

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 yogurt, 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.