This time in a teen's life is typically full of changes due to social maturity, puberty and emotional development. These typical challenges along with grief related to moving can increase stress levels for everyone.
- Visit the new school as soon as possible. Request a tour of the building and meet some of the staff. Identify the activities, sports, and clubs that are available to participate in. Allow your children/teens to ask questions.
- Help your children/teens get engaged in activities that he/she enjoy by researching prior to the move. On a visit to the new community, plan a visit to observe or participate in the activity to help with the transition.
- Provide social support in meeting new people. Practice a social interaction of meeting and greeting. Teach them questions to ask in getting to know another person. If you have shy child/teen this suggestion is especially important.
- Be mindful if your family has made multiple moves. Family members will associate previous experiences of moving to the current situation. Encourage them to be open to this experience and that the preparation for the move will support a smoother transition.
- Seek professional counseling if depression, withdrawal, or family problems begin to feel unmanageable.

Healthy Ways to Care for Self⁹⁹

During this time of transition, as a pastor you will experience many areas that can seem overwhelming at times and your ability to maintain healthy coping skills will influence your well-being. You will experience the general stress related to moving yourself and/or family. You will feel the pressure to prepare your congregation for the pastoral change. You will exhibit concern about your family members and their reactions to the move. And finally your own excitement and anticipation about the next appointment will be present. Maintaining a focus on healthy coping skills will be important during the transition time.

Physical

- Maintain good patterns for eating, sleeping, exercise and movement
- Maintain your daily or weekly routines during the transition time
- Identify and use stress reducers and if you don't have any create some
 - i.e. walking, journaling, listening to music, meditation

Emotional

- Acknowledge any and all feelings as they occur
- Identify a safe support network that you can have regular interactions with during the transition time

Psychological

- Identify thoughts about self and the work you have accomplished
- Identify expectations that you are setting for yourself in your next appointment

Spiritual

- Identify your spiritual practices and maintain them even when there are extra demands on your time
- Have regular conversations with a colleague, mentor or coach

⁹⁹ Amy Thompson, LCSW.

Self-Care Considerations

My Covenant for Balancing Ministry and Family/Friendships

- 1.) I will reserve time each day for personal devotions and exercise.
- 2.) I will be attentive to my own feelings of grief and possible disappointment that accompany the transition into my new ministry setting.
- 3.) I will have regular family meetings or discussion with significant friends about the ongoing transitions in our daily life.
- 4.) I will identify helpful resources and spiritual counseling needed for dealing with personal issues and stresses on the journey.
- 5.) I will schedule a time for rest and renewal with loved ones, both planned and unplanned.
- 6.) I will develop clear expectations with my ministry setting about what I need as a single person or married person for good self-care.
- 7.) I will remember that my family/friends are not appointed to the church: I will plan sacred times for myself and others. If I have a spouse/children, I will plan key times to be attentive to them. I will be aware of what seasons will require more of my time.
- 8.) I will look for ways to show my love and appreciation to my family and friends who know me best.
- 9.) I will build and surround myself with healthy friendships that help me to reflect “best practices.”
- 10.) I will laugh a lot with those dear to me and enjoy silent moments. I will not lose sight of opportunities with them, even with limited finances, and seek to grow spiritually together inwardly and outwardly.
- 11.) I will be the first to say “I am sorry” and “forgive me” when I have laid all my stuff on someone else because I am mad at the church or the system.
- 12.) I will reclaim continually my call to serve with visions and dreams and to respond to the needs of loved ones and the church with excellence.

The Church's Responsibility for Pastoral Care

The local church, beginning with the Board, needs to recognize their own responsibility in protecting the mental, emotional, and spiritual health of their pastor. Consider exploring additional training on Clergy Professional Boundaries at www.moumethodist.org/boundariesPPRC.

- The budget should include provision for him/her to attend one or two conference or retreats each year where the pastor can find refreshment and renewal. This should be in addition to regular vacation time, not part of it.
- Respect of the pastor's study time. Apart from an emergency, she/he should be allowed to have undisturbed blocks of time to prepare for preaching and teaching. If the pastor is weak in preaching the whole church will suffer.
- Don't demand more from the pastor than she/he can give. Pastors are human and imperfect. Pastors need your prayers and encouragement as much as you need theirs. Understand that she/he can't please everyone, and sometimes the person the pastor won't please will be you!
- Consider granting the pastor a formational and spiritual growth leave or a sabbatical (See ¶¶350, 352). Associate members or clergy members in full connection who have been serving in a full time appointment for six consecutive years, or in a less than full-time appointment equivalent to six consecutive full-time years, may be granted time away (not including regular vacation time) to seek spiritual and mental refreshment, do research or writing, travel, or pursue other activities that will "disconnect" for a time from the routine demands of ministry and provide a time for renewal. Whenever possible, the compensation level of the last appointment served before the leave should be maintained. Even Jesus realized the importance of stepping away from the ministry for a time.
- It is important for the Pastor Parish Relations team to know the pastor's schedule and support the pastor in maintaining the schedule. The pastor should have time in the schedule for sermon preparation, time in the office, time in the community and Sabbath time. Support your pastor in having some evenings during the week at home with family or with self. See also the Pastor Parish Relations Guide found in this packet on pg. 69.
- Have conversations with the pastor about self-care habits. Supporting these practices helps protect the mental, emotional and physical well-being of the pastor. A healthy pastor is essential for having a healthy congregation.

Suggestions for the First Week

- Show Up and Move In! Live in the mission field.
- Dedicate one day **during the first week** to visiting the most critical homebound or ill parishioners.
- Hold initial meeting with the Transition Team.
- Finish preparations for the listening tour (“get acquainted meetings”) – coordinating your calendar with the plans the transition team or PPRC has made for in-home listening sessions.
- Work with PPRC to organize the listening tour organize; meet the pastor, coffee’s etc. Consider the following questions to ask:
 1. What do you like best about your church?
 2. What are your dreams for the future?
 3. What would you not want changed?
 4. What do you like least about your church?
 5. If you were the new pastor, what would you do in the first three months?
- Meet with governance board and/or individual church leaders to begin learning their roles in the church.
- Set a regular pattern of staff meetings. Discover their current learning pathway and commit to regular time for prayer and scripture study together.
- Work with staff to or prepare order of worship for the next Sunday.

The First 100 Days

The first 100 days in a new appointment is a crucial time in the change-over zone. The Cabinet encourages all transitional pastors to set aside time prior to your move for a time of dedicated prayer about your new appointment. During your discernment, develop a 100-day plan.

How will you get to know your staff and your congregation?

How will you get to know your community (e.g., school superintendent, chamber of commerce officials, mayor, city council officials, police and first responders)?

What are you going to preach for the first 100 days? What are the key messages? Help your congregation get to know who you are and what you believe. Show some passion.

First 30 days: Learning and Building Personal Credibility (by: July 31)

- Get settled into your home and tending to your family's transition needs.
 - Get settled into your office and setting your routine work week.
 - Host an initial conversation with church leaders (PPRC, Lay Leader(s), Chairperson of the governance board/administrative board/church council, finance chair and/or trustee chair) regarding the current state of affairs of the church and their understanding of the immediate priorities.
 - Build high-priority relationships with leaders, influencers, those with immediate pastoral care needs, and those in the community.
 - Establish a 3-month preaching schedule.
 - Plan out the next year's PPRC schedule (it is suggested that the PPRC and pastor meet monthly for at least the first six months).
 - Begin the Listening Tour (re-read chapter 10 in *The Change-Over Zone* about establishing a listening tour). Bishop Farr's suggested questions for these meetings (See also pg. 10 in *The Necessary Nine*):
 1. What do you like best about your church?
 2. What are your dreams for the future?
 3. What would you not want changed?
 4. What do you like least about your church?
 5. If you were the new pastor, what would you do in the first three months?
 - Spend time with each staff member to get to know them personally, their ministry role, and hopes and challenges in their role. Review any staff evaluations or professional development plans (if none, begin work on establishing that process for each staff member).
 - Discover the church's stated and unstated vision for ministry.
 - Assess the style of leadership, you need to bring to the congregation.
 - Assess the congregation's health in the area of generosity. Learn the giving patterns of the church and the cultural approach to stewardship and giving. Set the period of time for a generosity campaign.
 - It's never too early to begin thinking about upcoming Invite Sundays (e.g., Promotion Sunday, Back-to-School kick-off Festival, Advent Season). What teams and leaders do you need to engage in this work?
 - Are there any "early wins" – areas that you can resolve to help cement your role as a leader? Early successes might include: _____
-

Other: _____

Second 30 Days: Seeking Some Early Wins (by August 31)

- Assess your first 30 Days. Discuss your progress with key lay leadership and submit a brief update to your DS as part of your “managing up” plan.
- Any items from the first 30 days that need to be carried over?
- Assess your team (Lay Leadership and Staff) and determining how you will lead them.
- Analyze your early judgments about the congregation for accuracy and adjusting your leadership style to your emerging understanding of the situation.
- Identify key leaders in the community. Set up times to meet with them for coffee as an introduction – ask them to assist you in learning the community. Bishop Farr’s suggested questions for these meetings:
 1. What are the needs of the community?
 2. What could our church do to be helpful?
 3. What do you know about the United Methodist Church?
- Identify an important issue that you can address that will have a tremendous impact on the congregation and their perception of your leadership if you deal appropriately with it.
- Work on ways to communicate the vision of the church and keep it before the congregation.
- Any other priorities for the second 30 days?
- Any other “early wins/successes”?
- Other: _____

Third 30 Days: Refine, Identify, Develop, and Assess (by September 30)

- Assess your first 60 days. Submit a brief update to your DS.
- Any items from the first 60 days that need to be carried over?
- Casual follow-up with the key leaders visited in the first 30 days. Ask for honesty from them in their assessment of how things are going? Any immediate concerns that need to be addressed?
- Identify resource challenges.
- Any strategies arising for finance, budgeting, connectional giving nominations, structure, and staffing?
- Have conversation with the PPRC re: personnel development.
- Establish another 3-month preaching schedule. Engage music and worship ministries in clarifying plans for Advent and Christmas worship. Set your Christmas Eve/Christmas worship times for evangelism and publicity purposes.
- Any other priorities from the second 30 days?
- Any other “early wins/successes”?
- Other: _____

First Year Priorities When Pastors Move¹⁰

By Ralph C. Watkins on April 13, 2011 [Leading Ideas](#)

How does a pastor gain a congregation's trust? How does a pastor warrant their respect? These are lessons I have learned through my own experiences with pastoral transitions.

For the first year or so of ministry, the priority must lie in being active in the life of the church by being present and actively engaging in developing this new relationship.

Presence

As a pastor becomes a part of the congregation, the pastor must guard his or her schedule to make time for congregants. The community will call, denominational loyalties will call, but for the first year or so of ministry, the priority must lie in being active in the life of the church by being present and actively engaging in developing this new relationship. This may mean that there will be an imbalance during that first year as the pastor focuses on building a relationship with the congregation. The pastor has to schedule time to be with members; visit the older saints; conduct funerals, weddings, and baptisms; offer counseling; touch the people before and after worship. This is intense relationship work that can't be done if the pastor is absent. This is emotional work that takes time and energy. There are no short-cuts; there are no substitutions for the pastor's consistent and engaged presence.

Preaching and Worship

New pastors must make preaching a priority. A key role of the shepherd of any flock is feeding the flock. The new pastor should be the lead preacher and should have the right to decide who preaches and when. During that first year, the new pastor needs to preach as many Sundays as he or she can handle. As the pastor makes preaching a priority, the congregation must give him or her time to prepare. Study and preparation are critical to quality preaching. The pastor who is overbooked and doesn't have time to prepare will not be able to preach effectively. In the African American tradition, preaching is central to the role and duties of our pastors. We expect a well-prepared word and a word that is delivered well.

Teaching

New pastors must take time to teach God's Word outside of the Sunday worship experience. The weekly Bible study is not just about the Word of God; it is also about relationships. Bible study tends to be a much smaller group than most churches see on Sunday. It is a time for the pastor to touch the people outside the pressures of Sunday and get to know them. This act of relationship-building leads to the new pastor caring for the people, praying with them, visiting them, and walking with them through their good times and bad times. In addition to Bible study, the pastor can also think about other teaching moments. Pastors can visit choir rehearsals and ministry meetings and share a word.

Pastoral Care

During that first year, the relationship between the pastor and the congregation will intensify through intentional acts of love manifested via pastoral care. Pastoral care is simply caring for the people: calling and seeing about the people in times of tragedy, celebrating with the people in times

¹⁰ This article is adapted from *Leading Your African American Church through Pastoral Transition* by Dr. Watkins, copyright © 2010 by Judson Press. Used by permission of [Judson Press](#) and available from [Amazon](#) and [Cokesbury.com](#)

of joy. New pastors have to show the congregation that they care. It is one thing for a pastor to have a good heart and quite another for that pastor to let folk know he or she loves them. When a congregation knows that their new pastor loves them, and that pastor has shown that love through tangible acts of caring, it will go a long way in moving the transition along. The new pastor has to remember that what makes the former pastor's legacy so long is relationship.

Organization and Administration

The new pastor must be brought up to speed on where the organizational structure of the church is and where it is going. People are looking to the pastor to lead and order the church. A new pastor must first know what was and what is, and then must decide with his or her leaders what ought to be. A good administrator is not birthed, but rather is made by paying attention to what is going on, seeking answers to questions, and sharing leadership with knowledgeable people who can cover the new pastor's weaknesses and make the work of the ministry happen. The new pastor has to balance the administrative task of the church in such a way that it points the church toward its future.

Leave the Old Church Behind

New church pastors must accept that they are not the pastor at the old church anymore. A minister can't pastor two churches. The new pastor has to pour his or her energies into the new congregation. Let the old church go. Don't take calls or entertain complaints about the successor. Don't go back and do funerals. At some point, the new pastor needs to walk with the members through times of grief as part of pastoral care. The principle here is simple: move on, and let the people go, and help them move on. A pastor can't move on and the former congregation can't move on if the pastor doesn't move out.

COMMUNICATION



*For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life. —Ephesians 2:10 NRSV*

Communication

Leaving Well¹¹

By Lovett H. Weems, Jr.

If you will be moving to a new congregation this summer, keep in mind the importance of ending your ministry well at your current location. It is easy to shift one's thinking and emotional energy to the anticipated new congregation and neglect some key elements of leaving well and preparing the way for your successor. Most mistakes clergy make in their last months before moving are not intentional but the result of oversight from not planning carefully for leaving.

Many clergy do not have an adequate plan for their leaving. This can leave a feeling of incompleteness for the pastor and congregation.

Remember that the primary goal of the transition is the continuing faithful witness of the congregation in which you have invested much energy. There is an important dimension of the leaving time that is about you — in that people want to express appreciation for your ministry. But you will want to find every opportunity possible to receive their thanks graciously while reframing what is happening as God's ongoing purpose for the congregation.

Many clergy do not have an adequate plan for their leaving. This can leave a feeling of incompleteness for the pastor and congregation. One also wants to be very careful not to do things in the closing months that will undermine one's overall ministry there or make the entry of a new pastor difficult.

Communicate

There can never be too much communication during times of change. Give people information and then do it again and again. The pastor does not need to do all the communicating, but the pastor needs to ensure that such generous information sharing is taking place.

Adhere to all denominational protocols and timelines, but do not be content to think that just because "the change was announced" or "a letter went out," the task of communication has ended.

Find multiple ways to give people information they will need to understand and to interpret to others the upcoming change.

You will want to give special attention to some persons with whom you will plan to have personal conversations to express thanks and discuss the transition. For some you may want to prepare personal letters of appreciation. Who are the persons that need particular consideration because of close personal relationships, extraordinary service, or key current or past roles within the congregations? Who are the people with whom your relationship has often been difficult and troubled — and you would not want to leave without some kind of personal communication?

For the congregation as a whole, find multiple ways to say in speech and writing your thanks for how much they have meant to you. Always lift up positive things from your tenure, even if there have been unhappy or rocky periods. Share ownership for the move and for your church's polity.

¹¹ *Leading Ideas*, May 21, 2008.

Do not blame others for the move or use closure to get back at others; be gracious to all. Clarify in spoken and written communication your new relationship with the congregation. Define what is over and what is not.

Also think of communicating with public and community leaders. They often do not have access to the information shared within the congregation. Make sure that ecumenical and community partners know what is happening. Tell them about your successor. You might also serve as a linking person in connecting the new pastor and key community leaders.

Mark the Endings

It is particularly important to find ways to mark the endings that are taking place. Rituals, ceremonies, and litanies that mark occasions of celebration and goodbye are essential for all. It is important to capture the significance of what is happening by acknowledging what has been accomplished, what is changing, and what lies ahead. Such services create common experiences that make it easier for everyone to move forward.

One component can be your final message as pastor. George B. Thompson, Jr., provides some suggested themes for consideration (*How to Get Along with Your Church: Creating Cultural Capital for Doing Ministry*, Pilgrim, 129).

- Accomplishment — “See what God has done in our midst!”
- Affirmation — “You continue to be God’s people.”
- Anticipation — “Behold, God is making all things new.”

William Bridges, in his work on transitions, has noted how important it is to give careful attention to such markings. “Most *un*successful transitions start with failing to handle the ending well,” he says, in that such endings rarely get the thought and planning they need. (*The Way of Transition*, Da Capo, 144-145)

The Metaphor: Passing the Baton

The Missouri Cabinet has embraced the ideas found in Jim Ozier and Jim Griffith's book *The Change-Over Zone: Successful Pastoral Transitions* (Abingdon Press, 2016). Whether planned or not, every pastoral transition ends up being an example of passing the baton (as in relay races in track & field sporting events). In itinerant ministry, each pastor is a member of a cosmic relay team passing the responsibilities of shepherding a congregation to another member of the relay team.

It is the Bishop's expectation that pastors leaving an appointment will be cooperative in all pastoral transitions.

One of the images of a pastoral transition is that of "passing the baton." A baton will be given to the next pastor and PPRC at the introductory meeting – and the DS will ask that the baton be placed on the altar. YOU, as the current pastor, can help with the transition by weekly referring to the baton.



We encourage you to embrace the imagery of the baton during the period of the change-over zone – the time from the announcement of your departure through the first 100 days of the incoming pastor's tenure. Keep in mind the following:

- We live in a world where we cannot afford to possess an attitude about pastoral transitions that "we will get through it." Rather, we know that those new to our community and guests to our community during this time have no allegiance and may turn to alternative options or even give up on finding a faith community. Therefore, we need to believe that pastoral change is a time to grow the church.
- Saying goodbye to the outgoing pastor and saying hello to the incoming pastor is for the congregation and in particular, for the first time guests who may visit during this period.
- We believe that there is an opportunity to accelerate growth during the change-over zone and that hinges on how successful the outgoing and incoming pastors are in transferring the relationships of the congregation to one another.
- Embracing this attitude requires a culture change including changing the historical approach to pastoral transitions. This change requires increased communication between the outgoing and incoming pastors and a coordinated effort to ensure the successful transition.

Ideas for Using the Baton

- When the PPRC chair makes the announcement in worship, use the baton, describing the time as a "change-over zone" and how the metaphor of the relay race exchange is how we will approach this time of pastoral transition.
- Lay the baton on the altar, sharing that we will be praying during this time of transition so that the incoming pastor appointed by the Bishop and the Cabinet will be a good fit for the church's mission and vision.
- One week you might pick up the baton and remind people that their next pastor needs the church's prayers, and pray for the pastor and the pastor's family.
- One week you might pass the baton around the sanctuary during worship, and ask each person to hold the baton and offer a silent prayer. This will allow you to tell the incoming pastor on

their first Sunday that everyone in our congregation has prayed over this baton and for our “change-over zone” that we might grow through this time of change.

- One week you (or a leader working with the children or youth) might take the baton to Sunday School or youth group, and talk to the kids or youth about the new pastor, and then ask everyone to pray for the new pastor with their hands on the baton. The leader of that class could share that experience in worship.
- One week you might invite the youth group to paint the baton as their contribution.
- One week take the baton on some shut-in visits, telling them about their next pastor, and inviting them to be part of “handing off the baton” by touching it, and tell that story in worship.
- Hold the baton during a children’s sermon, talking about you leaving and their next pastor coming, and that this baton will be sitting on the altar for the next pastor. The homebound and children of the congregation are two groups often left out of the conversation when there is a pastoral change. This is a key opportunity to “grow through the change” rather than to simply “get through it.”
- Have the outgoing pastor write a note and insert it into the baton for the incoming pastor that can be read or shared publically (private notes should be left in a different capacity).
- Make sure the baton is a part of your First Sunday with the incoming pastor. Incorporate it into the worship service. You can adapt the welcome service from the *United Methodist Book of Worship* (See “An Order for the Celebration of an Appointment” on pg. 595 of the *BOW*) to include the baton as part of the presentation of symbols. You might say something like:
 “*Name*, receive this baton as a symbol of our hopes and plans for the future, and lead us during this time of transition so we might continue to grow in our love of Christ, one another and the world. **Amen.**”
- Invite the pastor, and the pastor’s spouse/family, to visit the community and church several different times.
- Take the new family to the schools, introduce them around, and assist in the registration process
- Introduce to key leaders in the church and community
- Introduce the staff (because your staff are going to be anxious about their new boss and church members are going to be anxious for their staff)
- PLEASE help those who ask understand that their next pastor is waiting to attend any business meetings until that person is their next pastor officially. Explain that the next pastor is spending these weeks simply getting to know people and learn culture, before weighing in on any decisions.

Have *fun* with the transition:

- Take a selfie of you and the next pastor; post on social media and show in worship
- Record a short video of you and the next pastor together – you could say how glad you are that... is coming to the church as their next pastor
- Urge PPRC to think about how they will welcome the pastor on moving day – and to think about that first Sunday and greeting the new pastor as s/he picks up the baton
- Mirror your electronic and social media announcements to that of the public announcement in worship. Consider using video (this can be done cheaply and easily on most smartphones) to help bring the metaphor off the baton to life. At the very list, take a photo of the baton and insert into the announcement.

It's a Matter of Ethics

In Missouri, we are trying to encourage a change in the culture that invites more conversation, engagement and coordination in pastoral transitions. This work is primarily done prior to the new appointive year. There may be occasion for the new pastor to consult with the previous pastor on matters related to orientation and onboarding, but this is done at the request of the incoming pastor.

Once a new pastor comes to an appointment, they are afforded all the rights and responsibilities of the office. This means the pastor has left the previous appointment and turned that ministry over to a new pastor.

It is not ethical for a pastor to return to a previous appointment to conduct weddings or funerals or to take part in an ongoing function of the church or perform pastoral functions. A former pastor may participate in weddings or funerals **ONLY** at the initiation and direct invitation of the pastor in charge.

It is helpful for the laity to assist in the adjustment of the new pastor by not asking the former pastor to return, except as a friend or visitor.

Sermon Ideas for the Change-Over Zone

From *First and Last Words: Preaching in the Midst of Transition* by Robert Kaylor¹²

1. Make it a message about new beginnings.

I have developed a pattern of using the text of Abram's call in Genesis 12 as a paradigm for ending and starting a new pastorate. In fact, I have preached nearly the exact same sermon on both my first and last Sundays since the principles still apply. Genesis 12 is the text that begins the whole traveling narrative of the Bible and sets the tone for the story that is to come. God calls Abram to go on a journey where the destination is uncertain and, because he faithfully goes, God blesses him so that he and his family will be a blessing to the whole world. The church I am leaving is going on a journey into the unknown, and so is the one to whom I have come. We have been called to journey together: to be blessed so that we can be a blessing to our community and to the world. All that God requires of us is faith and the willingness to take the first step. So, when God calls, we haul, even if that means we leave behind the familiar and step into the new and the strange.

I often wonder if Abram was afraid to take that first step, but did it anyway. As I stand in front of a congregation full of faces that I do not yet know, I know that I always feel a little bit anxious. "Is anyone feeling a little scared this morning?" I asked a congregation on my first Sunday. When they raised their hands I was relieved that I was not the only one! In spite of our fear in the midst of uncertainty, we recognize that God has called us to the journey together. If I'm leaving, the same fear applies as both pastor and congregation wonder what's next. A good transition will help us get over that fear because the more we walk together on the journey, the more we will see it as a blessing that has come to us and will work through us.

2. Turn the congregation toward the future.

"The past is never dead," wrote William Faulkner. "It's not even past." If I've been serving a congregation for a long time, we have a past together and the congregation to which I'm going also has a past without me. It's tempting to dwell on those pasts and while they're never dead, a transition happens best when both congregation and pastor take the best of their pasts and turn them toward a mutually fulfilling future. A good transition sermon will focus on the new thing God will do in the life of both pastor and congregation. Notice that Jesus' own farewell discourse in John is less about where they've been together but about the future they will share because of God's resurrecting and renewing power. Paint a picture of your hopes and dreams for the congregation. Give them a glimpse of the Promised Land that looms over the horizon. God told Abram that the land toward which he was walking would be a place of multiplied blessings. Give people a sense of what life will be like when they keep walking in obedience to God.

3. Share some of yourself and how God has brought you to this place.

The final sermon is a chance for you to express what God has been teaching you during your time together as pastor and congregation. How have you grown? How have they blessed you? Share your heart and thanksgiving for the worship, work, and witness you have done together. Even if your tenure has been a rocky one, there is always something to bless and something to learn.

¹² <http://www.seedbed.com/first-and-last-words-preaching-in-the-midst-of-transition/>

If it's your first sermon in new church, however, you will want to share some of your story and about some of the twists and turns of God's grace that have brought you to this place. Yes, you can share the story of your call to ministry one more time! More specifically, express your excitement about the call of God to this particular place of ministry. Remember, the sermon is not primarily about you, just like Abram's call wasn't the result of his stellar resume, but it is an opportunity to share why you believe God has brought you together for such a time as this.

Preaching your first and last words to a congregation is both a privilege and an opportunity. Bless your people so that whether you are coming together or coming apart, you will both be a blessing!

Sermon Ideas for the First 100 Days

In Jim Ozier and Jim Griffith's *The Change-Over Zone: Successful Pastoral Transitions*, they outline seven strategic components of preaching throughout the first three months of a new appointment.

1. Introduce yourself and your family in real-life vignettes (this should occur over time in multiple sermons).
2. Include **humor** as a way to get through resistance and anxiety.
3. Reveal your heart and passion.
4. Demonstrate your character, personality and professionalism.
5. Share favorite scriptures and how you apply the Bible to daily life.
6. Lift up community history and values to connect with the congregation.
7. Indicate how much you care about your new church and are excited to be here.

“Every sermon delivered in the first one hundred days must contain humor...Laughter is good for the heart, and group laughter is good for the group...laughter brings life and hope and begins to set the tone for other interactions the congregation will have with the incoming pastor.”

~Ozier and Griffith, *The Change-Over Zone*, p. 81

Preach a sermon series that sets the framework for your ministry:

1. Start with your faith story.
2. Outline your personal mission statement.
3. Work through your favorite scripture text.
4. Work through what you think an effective church looks like.

See also Bob Farr and Kay Kotan's *The Necessary Nine* (Abingdon Press, 2016), Ch. 8 “Preach and Worship Well”

Clergy and Social Media Ethics

- Say goodbye with grace
- Be gracious in telling the truth
- Be gracious in recalling the good times
- Be gracious in pastoral care
- Be gracious in dealing with conflict
- Be gracious in expressing thankfulness
- Be gracious with your family
- Be gracious to yourself with your emotions
- Transitions are made easier through transparency
- Outline clear expectation and boundaries
- Follow the “orthodox” traditions of distance
- No presiding at weddings or funerals without the express permission of the following pastor).
- Don’t forget ¶2702.1.7 (relationships and/or behavior that undermines the ministry of another pastor).
- Think with intentionality about how to build healthy distances.
- Think intentionally about your approach to social media including: friend lists, privacy settings, unfollowing, unfriending, removing previous church from Newsfeed, and family communications. If you need technical advice on how to approach your social media presence during the transition, consider checking out: <http://hackingchristianity.net/?p=7626>

3 Simple Rules for Social Media

Social Media Guidelines for The Missouri United Methodists



DO NO HARM

One of the benefits of social media is that it provides the opportunity to share views, thoughts, joys and concerns about all areas of life. Our social media contributions can be very effective tools for ministry if we are careful to apply caution before we post. We will be careful that our posts are not “doing harm” by insulting or damaging the reputation of others. We will make sure our posts are respectful and in good taste. And we remember: Everything we post—status updates, comments, tweets, blogs—becomes public immediately after we click “send” (even if we’re using a limited access setting). We can’t take it back once it’s out there, so we will use discernment with everything we post.

TO THINK ABOUT: Is the post “doing harm” to the reputation of the church, Christ or another person or organization?

Can the post be interpreted as harmful, offensive, rude or distasteful?

If using the post as an outlet to vent, is there a more productive, less public way to do so?

DO GOOD

Social media is one of the most effective methods of church networking and communicating today. When used properly, it can have a significant encouraging influence on our readers and become a powerful tool for delivering the Gospel message to a large audience that extends beyond our contact list. It is a great tool for networking and providing the world with news about our church and ministry. It also is a very useful tool for obtaining feedback and ideas from our audience and can be used to gain insight for sermons, Bible study topics, worship times, needs of the community, etc. The “good” and positive uses of social media are endless.

TO THINK ABOUT: Can the post be described as “good”?

Will it help the Kingdom and fellow believers? How will it be perceived by non-believers? How will the post be received by people with different cultural or faith backgrounds?

Are we communicating effectively by asking questions in addition to providing information?

STAY IN LOVE WITH GOD

Social media is a great way to find meaningful devotional materials, thought provoking blogs, inspiring worship videos and media resources, and current articles and tools for our ministry. Users have reported that their social media usage helps keep them informed and enthusiastic about their ministry on a daily basis. While it can definitely help us “stay in love with God,” it also can be very distracting. We will make sure our use of social media does not occupy so much of our time that we are no longer participating in meaningful Bible study, devotional times, worship and conversations with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Social media can serve as a tool to aid, promote and conduct discussions, studies and devotional times, but should not be our primary source of interaction with the world.

TO THINK ABOUT: How is/can social media helping me to stay in love with God? How is it hindering me?

How am I helping others stay in love with God by my social media contributions?

REMEMBER

Our character and faith is reflected in each post we make, so if we are not sure about something, we won't post it.

Social Media Guidelines

Social Media and Pastoral Moves

By Thomas G. James And Lovett H. Weems, Jr. On June 4, 2014 Leading Ideas

What should pastors do about their social media relationships when they move from one pastoral assignment to another? Do you “unfriend” all former members on Facebook and “unfollow” them on Twitter? After all, members in the church you are leaving may be watching to see if you post affectionate notes about your new church. You might find yourself curious about what your former members have to say about your departure or your successor. And people in your new church may monitor how you interact with your former members, as might the new pastor of the church you are leaving.

With sensitivity and conversations, we can honor our past ministry and relationships while honoring the colleagues following us as well.

As with the changes that take place in your personal relationships, social media changes are dictated by several factors including the nature of the relationships, the boundaries that you have already established, and a good healthy dose of common sense.

Avoid overusing social media during a transition. One simple way to ease your shift into a different set of social media relationships is to scale back your social media use during your transition. Posting frequent status updates, liberally commenting on other people’s posts, or “liking” everything on your homepage can easily become a distraction and waste time when your attention needs to be elsewhere. Keeping a “low profile” on social media may be the simplest way to manage the many different relational dynamics at play in a time of transition.

Don’t rely on social media to get to know your new congregants. Social media is designed for staying in touch with others, not as a primary avenue for developing new personal relationships. Use social media as a supplementary way of keeping up to date with people, but never as a substitute for face-to-face ministry.

Manage social media contacts in the church you are leaving. Some moving pastors choose to “unfriend” everyone from their former church, eliminating the temptation to continue to act as their pastor. Another alternative is to move previous church members to a list with limited access to your profile. People on this list would not be able to see new wall posts or pictures of your life in the new church. Advanced settings on Facebook permit you to create sub-lists for different categories of friends and set different levels of access to organize Facebook friends into different groups to receive different posts. In addition to grouping people by past and current congregations, you may also want to create other groupings for family or classmates from high school, college, or seminary. Whichever option you choose, it is important to state clearly in advance how you will handle this transition to avoid hurt feelings. If former parishioners remain as Facebook friends and Twitter followers, remember you are no longer their pastor. Talk about your plan and your new relationship on social media just as you talk about other changes and boundaries that come into play because of your transition. Let people know what is changing and what is not in your relationship, including through social media. Begin with conversations with church leaders, but eventually share the plan broadly.

Bruce Reyes-Chow, a Presbyterian pastor, worked with the church he was leaving to develop a “covenant” both to ensure a healthy transition and to remind everyone of the importance of the relationship between pastor and congregation (*The Definitive-ish Guide for Using Social Media in the Church*, Shook Foil Books, 2012). It reminded everyone that great self-restraint was required to allow for a relationship with the new pastor to flourish.

Check for guidelines. Increasingly, there are denominational and judicatory expectations for pastors both in the use of social media and in how it should be handled when there is a pastoral transition. Check to see if there are such guidelines or rules that apply in your situation. But no statement or document can capture the complexity of these and other dynamics that go on during times filled with such mixed feelings of joy and grief by all involved. As Reyes-Chow puts it, “The line over which we must not cross when it comes to pastoral transitions is wide and gray, thanks to the expansive nature of social media.” It is hard to strike the perfect balance, but with sensitivity and conversations, we can come close enough to honor our past ministry and relationships while honoring the colleagues following us as well.

Sample Communication

[Pastoral Change Announcement from PPRC-this should be sent to the congregation shortly after it is announced on a Sunday morning from the PPRC]

Dear Church Family,

I want to let our Grace UMC family know about a leadership transition in our church. Our pastor, *Mark Methodist*, is being appointed to another congregation in our United Methodist connection, *First UMC in Somewhereville*, MO.

Mark has served us well for *9* years. He has helped lead us through governance board changes, moved us out into the community through Winter Outreach and reconnected us to the neighborhood through our school partnership with District 9. Together with his family, we have seen *23* baptisms and *44* confirmands and *12* weddings and far too many funerals. We have shared each other's joys and sorrows, we have lightened each other's loads. Together, we have laughed and cried, prayed and worshipped, together we have lived.

If you're like me, when you hear this, you may feel stunned, and then sad. You'll probably wonder, "What's next?" I want to help you through that process. Our Pastor Parish Relations Committee met with our District Superintendent last week and outlined what we believe to be *Grace UMC's* values and vision for living out the Great Commandment and Commission. We shared with her what we envision for the church in the coming years – the hopes, dreams and challenges we might face. That conversation will help the Missouri Cabinet (made up of the Bishop and District Superintendents all over the state) identify a pastor with gifts that will hopefully serve as a strong match to our local church's ministry context. If you have questions about the process, I encourage you to reach out to me or to *Rex, Mattie or Hank* on our leadership board.

There will be a lot of change in the coming year, but let me say what is not changing. Our church's leadership is committed to the mission of making disciples for the transformation of the world. We hope you are in agreement that this mission is unchanging and it is the work of all disciples to co-partner with God to help in this work.

There will be opportunities in Pastor *Mark's* final weeks to celebrate our shared ministry and thank him and his family for the gifts they have brought into the lives of us at *Grace*. Please take time in the coming weeks to wish Pastor *Mark* Godspeed in his new appointment. I know he will appreciate your prayers during this time of transition.

Peace in Christ,

F. Asbury

Pastor Parish Relations Committee chairperson

Sample Communication

[Incoming Pastor Announcement from PPRC]

Dear Church Family,

Since we announced the news of Pastor **Methodist's** forthcoming departure at the end of June to serve as **new position**, we have been in deep prayer that God would send us a strong spiritual leader to guide us into our next season and help us live out our vision. We believe our prayers have been answered! We learned this week that our Bishop plans to appoint The Rev. **Molly** Methodist to **First UMC**.

Pastor **Molly** is a dynamic preacher ([hyperlink to one of her video recorded sermons](#)) with a deep desire to see people grow closer in their relationship with God through Jesus Christ. She is currently **former position** with primary focus on **description**, but with extensive experience in worship planning, leadership development and staff training. Prior to her work at **former church**, she served as **Molly** has plans to marry this summer to

insert quote from Molly

Over the course of the next several weeks, you will have an opportunity to celebrate Pastor **Methodist's** ministry, as well as express your appreciation and to wish her well in her new ministry. Throughout July, the Staff Parish Relations Committee will be coordinating welcoming opportunities for you to meet Pastor **Molly** in small group settings as she begins her time in leadership here.

This move becomes official at Annual Conference in June. **Molly's** first Sunday with us will be June 28. Please keep **Molly** and her family, Pastor **Methodist** and our church in your prayers.

Peace in Christ,

F. Asbury

Pastor Parish Relations Committee chairperson

Sample Communication

[Last email of outgoing pastor/how our relationship will change]

Dear Church Family,

Since I love to have the last word, let me share a few thoughts before my departure as your pastor. I included some of these thoughts in the letter to the congregation that appeared in this week's e-newsletter, but I thought I would spend some more time reflecting with you on how our relationship will change after this Sunday.

Many of you know that an essential character of our denomination is the itinerant ministry. While changes in clergy leadership are inevitable, we are fortunate to be in a system in which pastoral succession occurs efficiently, without extensive interim periods or gaps in pastoral coverage. At the same time, this efficiency can cause some natural tensions.

What that means is that as quickly as you say good bye to me, you will be greeting your next pastor. Rev. **Molly Methodist** will be in the church office Wed., June 22 and Thurs., June 23 and will preach June 26. Due to an already scheduled vacation, she will be absent Sun., July 3 but Lay Servant **Marcus Methodist** is leading in worship that Sunday. There are many benefits to such a rapid pastoral transition, but it does become incumbent on the congregation and the outgoing pastor to make appropriate space and time for grieving and discovering what their forthcoming relationship will be like.

So, I offer to you some guidelines to navigating this awkward space. Many of these ideas were discussed with all pastors making a move at our conference's Right Start workshop in May. I realize that many of you in this congregation have gone through pastoral transitions in the past, but, this is my first time and the process of writing this statement and sharing it with you is a beneficial exercise.

What will it mean for me to no longer be your pastor?

Simply put, it means that I will be released from the responsibility of preaching, leading, and providing pastoral care for this particular congregation. It will no longer be appropriate for me to do weddings and funerals at **First UMC**, and I will not be involved with the future direction of this church. In other words, when pastoral matters arise among you, there is no expectation that I will be involved in it. And when major decisions are to be made regarding the church's future, I will in no way be a part of these discussions.

Does that mean that any communications with me are inappropriate?

Though I will no longer be your pastor, we will continue to be brothers and sisters in Christ. As part of Christ's body, we will still be responsible for rejoicing in each other's triumphs and bearing each other's burdens. I welcome updates on how you and your family are doing, just as I know you would welcome such news from me. But here are some guidelines for discerning what news to share with me. 1) Make sure that your new pastor already knows the news you would share with me; 2) Make sure that the news is of a public nature and already available for general knowledge; 3) Make sure that the news is not of a confidential nature, such that it would best be kept in the context of a pastor-parishioner relationship. If those three criteria are met, then I am open to sharing with you the critical life-stage moments that make life so rich and compelling. Simply remember that there should be no expectation that I will respond to you as anything more than a fellow sister in Christ.

Do I want to hear “how things are going at the church?”

This community has been a part of my vocational discernment and call to ministry. Therefore, **First UMC** will always have a special place in my heart. I will be praying for God’s spirit to lead you into what I know will be a bright, faithful future. But again, I would ask you to use the following criteria in discerning what kinds of church news to share with me: 1) Have you, for whatever reason, refrained from sharing this news, or your opinions regarding the news, with the new pastor? 2) Are you seeking my opinion or feedback regarding this news? 3) Are you sharing this news with me simply to draw a contrast between how things were done under my leadership? If the answer to any of those questions is yes, then it is truly wisest to refrain from sharing with me any news about what is happening at the church.

How does Facebook figure into our new relationship?

There are many schools of thought on how Facebook plays a role in pastoral ministry. I am Facebook friends with many of you, and have enjoyed interacting with you through it. We often use it to share with others a glimpse into our personal and family lives, and I have used it to celebrate the ministries of **First UMC**. We must remember that the persona we project via Facebook is often a one-dimensional, largely optimistic rendering of how things are actually going. Therefore, to say you have a Facebook “friend” is quite different from the kinds of intimate, deep “friendships” you might have with a person face to face.

Because our “virtual” relationships will never be a suitable substitute for genuine personal interactions, and must never rise to the level of relationships you develop with your pastor and others in the church, I see no need to “unfriend” any of you who are currently “friends” with me on Facebook. You will begin to notice that after my departure, many of my posts will primarily be about the establishment of my new life in **Townville** and ministry throughout the conference. And again, because of the nature of Facebook, most of those “updates” will be largely positive. Please know that those posts will never be meant to denigrate the fruitful, sacred time we have shared together.

What will be my relationship with the new pastor?

All clergy in the United Methodist Church are ordained into a covenant communion, in which we support each other as colleagues in Christ. **Methodist** and I will likely be in conversation together periodically over the months to come, but they will mostly be prompted by her initiative to contact me, rather than my intrusion into her work. The bottom line is that I will do everything I can to ensure her successful start as your new pastor, and I will be available to her for whatever she needs. Pastor **Methodist** is an immensely talented pastor. Her appointment here is a blessing to you.

Your future is bright.

One of the things I was most grateful for shortly after my arrival as your pastor **seven** years ago is there was a real interest in making a difference in how we do ministry. For that reason, I was given a great deal of permission to make some hard but necessary changes. The fact that you welcomed my leadership and my ideas so warmly and openly is a testament to the amazing hospitality and readiness of this congregation. My prayer for you is that you would offer Pastor **Methodist** that same hospitality and grace to be your next spiritual leader. By pressing on to continue the vision that God has established for us, you honor our work over the past **seven** years.

I am absolutely convinced that God’s Holy Spirit will continue to work among you, and that the future of **First UMC** and our broader community is a bright one indeed. I have been so honored to

be your pastor. Thank you for allowing me into the sacred and holy spaces of the intentional community of Christ that is **First UMC**.

In Christ+
Pastor

Change-Over Zone (Pastoral Transition) FAQs

These are sample Frequently Asked Questions to share with the congregation as you work through the pastoral transition.

1. When do these changes take effect?

Pastor Wesley's last Sunday at *Church* is anticipated to be in late June. The next Senior Pastor's first Sunday will be in early July.

2. How does the appointment process work in the United Methodist Church? Will we choose our next pastor?

The bishop is given the responsibility of making all pastoral appointments. We are in the Missouri Conference of the United Methodist Church, which is served by Bishop Robert Farr. Bishop Farr appoints all clergy in Missouri, and these appointments are made official at Annual Conference which meets the first week in June. The Bishop and his cabinet will look at the appointment needs throughout the state, taking into consideration the needs of each church, the gifts and talents of each pastor, etc.

Our Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) will consult with our District Superintendent, *insert name*, about the appointment process and communicate the desires of our church, but the role of PPRC is advisory only. Our District Superintendent will report the advice of the PPRC to the Bishop and Cabinet.

The chair of our PPRC is *insert name*. Please direct any questions that you have regarding the process to *her/him* at [*insert email address*](#).

3. How will this change impact the mission & vision of our church?

The mission and vision of our church will not change. *Pastor Wesley* has been an outstanding leader for *Church* but the mission and vision of the church is carried out by the congregation. We have strong leadership. The capable leadership of the current pastors, staff, and lay members will continue during the transition.

4. How will this change impact the tenure of our church staff?

We anticipate that all staff will stay in their current positions. Our church staff is hired internally and hiring decisions for the staff beyond the pastors are not directed by the Conference.

5. Will there be a reception for *Pastor Wesley*?

We will hold a thank you and farewell reception for *Pastor Wesley* this summer. *He/she* has walked alongside many of us as we experienced our moments of greatest joy and deepest sorrow. This will be a heartfelt reception where we can share our appreciation and well wishes with *him/her*. More details will be shared in the coming months.

6. How will *Pastor Wesley* interact with the next pastor, both during the transition and after?

Pastor Wesley will have many opportunities to talk with and mentor the next pastor that will be appointed. We expect to have ongoing discussions over the next few months with our lead staff and the next pastor.

7. **Will *Pastor Wesley* still have a relationship with our congregation?**

For the good of the church, it is necessary for *Pastor Wesley* to allow the new pastor to build relationships and establish credibility without interference or divided loyalties. *He/she* has always told us that we must be committed to the mission of our church, regardless of who the pastor may be.

8. **How can I make the transition easier for the new pastor?**

We ask that you keep an open heart and mind through this process. It is an anxious but hopeful time for everyone. Remember, this is a learning process for both the pastor and the congregation and there will be challenges along the way. The first few weeks after the arrival of a new pastor will involve getting to know one another. The new pastor will then begin working with church leadership and understanding expectations and the culture of the church. Change is difficult, but it is also a chance to revitalize, refocus, and recommit to the mission and life of the church.

If you are involved in church ministries or activities, continue doing so. Throughout the history of *Church*, the strength has been in the people, not just the leadership.

9. **What can I do today to help with this transition?**

The most important thing we can do is pray. Pray for the people of our church, for *Pastor Wesley*, for the Bishop and Cabinet, and for our pastors, staff, and leadership. Pray that God would lead us through this transition. Reaffirm to yourself and others that this is God's church. As in everything, we can expect great things from our gracious God.

Appropriate Transparency and Oversharing

- Process your current issues privately.
- Cultivate an inner circle – these are not members of your congregation. Great options for your inner circle include professionals trained in working with clergy.
- Share publically only what you have already processed privately.
- Share what will help the listener, not you (e.g., avoid “vaguebooking”).
- Recognize the difference between being vulnerable versus oversharing.
- Be aware of your emotional state when communicating.
- Oversharing mistakes include: sharing before you have finished processing what you had experienced. Or, making your post, talk, sermon, illustration more about you than the congregation/audience.
- Work with your paid and volunteer staff regarding the local social media culture and expectations regarding online presence.

REFERENCE GUIDE



...whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. –Colossians 3:17 NRSV

Reference Guide

Policies, Guidelines and Protocols (and Where to Find It)

Policy on Parsonage & Cash Housing Allowances	Missouri Annual Conference Journal 2016, F20
Guidelines and Recommendations for Church-Provided Residences	Missouri Annual Conference Journal 2016, F21
How many moving company estimates are suggested	Missouri Annual Conference Journal 2016, F41 (The responsibility lies with the pastor to obtain at least 2 bids from licensed moving companies.)
2016 Moving Policy	Missouri Annual Conference Journal 2016, F41
Minimum Salary and Salary Supplement	Missouri Annual Conference Journal 2016, F15
Clergy Continuing Education & Clergy Vacation	Missouri Annual Conference Journal 2016, Standing Rule 406.00; See also ¶350 in the 2012 Book of Discipline

Policy on Parsonage & Cash Housing Allowances

The parsonage system is central to our system of itinerancy. The itinerancy system is central to our understanding of pastoral ministry in the United Methodist Church for full-time ordained elders. “The itinerant system is the accepted method of The United Methodist Church by which ordained elders, provisional elders, and associate members are appointed by the Bishop to fields of labor. All ordained elders, provisional elders, and associate members shall accept and abide by these appointments.” (§338, The Book of Discipline 2012) The parsonage system works to provide congregations and pastors with a greater flexibility in the appointment of pastors to suit the needs for pastoral leadership in particular places at particular times. In certain areas of Missouri, the housing norm for clergy who are serving in a full-time appointment in the Missouri Annual Conference is a parsonage that fits the Guidelines for Church-Provided Residences; other areas of Missouri may consider housing allowances as these areas are more transitional/homes can be purchased or sold more easily. When a charge does not provide a parsonage that meets the conference’s parsonage guidelines, District Superintendents may initiate conversations for considering alternative housing or a housing allowance for the clergy appointed. If a pastor declines to live in a parsonage that meets the guidelines, the church is under no obligation to provide alternative housing or housing allowance.

If a housing allowance is provided in lieu of a parsonage, these guidelines are to be followed:

1. Negotiations to establish a housing allowance in a charge will include:
 - a. The pastor
 - b. The pastor/staff-parish relations committee chairperson
 - c. The committee on finance chairperson
 - d. The trustees chairperson
 - e. The district superintendent

The purpose of these negotiations is to develop a clear understanding by all parties as to the arrangements mutually acceptable. Final arrangements must have the approval of the church/charge conference and the district superintendent.

2. A housing allowance should be based on the rental value of an average home in the parish setting that meets the Conference’s Parsonage Guidelines.
3. If the pastor chooses to live outside the community(ies) served, s/he must receive consent of the district superintendent, in consultation with the pastor-parish relations committee.
4. The charge conference shall annually approve the housing allowance and shall not have the authority to reduce the allowance without re-negotiation and approval as set out in item #1 above. Upward adjustments in the housing allowance would be part of an annual process of review and recommendation initiated by the staff/pastor-parish relations committee.
5. A written record of the housing allowance agreement shall be signed by the pastor, PPR chairperson, Trustee chair, Finance Chair, and District Superintendent (with each keeping a copy of the agreement). The agreement should state the amount allowed per month, and a statement that the arrangement for a housing allowance in lieu of a parsonage shall not hinder participation in itinerancy for future appointments.
6. The Charge Conference has the option to change to a parsonage provision at the time of changes in pastoral appointments.

Other policies regarding parsonages:

- A. The incoming pastor shall have no obligation to purchase the house of his/her predecessor.

- B. If a charge needs to purchase a parsonage for an incoming pastor, a temporary housing allowance shall be negotiated (as described in item #1) until the new parsonage is ready, and any extra moving costs associated with these temporary arrangements shall be the responsibility of the local church.
- C. If, after living in a parsonage, the pastor requests and the charge agrees to a housing allowance, the cost of moving to another home shall be paid by the pastor. If the charge requests a change to a housing allowance and the pastor agrees, the moving cost shall be borne by the charge.
- D. No assets from the sale of a church-owned parsonage shall be used for current operating expenses of the charge (§2543.1 The Book of Discipline 2012). Any such sale of a church-owned parsonage must include consent of the pastor, district superintendent, district board of church location and building, and the charge conference (§§2542-2544 The Book of Discipline 2012).
- E. If a church-owned parsonage is sold on behalf of a charge with full-time pastoral leadership, a restricted fund account shall be established for the purpose of maintaining a down payment for another parsonage. It is also recommended that the minimum for this restricted account will equal 20% of the cost of a home in the community that meets conference parsonage standards. This restricted fund shall be maintained for at least 10 years if it remains full-time. If at that time the charge determines that it intends to continue providing a housing allowance rather than a parsonage, the restricted account may be released according to the requirements of the Book of Discipline.
If a church owned parsonage is sold on behalf of a charge with less than full-time pastoral leadership, a restricted fund may be established, but is not required. The proceeds of the sale must adhere to the requirements of the Book of Discipline.

Guidelines and Recommendations for Church-Provided Residences

These minimum parsonage guidelines are intended to provide clergy housing that meets safety, codes, good building practices and comparable community living standards. These minimum guidelines are specifically for full-time pastors, whether a church owns or rents the parsonage.

- Appliances: Laundry (washer and dryer) and Kitchen (oven/stove, refrigerator including freezer compartment and dishwasher) appliances provided in good condition
- Bathrooms: At least two full baths with modern fixtures, and at least one shower
- Bedrooms: Minimum of three bedrooms (each at least 120 square feet), with adequate closets in each
- Design: Neutral colors and versatile design used throughout the home, including floor covering, wall colors and major appliances
- Dining: Adequate dining space for family and guests
- Electrical Wiring: Adequate outlets in all rooms, lighted stairways, meets National Electrical Code, and outside lighting where needed
- Flooring: Adequate, safe, easy care flooring. Consider hardwood, laminate or other flooring to avoid allergies
- Garage: Two car garage, with opener if possible
- Heat, Air Conditioning and Energy Efficiency: Central heat and air conditioning, adequate insulation in walls and ceilings, and energy efficient major appliances (furnace, air conditioner, water heater)
- Humidifier/Dehumidifier (if needed) provided
- Kitchen: Includes adequate work space, sufficient storage space, and garbage disposal

- Landscaping: Yard with adequate drainage and attractive landscaping
- Living Space: Adequate, comfortable space for accommodating guests
- Location: Encourage parsonage to be within reasonable proximity to the church served, provide privacy for the parsonage family, and not next door to the church
- Pastor's Study: Preferably the pastor's study is in the church, however if the study is in the home there should be a separate clearly marked outside entrance and separate doorbell
- Plumbing: Water heater, easy access for repairs, adequate plumbing with provisions to prevent freezing in winter, and sump pump where needed
- Safety features: Smoke/carbon monoxide detector(s) in sleeping area, fire extinguisher in cooking area, dead bolt locks on outside doors, outside lighting, and adequate fire exits
- Storage: Minimum 120 square feet in sealed, dry basement, utility room, walk up attic or building near the residence.
- Window Treatments: Shades, privacy curtains or Venetian blinds on all windows

The Church is responsible for:

1. Providing a full-time pastor with a parsonage that meets the minimum guidelines. If there are questions/concerns, the PPR chair and/or pastor should consult with District Superintendent.
2. An annual inspection of the parsonage, made by (at least) the Trustee chair, PPR chair, and pastor (2012 Discipline, paragraph 2533.4). Report of this inspection is to be sent, by March 1 of each year, to the respective district office and to the chair of the local church Trustees.
3. An inspection should be made annually on every church owned parsonage, whether the pastor lives in it or it is used in other ways (including renting).
4. Adequately budgeting for routine maintenance/repairs and needed major improvements to the parsonage. (Recommend minimum of 2.5% of the parsonage's replacement value to be provided in annual budget, with excess to accumulate for future replacement.)
5. Provide timely maintenance/repair on items reported by pastor/annual inspection.
6. Consult with parsonage family in selection of appliances, furnishings, color schemes and equipment.
7. Respect the rights and privacy of the parsonage family.
8. Provide insurance on residence and church-owned furnishings.
9. A residence book (file) is to be permanent in each residence which includes guarantees, repair lists, instructions for use of equipment, when/where equipment was purchased, whom to call for various reasons, where to find various items and when/by whom various improvements were made.
10. At any change of pastors, the Trustee Chair and PPR chair are to make inspection of the parsonage with the pastor, noting repairs that need to be made, normal wear and tear, and damages for which the parsonage family is responsible.
11. Within a month of a new pastor moving into the parsonage, the Trustee Chair and PPR Chair are to re-inspect the parsonage with the new pastor and sign the "Parsonage Use Agreement", keeping a copy in the church and sending copy to District Superintendent.

The Pastor is responsible for:

1. Respecting the property.
2. Routine care of lawn and shrubbery.
3. Insurance on personal effects.

4. Arranging an annual Inspection of the parsonage, made by (at least) the Trustee chair, PPR chair, and pastor; this is to be completed by March 1 of each year, with a copy of the inspection report sent to the respective district office and chair of the local church Trustees. When an inspection is not done, the pastor waives protection from blame on any damage found.
5. Promptly reporting needed repairs.
6. Requesting of the Trustees (in advance) any changes the parsonage family wishes to make to the structure or design of the parsonage (including painting).
7. Restitution for damages done by family or pets (outside of normal wear and tear).
8. Leaving the property clean when moving out.
9. Adding to the residence book (file) which is to be permanent in each residence which includes guarantees, repair lists, instructions for use of equipment, when/where equipment was purchased, whom to call for various reasons, where to find various items and when/by whom various improvements were made.
10. Before moving out of a parsonage, the pastor shall invite the Trustee Chair and PPR chair to make an inspection of the parsonage, noting repairs that need to be made, normal wear and tear, and damages for which the parsonage family is responsible.
11. Within a month of moving into the parsonage, the new pastor shall invite the Trustee Chair and PPR Chair to re-inspect the parsonage and sign the "Parsonage Use Agreement," keeping a copy in the church and sending copy to District Superintendent.

Any new parsonage construction or purchase shall:

- meet or exceed local building codes or FHA Minimum Property Standards or a nationally recognized building code;
- use passive solar where practical; and
- meet new construction accessibility requirements as set forth in the 2012 Book of Discipline 2544.4d. A fully accessible bedroom, bathroom and utility area on the ground-floor are required.

2016 Moving Policy

Effective June 6, 2016

The Missouri Annual Conference shall be responsible to reimburse local churches a reasonable amount for the moving expenses of full-time pastors under appointment who have annuity claim with the Annual Conference. A Moving Expense Fund shall be established for this purpose. It shall be the responsibility of the pastor undergoing the move to obtain at least two bids from licensed moving companies. These bids shall be reviewed in consultation with the Staff-Parish (Pastor-Parish) Relations Committee of the receiving church or charge before a contract for the move is issued. The local church or charge shall have a maximum obligation of \$5,000 for the pastor's move. Moving costs above this amount shall be negotiable between the pastor, receiving local church or charge, and the District Superintendent of the district into which the pastor is moving. If the pastor is doing the move with rental equipment, bids are not necessary.

A local church or charge may apply to the Annual Conference for up to \$1,500 of the incurred moving expenses per full-time pastor. Reimbursable costs will include professional moving costs or the cost of truck rental, labor and related expenses. The Annual Conference will not provide reimbursement for food or lodging. Adequate documentation must accompany the application and reimbursement must be requested within 6 months of the move. For moves over 150 miles, a special grant may be given from the Conference with proper documentation.

When two pastors are moving to two charges on the same moving bill, each charge will pay 50% of the moving cost unless otherwise negotiated. Each charge may apply for up to \$1,500 of the moving expense incurred by the charge. The charges shall work together to make the necessary arrangements for paying the moving bill. The District Superintendent(s) shall facilitate any necessary negotiations between the charges.

In order to qualify for the moving expense reimbursement, the local church or charge shall have paid 100% of conference apportionments for the prior year. If the local church or charge has not paid 100%, then the reimbursement will be made at the percent of conference apportionments paid for the prior year. In a multi-point charge, each church shall receive reimbursement at the respective percent of conference apportionments each church paid for the prior year.

For full-time pastors accepting extension ministry appointments with annuity claim on the Annual Conference, the Annual Conference will reimburse the receiving appointment under these same rules.

For full-time persons entering the retiree relationship, or going on incapacity leave there shall be a one-time moving expense grant available of up to \$1500. For full time persons entering the Voluntary Transition Program there shall be a one-time moving expense grant available of up to \$1000. These grants will be made upon adequate documentation for the move being submitted to the Treasurer's Office within 6 months of the move.

For full-time pastors with special circumstance requiring a move, there may be a one-time moving grant of up to \$1500 available. These grants will be made by the Executive Committee of the Finance and Administration Team upon application including submission of adequate documentation for the move.

Clergy Compensation (from the Clergy Support Team Policies & Procedures)

All full-time charges must include in their compensation package:

- A. TRAVEL -Reimbursement for the actual “business” miles traveled by the clergy at the current rate established by the IRS. Clergy are to voucher all miles and submit documentation to the church treasurer for reimbursement.
 - B. UTILITIES - (Gas, Electricity, water, sewer, trash service, base telephone and basic cable or base telephone/internet/cable bundle. We also recommend that charges consider providing internet service for full- time clergypersons.) Either (1) direct payment to the utility companies; or (2) in special circumstances, cash allowance at a minimum of \$3,000 per year. When the utility companies are paid directly, there is no compensation to the clergyperson for utility charges.
 - C. HEALTH INSURANCE -- All pastors serving in full-time charges shall be enrolled in the conference insurance program. (Missouri Annual Conference Standing Rule 401.00)
 - D. PENSION -- Monthly premium for the clergyperson’s CRSP (pension) and CPP (death/disability)
 - E. HOUSING - Provide adequate housing allowance or housing meeting the requirements and standards of church- owned residences as published in the 2015 Missouri Conference Journal, pages F-21 through F-24.
 - F. CONTINUING EDUCATION - Full-time clergy are required to participate in a continuing education plan. Charges are encouraged to pay for these expenses either by a continuing education allowance or reimbursement.
 - G. PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES - It is recommended that other professional expenses directly related to work as a clergy person be paid as a reimbursed expense. Cell phone expenses for a clergy person are considered a part of professional expenses. Please refer to the General Council on Finance and Administration Accountable Reimbursement Policies
 - H. CLERGY COUPLE HOUSING – If a clergy couple in a dual appointment are living in one parsonage, both clergy will claim the parsonage housing value for pension and service credit.
- ** Part-time charges must include in their compensation package: pension (CRSP/UMPIP, professional expenses (travel/continuing education).

It is recommended that the total allotted for travel, utilities, continuing education and professional expenses be a minimum of \$7,000.00 per year for full-time clergy. This amount should be reviewed annually by the charge to determine if it is adequate to support of the ministry of the clergy person.

Minimum Salary and Salary Supplement

The minimum base salary for all full-time clergypersons under Episcopal appointment is determined by multiplying the conference average base salary (2017, \$54,237) by 70% for full-time local pastors; 70% plus \$800 for associate and full-time provisional members; and 70% plus \$1,250

for full members. Therefore, the minimum base salary for all full-time clergy is as follows (Section A of Pastoral Support Form):

	2016	2017
Full-time Local Pastors	\$37,308	\$ 37,966
Associate members and Full-time Provisional Members	\$38,108	\$ 38,766
Full Members	\$38,558	\$ 39,216

2017 Part-time minimums	¾ Time	½ Time	¼ Time	< ¼ time
Local Pastor	\$28,475	\$18,983	\$9,492	<\$9,492
Provisional/Associate Member	\$29,075	\$19,383	\$9,692	
Full Member	\$29,412	\$19,608	\$9,804	

Vacation and Continuing Education (from MOAC Standing Rule 406.00)

The Annual Conference shall maintain a policy of time allowed for vacation and continuing education for pastors serving full time under appointment who have completed their basic educational requirements. Clergy serving full time under appointment, who have completed their basic educational requirements, shall be granted four weeks for vacation and a minimum of two weeks for continuing education annually between the regular sessions of the Annual Conference.

PASTOR PARISH RELATIIONS GUIDE



Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ. —Galatians 6:2

Transition Strategies for Lay Leadership¹³

As part of the leadership of the church, you have a vital role in the transition process. Your leadership will support steps the pastor will be taking in order to prepare the way for the change. Your leadership will provide support to the congregation during a time of grief and loss. How a pastor leaves the church can either set the church back or provide for an ongoing positive environment for the next pastor and congregation to join in ministry together. Evaluate and plan how you can intentionally and actively support how your pastor leaves the church.

- Most importantly, surround the transition in prayer. Remember to pray for the departing pastor and the arriving pastor in your private prayers and the church community prayers.
- Provide opportunities to acknowledge the change. Some congregations would prefer to move along as if nothing is changing. As a church leader, be active in helping your congregation grieve well.
- Prepare the congregation for the transition. Support the pastor in his work to recall some of the high points, to acknowledge the feelings about the change and to remain focused on the mission of the church as guests will continue to arrive during the time of transition.
- Be constructive in answering the often-asked question: “Why is the pastor leaving us?” As a member of the United Methodist Church you know that pastors will be moving from one appointment to another. Share this information with individuals that ask.
- During the transition ask yourself a simple question: “What should you as a church leader do to prepare for the next pastor before he or she arrives in your church?”
- Listen. As a church leader provide a listening ear rather than a response to comments you hear from members of the congregation. Discourage any gossip as this can be destructive to the life of the church.
- Focus on positive attributes and contributions of the arriving and departing pastors.
- Avoid the temptation to compare the arriving pastor to the departing pastor.
- Affirm the arriving pastor who has been appointed to your church. Open yourself to building a relationship with the arriving pastor and encourage others to do so as well.

Additional resources for transition support

- Utilize “50 Ways to Welcome Your New Pastor” found in this packet on pg. 71.
- Educate yourself about the appointment process by reviewing the FAQ sheet found in this packet on pg. 56 or visit <https://vimeo.com/140807995> to watch Bishop Robert Schnase’s presentation: “Demystifying the Appointment Process.”
- Utilize the “Good Ideas for a Move” checklist for the pastor found in this packet on pg. 17-19. Assist the pastor in completing some of the tasks that are paperwork related.

¹³ Adapted from East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church Commission on Pastoral Care & Counseling, “Move Pack: A Guide for a Good Move for Pastors & Families,” (2001).

New Appointment Administrative Checklist (for the Church staff or Treasurer)

If your church has a new pastor, the following paperwork should be completed and a copy given to the church treasurer:

- Form I-9: (Employment Eligibility Verification)
- This form must be completed when any new person is added to the payroll. Pastors will complete the I-9 form at the time of their first appointment in Missouri and it will remain on file in the pastor's district office. If the pastor moves districts, the form will move to that district as well. I-9 forms for district superintendents will be housed with the benefits officer in the Topeka office. Download a copy of this form.
- Clergy Support Worksheet
- Even if the compensation package does not change between pastors, a new worksheet needs to be completed for the incoming pastor. The district office will prepare this form, obtain signatures and distribute copies to pastor, treasurer, SPRC chairperson and conference benefits officer.
- Housing Resolution
- A new one is needed each time there is a change in pastor. It is a tax shelter arrangement between a specific pastor and a specific church. The housing resolution must not be retroactive and must be in place prior to the new pastor receiving any pay. Download a sample housing resolution or review the housing resolution Q&A.
- Pastor Pension Contribution (PIP)
- New forms are needed each time there is a change in pastor. If your new pastor wishes to make contributions to his/her pension savings account, two forms need to be completed:
- Contribution Agreement - Because contributions to PIP are done by payroll deduction, a new payroll deduction authorization form must be completed when there is an appointment change. The pastor and church should each keep a copy. Download this form.
- Billing Change Form - The church must send this form to the General Board of Pensions indicating the terms of the contribution agreement (how much will be withheld from the new pastor's salary each month). Download this form.
- Payroll Taxes
- If your pastor is a DSA (district superintendent assignment) or CLM (certified lay minister), you must remit payroll taxes just as you would for the church secretary or other church employees. Failure to do so can result in interest and substantial penalties.

50 Ways to Welcome your New Pastor¹⁴

From the Lewis Center for Church Leadership Prepared by Robert Crossman

Prepare to welcome your new pastor

1. Open your hearts and decide that you are going to love your new pastor.
2. Begin praying daily for the new pastor and family, even as you continue to pray for your departing pastor and family.
3. Invite church members individually to send cards of welcome and encouragement to the incoming pastor.
4. Know that welcoming your new pastor in genuine and effective ways lays the ground work for a healthy and vital relationship and the development of stable, long-term ministries together.
5. Plan for the transition. Occasionally important welcoming gestures are missed with everyone thinking someone else is handling these details.
6. Appoint a specific liaison person to whom the pastor can go for help and information during the transition.

Say goodbye to your current pastor in a healthy way

7. Show love, regard, and even grief, for your departing pastor. This is one of the best things you can do for the new pastor.
8. Acknowledge the change in public ways. Especially in the case of a much-beloved pastor, this allows the congregation better to let go and receive the new pastor.
9. Provide the congregation the opportunity to say thank you and goodbye to the outgoing pastor, even if things have not always gone well.
10. Find appropriate occasions — in worship and at other times — to thank the outgoing pastor.

11. Express appreciation in ways that are consistent with what you have done in the past.
12. Consider giving the pastor the last two weeks off. This helps the pastor enter the new situation rested and gives an emotional buffer between one pastor's last Sunday and another pastor's first Sunday.
13. Plan goodbye celebrations prior to the beginning of the two weeks off.
14. Provide information to the local media about the outgoing pastor's accomplishments and future plans.
15. Do not invite the former pastor to return for weddings, funerals, or baptisms. This allows your former pastor to engage fully with his or her new congregation, and it establishes your new pastor as everyone's pastor from the beginning.

Make things move-in ready

16. Make sure the parsonage and pastor's office are clean and ready. Offer to provide help or a cleaning service if needed.
17. Determine if the parsonage is in need of repairs or painting. Consult the outgoing and incoming pastors about timing so as not to disrupt the lives of either party. Do not ask a new pastor to move into a parsonage "under construction."
18. Consult the new pastor on any paint, design, or furnishings issues.
19. Offer to have someone cut the parsonage grass.
20. Make sure the new pastor and church officials are clear on how moving expenses are paid and all matters related

¹⁴ Originally found at Lewis Center's Leading Ideas: https://www.churchleadership.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/50_Ways_to_Welcome_New_Pastor.pdf. Dr. Robert Crossman, Minister of New Church Starts and Congregational Development for the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church, is the primary author of this document. The Lewis Center staff and others provided suggestions and editorial assistance.

to compensation, benefits, and reimbursement policies.

Welcome your pastor on moving day

21. Stock the parsonage refrigerator and pantry with some staples.
22. Make sure there are kid-friendly foods and snacks in the refrigerator if children are arriving.
23. Have a small group on hand to greet the new pastor and family when they arrive and to help as needed.
24. Offer child care if there is an infant or toddler in the household.
25. Invite children in the household to do things with others of their same age.
26. Welcome any youth in the household by having church youth group members stop by and offer to show them around.

Continue the welcome during the entry period

27. Take food over for the first few days.
Many churches continue the practice of having a “pounding” for the new pastor when persons bring food items.
28. Provide a map with directions to local dry cleaners, grocery store, drug store, veterinarian, etc., and information on local options for internet and cable television providers.
29. Give gift certificates to several of your favorite restaurants in the community.
30. Give the pastor and family a welcome reception on the first Sunday.
31. Plan a worship celebration of the new appointment.
32. Invite the new pastor to any social events held by Sunday School classes or other groups in the early months.
33. Make sure the pastor’s spouse and children, if applicable, are invited to Sunday School and other appropriate small groups.
34. Continue to remember your new pastor and family in your daily prayers.

Help the new pastor become familiar with the congregation

35. Introduce yourself to the pastor repeatedly! You have one name to learn; your pastor has many names to learn.
36. Wear name tags. Even if name tags are not a tradition, the congregation can wear them for a few weeks to help the pastor learn names.
37. Provide a current pictorial directory of all the church members, if available.
38. Provide an up-to-date list of all church committees and officers.
39. Provide the new pastor with a tour of where things are kept inside the church and perhaps a floor plan of the facilities.
40. Orient the new pastor to information systems and the way records are kept.
41. Make sure the pastor has a list of home bound or nursing home members, a list of those struggling with long term illness, and a list of those still in grief over recent deaths in the family. Better yet, take the pastor for an introduction to each of these households.
42. Have an appropriate person offer to go with the pastor for introductions and support if there are particularly urgent pastoral situations (a member near death or the family of a member who has just died).
43. Have a lay official offer to take the pastor to meet church members in their businesses or other work settings, if they are easily accessible.
44. Offer to help arrange small group sessions to meet and talk with the congregation.
45. Create a “church yellow pages” (a list of people in the church who have specific skills that a newcomer may find beneficial.... auto mechanic, doctor, dentist, dry cleaners, book store, office supply, etc.).

Help the new pastor connect to the community

46. Provide local media with information about the new pastor.

47. Provide a list of hospitals, nursing homes, and community service agencies.
48. Introduce your new pastor to other clergy in the community. Provide information on any ecumenical activities or associations.
49. Introduce the new pastor to public and community leaders.
50. Ask church members in civic clubs to take the new pastor to one of their meetings.

Suggestions for Churches with a Single Pastor¹⁵

All clergy face many challenges. But single persons in ministry can face a unique set of challenges around maintaining boundaries, privacy, and social connections, particularly if they serve in a congregation that has only been served in the past by married clergy. Some of the best advice for churches comes from a young single pastor — “congregations and pastors both should work on the tender balance between being supportive and allowing privacy.”

Church members can often subconsciously communicate the assumption that they expect their pastor to be married. For example, a single clergyman starting ministry in a new congregation was asked repeatedly “When will be meeting your wife?” or “Will your wife be teaching Sunday School or serving on the altar guild?” Similarly, congregants can project the assumption that marriage is normative for or sought by everyone when they drop hints about eligible friends the pastor might like to meet. While these kinds of comments are generally well intended, they can make a single person feel awkward, judged, or even inadequate. Congregations need to be sensitive to and accepting of different marital statuses among clergy.

It is easy for single clergy to fall into the trap of letting the church become their primary social outlet and support network. This is especially true if they have left behind friends and family to begin ministry in a new church and community. It is important to recognize that all clergy, but especially single clergy, need to build a set of relationships and friendships outside the church — people for whom they are not the “pastor.” This may mean that they seek opportunities for involvement beyond the church, such as book clubs, sports teams, or community groups, and find people who share common interests. Churches can encourage them to take time off to renew themselves and to connect with friends and family. Encourage them to connect with other clergy in the community that you feel will be supportive colleagues.

Single clergy often feel they are navigating a minefield when it comes to dating. In addition to fix-up attempts, they have concerns about a lack of privacy, the potential for rumors and ill-informed assumptions, and questions about when and how to let the congregation know about a serious relationship. These all can leave a single clergyperson vulnerable and confused. You can help by recognizing that it is normal and important for them to date. Trust the pastor to operate within their own level of comfort regarding how much they share with the congregation.

It is important that the congregation be aware of norms and expectations about whether it is appropriate for pastors to date congregants. Denominations or judicatories normally have clearly defined policies on this question, usually not permitting such dating. Both pastor and congregation must understand these policies and their rationale. Appropriate church leaders may need to educate the congregation about the policies. But always remember that great sensitivity is required so that this issue does not loom too large in people’s minds or distract from the larger issues in establishing the pastor’s ministry.

Single clergy who are parents may also feel they are vulnerable or open to special scrutiny. Pay attention to expectations for evening meetings and the need for childcare. Such care will also benefit other church members. The church does not have special responsibility for the pastor’s childcare

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but should do everything possible to make possible the active participation of those with young children.

Lewis Fellows, participants in a Lewis Center leadership development program for young clergy, contributed to this resource. For more information, please visit churchleadership.com/programs/young_clergy.htm.

Suggestions for Churches with a Young Pastor¹⁶

Churches that receive a young pastor need to remember how lucky they are. Many congregations say they want a younger pastor, but few have the opportunity. They ought not, however, assume their church will automatically reach younger people simply because of the age of the pastor. Having a young pastor might improve the likelihood of a congregation connecting with young people, but not without openness to other kinds of change. Congregations sincere in their desire to work with a younger pastor to reach emerging generations must be flexible and open to new ideas and possibilities. Take the initiative in asking the young pastor for ways in which your church can become more inviting for younger people.

Congregants are encouraged to treat a young clergyperson as a pastor, not as they would act toward their children or grandchildren. It can be helpful to consider how one regards other young professionals. A patient being treated by a young doctor, for example, may not be able to help thinking, “That doctor is young enough to be my child or grandchild.” But that kind of thinking is quickly set aside in deference to the doctor’s professional role. In the end, many older people find themselves reassured when dealing a younger professional who has the benefit of more recent training. This is the same kind of regard the congregation can offer to a young pastor. Show respect for your pastor by avoiding any remarks about age that could appear to lessen the pastor’s standing. One reason such support is important is that, while laity quickly discover the gifts younger clergy bring and accept their leadership, the same may not be true for staff now supervised by someone younger than they are. Pay special attention to language you and others use for young clergywomen, who routinely report the use of “little lady,” “cute,” and “darling.”

Church members can also take time to remember what it was like to be young or to be responsible for a young family. Then they may not be too quick to criticize a young pastor who struggles with the number of night meetings on the calendar. Expecting around the clock availability from a pastor is unreasonable, regardless of his or her age.

Remember how important your support and care can be for young pastors. Many patterns and attitudes are shaped in those early years of ministry. Pray for them. Invite them for a meal. Understand their special challenges. Many are away from their support networks. Increasing numbers bring substantial educational debt. Be their advocate for adequate compensation, proper parsonage standards, and observance of maternity and paternity leave. Also encourage habits that can sustain the pastor over a long-term ministry such as regular Sabbath, time for renewal and sermon preparation, vacation time, and continuing education.

Younger and older generations in the church would do well to keep in mind the adage “We’re all in this together.” Especially within the community of faith, what unites us in Christ is far greater than what divides us as representatives of one generation or another. We are called in “all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love and making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit” (Ephesians 4:2-4 NRSV)

¹⁶ Adapted from *The Crisis of Younger Clergy* by Ann A. Michel and Lovett H. Weems, Jr. (Abingdon Press, 2008) with additions from young clergy participants in the Lewis Center’s Lewis Fellows Program. Used by permission

What the Church Can Expect in the First 100 Days

Pastors have expectations of their congregations in the beginning of a new relationship. Congregations certainly have expectations of their pastor and often, multiple and sometimes contradictory expectations. What can you expect from your pastor in the first 100 days of a new pastoral appointment?

1. **Settling into a new home.** Perhaps you've moved before. You know there are endless tasks and to-do lists in the days and weeks, even months, following a move. Moving is one of life's major stressors. This can be amplified by the number of people moving as part of the pastoral transition. Help communicate empathy and corral support for this challenging time in your pastor's life.
2. **Engagement with the community.** Remember this may be the first time your pastor has lived in this community. In order to be a pastor who leads an outward focused church, the pastor must get to know the community
3. **Asking questions.** Your pastor is learning on the job. An essential part of learning is asking questions. Try to hear these questions as a way of learning about the community and about the people that make up the community. You can assist your pastor in asking good questions of the community yourself. The listening tour will be helpful in getting these questions out in the open.
4. **Some people will leave and others will resurface.** Even in the most successful transitions, there will be some people who leave. In fact, pastoral transitions often afford someone who has been ambivalent about the church an excuse to look elsewhere. There might be others who have been central to leadership who depart, sometimes even directly blaming the new pastor for their exit. This is not a time for you or the pastor to panic despite the pain. Wise leaders expect this and even plan for it. A season of change is also an opportunity for new people to enter into the community and others to step up into leadership.
5. **The unknown.** It's hard to predict what to expect. Churches are made up of people with lots of ideas (good and bad), hurts and hang ups. Pastors, despite being professionals, are people, too, with their own set of ideas (good and bad), hurts and hang ups. Like any new relationship, there will be things that happen that cause confusion and pain on both sides. The key to success is communication. Communicate. Communicate. Communicate throughout the change-over zone.

RESOURCES



*We know that all things work together for good for those who love God,
who are called according to his purpose. —Romans 8:28*

Resources

Pastoral Leadership Series

The Right Start: Beginning Ministry in a New Setting

<https://www.churchleadership.com/product/the-right-start-pastors-version-download/>

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* indicates a book especially relevant for recent seminary graduates

indicates a book especially relevant for clergy entering small, rural communities