

Staff–Pastor–Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) — Toolkit

Your Calling: Nurture clergy and staff, care for the congregation’s pastoral life, and resource ministry in faithful partnership with the pastor(s), district superintendent (DS), and Church Council. SPRC work is theological and pastoral—not merely HR.

1) Core Responsibilities (at a glance)

- Nurture & Support: Encourage pastor(s), staff, and families; promote congregational unity.
- Evaluation & Priorities: Conduct at least annual evaluations; confer on goals, relationships, wellbeing.
- Interpret Ministry: Teach UMC understandings of ministry, open itinerancy, candidacy, and MEF.
- Job Descriptions & Titles: With the senior pastor, develop/approve written role descriptions for associate pastors and staff.
- Continuing Ed & Wellness: Plan time and funding for CEU, renewal, and health.
- Candidacy & Lay Servant Ministries: Enlist, interview, and recommend annually.
- Compensation & Housing: Propose salary, housing/parsonage allowance, insurance, pension, travel, vacation; arrange pulpit supply; conduct annual parsonage review with Trustees’ chair and pastor.
- Personnel Policy (non-appointed staff): Recommend written policies (hiring, evaluation, discipline, separation). Until adopted, SPRC & pastor jointly exercise these functions.
- Appointment Consultation: When a change may serve mission, consult pastor and DS; offer advisory input.

2) Membership, Eligibility & Rotation

- Elected by the Charge (or Church) Conference. Committee of 5–9 including the lay leader and lay member to annual conference; include a young adult (and youth where possible).
- Terms: Staggered 3-year classes; may succeed once. Vacancies filled by the Church Council (or its equivalent).
- Conflict-of-interest safeguards: No staff member or immediate family of pastor/staff may serve; only one per household may serve.
- Pastor is not a member of SPRC. The pastor participates and consults but is not a voting member.

3) Meetings & Confidentiality

- Frequency & Call: Meet at least quarterly and additionally at the request of bishop, DS, pastor, any accountable staff, or the chair. Meet with the knowledge of the pastor and/or DS.
- Presence: Pastor is present except when voluntarily excused. SPRC may meet with the DS without the pastor/staff if they are notified beforehand and brought into consultation immediately thereafter.
- Closed & Confidential: SPRC meetings are closed, and information is confidential. When any body enters closed session, report decisions/actions promptly without breaching confidentiality.

4) Boundaries & Collaboration (Know Your Lane)

- Pastor’s administrative role: Pastor orders the life of the church (¶340); SPRC partners with, not over, pastoral leadership.
- Appointment-making: Bishops/cabinet make appointments; SPRC’s role is consultative/advisory.
- Trustees & worship usage: Trustees handle property and safety; they do not control pastoral decisions about religious services or weddings. Pastors have discretion in weddings and worship use. Coordinate pastorally; don’t gatekeep worship.
- Finance & Council: Bring compensation and personnel recommendations to Church Council; route budget impacts to Finance.

5) Meeting Flow (60–75 minutes)

1. Devotion & agenda (5)
2. Pastoral/staff wellbeing & support (10)
3. Evaluations & goals checkpoint (15)
4. Personnel policy & staffing items (15)
5. Compensation/housing & parsonage review status (10)
6. Appointment consultation (as needed) (10)
7. Assignments & dates; prayer (5)

6) Annual Rhythm

- Q1: Schedule evaluations; plan CEU/renewal; set candidacy/lay servant interviews.
- Q2: Review job descriptions; mid-year wellbeing check; start parsonage walkthrough.
- Q3: Develop compensation recommendations; confirm pulpit-supply plan; finalize personnel policy updates.
- Q4: Submit compensation to Council; complete parsonage review with Trustees; plan next year's rhythms.

7) Quick Motion Templates

- Adopt Evaluation Plan: "Move to adopt the 2026 clergy/staff evaluation schedule and tools."
- Recommend Compensation: "Move to recommend 2026 clergy compensation (salary, housing, insurance, pension, travel, vacation) to the Church Council."
- Parsonage Review: "Move to conduct the annual parsonage review with Trustees and pastor by //__ and report findings."
- Personnel Policy: "Move to recommend the Personnel Policies and Procedures (non-appointed staff) to the Church Council for adoption."
- Appointment Consultation Statement (if needed): "Move to authorize the chair to convey SPRC's consultative input to the DS regarding appointment considerations."

8) Best-Practice Checklist

- Keep minutes focused on actions; maintain confidentiality.
- Screen for conflicts of interest; recuse where required.
- Use written job descriptions, evaluation tools, and wellness/CEU plans.
- Coordinate early with Finance on budget effects; with Trustees on parsonage safety.
- Report outcomes of closed sessions appropriately and promptly.
- Meet with DS and pastor as partners in mission.

Quick References

- SPRC: ¶258.2
- Pastor's administrative role: ¶340
- Appointment consultation/authority: ¶¶425–428
- Selected Judicial Council Decisions: consultation is mandatory/advisory (JCD 501); pastor not SPRC member (JCD 500); closed-meeting norms (JCD 869, JCD 1481); pastoral discretion in worship/marriage (JCD 1516).

Care well for your pastor(s), staff, and congregation. Healthy relationships = healthy mission.