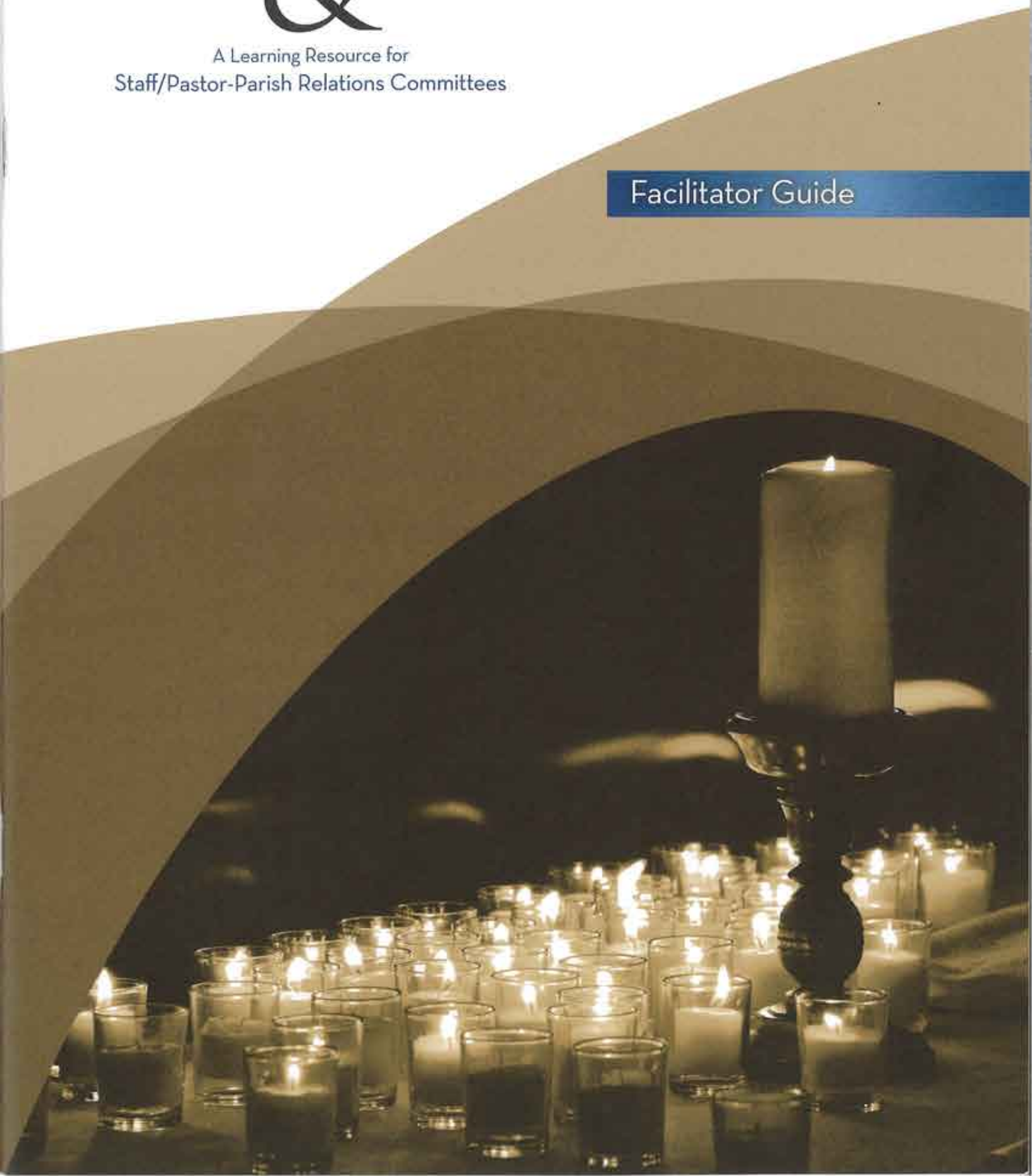


Pastor & Parish™

A Learning Resource for
Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committees

Facilitator Guide



Depending on the size of your church, your committee may refer to itself in one of two ways. United Methodist churches served by multiple clergy generally call this group the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC), whereas congregations served by one pastor often use the term Pastor-Parish Relations Committee (PPRC).

We have chosen to use the broader term of SPRC throughout this series. In places where we refer to 'your pastor' for simplicity, you should consider the point to extend to all clergy.



Pastor & Parish™

Thank you for agreeing to serve as facilitator during your Staff-Parish Relations Committee's journey through Pastor & Parish™.

This curriculum is designed to ground the work of the SPRC theologically, while encouraging thoughtful reflection upon the committee's ministry in your congregation.

Please recognize that this guide is meant to serve as a starting place for guiding discussion. Feel free to use your judgment in determining places where deviating from it might generate more discussion and honesty.

Your leadership throughout this series is a gift to the church, and we hope that it will be a satisfying ministry for you as well.

Facilitator Guide

Overview	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your Responsibilities as Facilitator• Using this Guide• Who Should Participate• Time and Place for Sessions• Audio-Visual Equipment• Materials• Preparing for Each Session• Addressing Questions and Concerns	
Introducing Pastor & Parish	6
Session 1: Baptism	8
Session 2: Discipleship	10
Session 3: Sacred Bundle	12
Session 4: Truthful Naming	14
Session 5: Stewardship of the Pastor	16
Session 6: Covenant for Ministry	18
Next Steps	20
Notes	21

Overview

Your Responsibilities as Facilitator

Your experience in the local church, combined with the resources in this guide, equip you to assist your SPRC in exploring the six sessions of Pastor & Parish. As your group's facilitator, you are responsible for:

- Gathering the group
- Ensuring that those participating have access to both the materials they need to complete the program and a safe space in which to share
- Coming to each gathering prepared to keep the conversation moving and productive, so as to be respectful of everyone's time

The videos provide a theologically-framed introduction to each session's topic, and the participant workbook guides the committee in considering how the ideas that have been presented might apply in your church.

Through your guidance – and the conversation that stems from it – your committee will emerge from this series with a deeper understanding of its ministry within the church.

Using this Guide

This facilitator guide will help you prepare for each session in a variety of ways:

- The **overview** provides suggestions for successfully preparing to lead your SPRC through the program.
- The **instructions for each session** include:
 - *A learning objective*
This is a way for you to orient yourself and the group to the purpose of each particular meeting.
 - *A list of materials and equipment*
You will need to assemble these in the meeting space prior to the session.
 - *Tips for keeping the group's conversation focused*
We encourage you to observe time limits where they are specified, so that each session lasts 75-90 minutes. Committee members are more likely to be faithful in attending if they know that their time is respected.
 - *Resources for delving more deeply into each topic*
On the Pastor & Parish website are books, articles and websites that you or others may wish to read to learn more.

Who Should Participate

We strongly encourage all members of the SPRC to attend all six sessions, as it is through communal discussion that your group will come to better understand its role and ministry within the church. Please encourage your committee members to make their presence a priority.

Because this program encourages discussion of matters that are sensitive to the life of the congregation, **there should be no casual drop-ins**. Only members of the SPRC and invited church leaders (such as the Chair of Church Council or Nominations) should attend, and the meeting space should be free from interruption by other groups and from distracting noise.

There should be assurance of **confidentiality** among the group participating. While these gatherings are not official SPRC meetings, you must create a safe space for people to share their thoughts.

Time and Place for Sessions

Consistency in time and place of meeting is strongly encouraged.

Pastor & Parish is designed to be presented in six individual sessions. Most of the sessions last about 75 minutes. Many committees have reported that the final two sessions in particular have prompted enough discussion to warrant 90 minutes; therefore the time estimates in this guide reflect this longer timeframe. If that is not possible for your group, actively manage the session so as to maximize your discussion time, or continue it on a subsequent date.

We encourage committees to meet weekly. The curriculum is neither time-consuming nor difficult, but combining two or more sessions into a single gathering will limit the time for prayer and reflection, two integral parts of the program. The Sunday School hour may be the ideal “set-aside” time for this study to take place, emphasizing the formational aspect of this ministry, as well as the practical training.

The setting in which Pastor & Parish will be presented is very important. **You will need a room where a DVD can be played and easily viewed by all**. While some sanctuaries contain a large screen and projection equipment, you may find that meeting in a smaller classroom with fewer windows makes it easier for everyone to view the screen and is more conducive to small-group discussion.

Continued on page 4.

Audio-Visual Equipment

To show the videos, you will need either:

- A television connected to a DVD player or
- A laptop computer equipped with a program for playing DVDs. If you use a laptop, be sure to also have a screen and projector available, and ensure that you have adequate speakers, since the laptop's built-in speakers may not be sufficient.

It is important that you do a test-run of your planned set-up well in advance of the first session, ensuring that the equipment is functional and that you can navigate to the correct session.

Materials

Please ensure that the following materials are available:

At each session:

- Audio-visual equipment, tested and ready to go
- Table and chairs sufficient for everyone to be seated comfortably, facing one another
- Poster paper and markers (plus tape if the paper is not self-adhesive)
- Pastor & Parish DVD
- Pastor & Parish Participant Workbook (one per participant, including the facilitator)
- Pastor & Parish Facilitator Guide
- Pens or pencils and blank paper for participants who may not have brought their own
- List of the names of the participants (this will be created during the Baptism session)
- You may also wish to have:
 - One copy of *The United Methodist Hymnal*
 - One copy of *The United Methodist Book of Discipline* (2012)

At specific sessions:

- *Sessions 1 and 5*: Large glass bowl of water in the center of the table (or the bowl from your church's baptismal font, if it is removable)
- *Session 3*: One copy of the local church's history, if available
- *Session 5*: One copy per participant of the Responsibilities and Duties of Elders and Licensed Pastors, found in the 2012 United Methodist Book of Discipline, ¶ 340 (pages 267-270)
- *Session 6*: One copy per participant of any covenant that your church and/or SPRC may have developed

As the facilitator, you will need to **set aside time to prepare for each weekly session**. It will be your responsibility to encourage engagement and thoughtful reflection, should the conversation stall or get sidetracked, and good preparation will help you to do that well.

Prior to the first gathering:

- Watch all the videos (when combined, the six sessions last about an hour.)
- Read through the participant workbook and this facilitator guide.
- Review the suggested resources on leading group discussions effectively.

Becoming familiar with the curriculum will help you answer questions from the group as they arise.

Before each session:

- Watch the week's video again.
- Review the workbook content for the session, as well as the "For Further Reflection" section of the prior session. Consider the connections between the two sessions so that you can bridge the discussion from one to the next.
- Write your own answers to the discussion questions. Doing this ahead of time will enable you to turn your focus to the group during the session itself.
- Reread the session notes in the facilitator guide for additional ideas on prompting discussion.
- Read some of the additional resources listed on the Pastor & Parish website so that you can direct participants who may wish to become more fully immersed in the topic.

The Duke Clergy Health Initiative staff wants you to have a positive experience in facilitating this program.

Should you have questions about the curriculum or guiding your committee through it, please contact us.

Duke Clergy Health Initiative

919.613.5350

clergyhealth@div.duke.edu

www.clergyhealthinitiative.org

Introducing Pastor & Parish

30 minutes

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To familiarize committee members with the Pastor & Parish curriculum and facilitate their engagement with it

Needed in the Gathering Space

- Audio-visual equipment, tested and ready to go.
- Table and chairs sufficient for everyone to be seated comfortably, facing one another
- Pastor & Parish DVD
- Pastor & Parish Facilitator Guide
- Pastor & Parish Participant Workbooks (one per participant)

Setting the Stage for Pastor & Parish

Pastor & Parish can have a transformative effect on your SPRC and the ways it approaches its responsibilities, but completing the program requires a substantial investment in time. Therefore, it is important that the members of your committee understand why they are taking part in the curriculum and what it is designed to accomplish.

The introductory gathering can take place during a regularly scheduled SPRC meeting. **The SPRC Chair should take responsibility for gathering the group and communicating his or her support of the program.** If you are not the chair, ensure that he or she can speak knowledgeably about what Pastor & Parish entails and decide who will present the information below.

Video and Discussion

If the group gathered solely for this introduction, welcome them and thank them for coming.

Distribute a copy of the Participant Workbook to each member.

Explain why the Duke Clergy Health Initiative created Pastor & Parish. Use the description below or summarize in your own words:

“The Duke Clergy Health Initiative is a collaboration of The Duke Endowment and Duke Divinity School, who are working in partnership with the two United Methodist conferences in North Carolina to study and improve the health and well-being of clergy. Information about their clergy wellness program, Spirited Life, is available on page 2 of the participant workbook.

Their research is the first to examine how to tailor health interventions to clergy, and they have determined that efforts to improve clergy health will succeed only if those programs address the many factors that influence pastors’ health. That includes the environments created by their congregations and denominational leaders.

They believe that the SPRC plays a critical role in fostering a healthy relationship between the pastor and the congregation. In response, they have developed this theologically-framed curriculum. It describes service on this committee as being a ministry that supports the mission of the local church. Their hope is that as we begin to view our work through this lens, we will, in turn, seek out ways to strengthen communication across the church and serve as good stewards of our pastor’s time and gifts – and that this will foster an environment that promotes clergy health.”

Using the DVD, play the Introduction. (Duration: 4:30)

Explain why your SPRC has chosen to participate.

Describe what is involved:

- The videos provide a theologically-framed introduction to each session's topic, and the participant workbook guides the committee in considering how the ideas that have been presented might apply in your church.
- Pastor & Parish is designed to be presented in six individual sessions, with the time between used for prayer and reflection.
- Most of the sessions last about 75 minutes; the final two last 90 minutes.
- The final session involves creating a covenant built upon the key tenets of the Pastor & Parish program to guide the work of the SPRC going forward.

Share the expectations of committee members:

- Encourage faithful participation by everyone.
- Reinforce the importance of confidentiality within the group. The committee should decide together what should be shared more broadly.

Describe the role of the facilitator:

- Gathering the group
- Ensuring that those participating have access to the materials they need to complete the program and a safe space in which to share
- Coming to each gathering prepared to keep the conversation moving and productive, so as to be respectful of everyone's time

Discuss optimal meeting times.

Invite and answer additional questions.

Ending the Session

Conclude with prayer. Use this prayer or one of your own design:

"Lord, as we begin this journey together, send your Spirit among us. Open our hearts and minds that we may see fresh ways of doing your will in this congregation. Keep us kind and generous to each other as we seek to be formed as disciples of Jesus Christ, that we may strengthen your people's witness in this community and around the world. We pray in the name of Jesus, to whom the church belongs. Amen."

"...It was so well done. It was informative, and it was one of those that - rather than focusing on the nuts and bolts of, 'When such and such happens, the Discipline says you need to do this' - it always took us back to the theological foundation of what we're about. That was very affirming, and reaffirming."

*United Methodist pastor,
one year after completing the
Pastor & Parish program*

Session 1

Baptism

75 minutes

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To encourage committee members to see their work on the SPRC as a ministry in response to the sacrament of baptism

Needed in the Gathering Space

- Audio-visual equipment, tested and ready to go
- Table and chairs sufficient for everyone to be seated comfortably, facing one another
- Pastor & Parish DVD
- Pastor & Parish Facilitator Guide
- Pastor & Parish Participant Workbooks (kept by participants)
- Extra pens or pencils and blank paper
- You may also wish to have:
 - One copy of *The United Methodist Book of Discipline* (2012)
 - One copy of *The United Methodist Hymnal*

Special items

- Large glass bowl of water in the center of the table (or the bowl from your church's baptismal font, if it is removable)

Welcome and Introductions (10 minutes)

Begin by welcoming everyone and thanking them for coming.

Use the first few minutes for introductions. This is important even if everyone participating knows one another well.

1. Ask each person to give his or her full name.
2. Encourage each person to share:
 - One thing that they love about your church
 - One thing that no one knows about them (something not on their résumé)

As the committee members introduce themselves, write their full names on poster paper so that all can see. After all have finished, add the names of any other members who will be participating in Pastor & Parish, but who may not be present.

Lead the group in the following prayer or a similar one of your own design. Use the list you have created to ensure that each participant is named in the prayer.

“Gracious God, we give you thanks and praise for our baptism and place in your holy church. You came to the waters and called us each by name. You called *[name each person on the list]* and welcomed them into the Communion of Saints. As we move through this study together, let your Spirit move among us, opening our hearts and minds to new learning and insight, that our congregation may be strengthened to do your will powerfully and gracefully. We pray in the name of Jesus, the Risen and Exalted Lord. Amen.”

Setting Expectations (2 minutes)

Focus the group's attention for several “housekeeping” items:

1. Reinforce the importance of **confidentiality** within the group. The committee should decide together what should be shared more broadly.
2. Encourage **faithful participation** by everyone.

Video and Discussion (55 minutes)

Using the DVD, play Session I: Baptism. (*Duration: 8:30*)

Refer the group to page 4 of the workbook. Ask them to answer the questions listed under “Remembering Our Baptism.” Allow approximately 5 minutes for writing. If the group finishes writing sooner, feel free to move on.

Invite members to share their recollections of baptism, whether those memories are of their own baptism or their children’s baptisms, or are anecdotes recalled from others’ telling. Encourage participants to touch the water in the bowl as they reflect. While there is no need to go in order around the table, do encourage everyone to speak. Allow no more than 2-3 minutes for each story. For a committee with 10 members, this could take up to 30 minutes.

If answers to the second question – What does your baptism into the church mean for the way you live your life? – did not emerge earlier, ask for volunteers willing to comment.

Continue this discussion until approximately 8 minutes prior to the scheduled conclusion of the session.

For Further Reflection (4 minutes)

Call the group’s attention to the “For Further Reflection” section on page 5 of the workbook.

Encourage everyone to copy the names of those participating in Pastor & Parish in the workbook space provided. Request that each member of the group take time over the next week to reflect on the relationship between his or her calling through baptism and the ministry of the SPRC. The group will discuss these questions briefly at the start of the next session.

Remind the group that the Pastor & Parish website (www.pastorandparish.com) contains a variety of resources for those who wish to read more on this topic. We intend to update these resources periodically.

Ending the Session (4 minutes)

Confirm the date and time when the group will meet next.

Conclude with prayer. Use this prayer or one of your own design. Be certain that each person around the table is named:

“God, renew us, guide our footsteps, free from sin and all its snares. One with Christ in living, dying, by your Spirit, children, heirs. Gracious Lord, the covenant you made through baptism with *[name each participant]* is timeless and trustworthy. As we move through this study together, keep our heads wet with the waters of your promise that we may learn and grow for the blessing and strengthening of the ministries of this congregation. We pray in the name of Jesus, who was baptized by John in the Jordan. Amen.”

TIP

Smallgroups.com, an offering of Christianity Today, features several excellent tutorials on how to facilitate group discussions effectively. The links to these and other resources are available on the Resources tab of the Pastor & Parish website.

Session 2

Discipleship

75 minutes

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To encourage SPRC members to partner with their pastor in developing fresh, vibrant ministry appropriate to the mission of the church

Needed in the Gathering Space

- Audio-visual equipment, tested and ready to go
- Table and chairs sufficient for everyone to be seated comfortably, facing one another
- Pastor & Parish DVD
- Pastor & Parish Facilitator Guide
- Pastor & Parish Participant Workbooks (kept by participants)
- Extra pens or pencils and blank paper
- You may also wish to have:
 - One copy of *The United Methodist Book of Discipline* (2012)
 - One copy of *The United Methodist Hymnal*

Welcome and Introductions (5 minutes)

Begin by welcoming everyone and thanking them for coming. If members are attending for the first time, ask everyone at the table to introduce themselves.

Lead the group in the following prayer or a similar one of your own design. Use the list you have created to ensure that each participant is named in the prayer.

“Eternal God, we give you thanks and praise for your call to discipleship, extended to *[name each participant]* as it was to Sarah and Abraham, and to Peter, James and John. Let your Spirit be among us now, that as we open ourselves to Its leading, we may come to fresh understandings of Your will for us in the world. We are gathered in the name of Jesus, the Lord. Amen.”

Remind the group that they’ve agreed that their comments and responses will stay in the room.

Revisiting Baptism (10 minutes)

Call the group’s attention to the “For Further Reflection” section of the Baptism session (page 5). Invite a few participants to share an insight or question they had while reflecting over the previous week. Allow 8-10 minutes for this conversation.

Conclude this discussion with a statement that summarizes the insights and links them to the learning objective for Session 2: Discipleship.

Video and Discussion (50 minutes)

Using the DVD, play Session 2: Discipleship. *(Duration: 7:30)*

Refer the group to page 6 of the workbook. Ask them to answer the questions listed under “Examining Our Path.” Allow 8-10 minutes for writing. If the group finishes writing sooner, feel free to move on.

Invite members to share and respond. Allow approximately 35 minutes for discussion. Ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to speak.

Continue this discussion until approximately 8 minutes prior to the scheduled conclusion of the session.

For Further Reflection (4 minutes)

Call the group’s attention to the “For Further Reflection” section on page 7 of the workbook.

Encourage them to continue to pray for one another daily. Lift up the importance of the question, “What is our church doing well? And what could we be doing better to form disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world?”

Remind the group that the Pastor & Parish website (www.pastorandparish.com) contains a variety of resources for those who wish to read more on this topic. If you had time to read one ahead of time and found it helpful, suggest it specifically to the group.

Ending the Session (4 minutes)

Confirm the date and time when the group will meet next.

Conclude with prayer. Use this prayer or one of your own design. Be certain that each person around the table is named:

“God of the Prophets and Apostles, of our mothers and fathers, of the disciples of all generations: by your Spirit help us to recognize when we are standing on holy ground, and that this congregation has not been called to ministry for its own sake, but as an answer to someone’s prayer. Watch over *[name each participant]* as you always watch over your faithful people, and strengthen them for ministry. We pray in the name of Jesus, who called the fishermen away from their nets and toward the Kingdom. Amen.”

TIP

Use a small clock or a smart phone with a timer to help you monitor the time that has elapsed. Put the device on the table in front of you so that you can check it periodically without distracting from the conversation.

Session 3

Sacred Bundle

75 minutes

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To encourage SPRC members to recognize and share congregational memories, taboos, and traditions that define their church's culture, but may not be readily apparent to a new pastor

Needed in the Gathering Space

- Audio-visual equipment, tested and ready to go
- Table and chairs sufficient for everyone to be seated comfortably, facing one another
- Pastor & Parish DVD
- Pastor & Parish Facilitator Guide
- Pastor & Parish Participant Workbooks (kept by participants)
- Extra pens or pencils and blank paper
- You may also wish to have:
 - One copy of *The United Methodist Book of Discipline* (2012)
 - One copy of *The United Methodist Hymnal*

Special items

- One copy of the local church's history, if available

Welcome and Introductions (5 minutes)

Begin by welcoming everyone and thanking them for coming. If members are attending for the first time, ask everyone at the table to introduce themselves.

Lead the group in the following prayer or a similar one of your own design. Use the list you have created to ensure that each participant is named in the prayer.

"God of Abraham and Sarah, of Moses and of Deborah: the journey from Egypt to the New Jerusalem is long, sometimes joyous, other times dark and difficult. All of us here *[name everyone at the table]* long for the day when nations will not lift up sword against other nations; neither shall there be war anymore. We long for that day when the church victorious shall be the church at rest. But we're not there yet, and neither is our congregation. As we meet, teach us to speak the truth in love, so that your plan for us may not be impeded. We pray in the name of Jesus, the Lord. Amen."

Remind the group that they've agreed that their comments and responses will stay in the room.

Revisiting Discipleship (10 minutes)

Call the group's attention to the "For Further Reflection" section of the Discipleship session (page 7). Invite a few participants to share an insight or question they had while reflecting over the previous week. Allow 8-10 minutes for this conversation.

Conclude this discussion with a statement that summarizes the insights and links them to the learning objective for Session 3: Sacred Bundle.

Video and Discussion (50 minutes)

Using the DVD, play Session 3: Sacred Bundle. *(Duration: 11:30)*

Refer the group to pages 8-9 of the workbook. Ask them to answer the questions listed under "Interpreting your Congregation's Sacred Bundle." Allow 8-10 minutes for writing. If the group finishes writing sooner, feel free to move on.

Invite members to share and respond. Allow approximately 35 minutes for discussion. Ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to comment.

Continue this discussion until approximately 8 minutes prior to the scheduled conclusion of the session.

For Further Reflection (4 minutes)

Call the group's attention to the "For Further Reflection" section on page 10 of the workbook.

Encourage them to continue to pray for one another daily. Ask them to consider how your committee might ensure that its members "speak the truth in love" every time you meet.

Remind the group that the Pastor & Parish website (www.pastorandparish.com) contains a variety of resources for those who wish to read more on this topic. If you had time to read one ahead of time and found it helpful, suggest it specifically to the group.

Ending the Session (4 minutes)

Confirm the date and time when the group will meet next. Explain that Session 4: Truthful Naming is constructed differently from other sessions and ask that they read all four of the scenarios on pages 12-13 in advance of the next session. At that time, the group will collectively decide which of the scenarios they wish to use as the basis for their discussion.

Conclude with prayer. Use this prayer or one of your own design. Be certain that each person around the table is named:

"God of grace and God of glory, on your people pour your power. Empower us to speak the truth in love. . .that the walls that separate us may fall and the chains that bind your church may be broken. Gift these your servants *[name everyone at the table]* that, in their ministry in this place, they may embody truthful discipleship and share what they hold most dear. In the name of Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Amen."

TIP

You may need to call on those who seem less inclined to participate or to politely close down another member's lengthy comment.

Breaking into the conversation with a simple question, such as:

"Tom: what do you think about what Rick just said?" may encourage Tom to share.

Session 3

Truthful Naming

75 minutes

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To equip SPRC members with tools for dealing responsibly with conflict that arises in the local church

Needed in the Gathering Space

- Audio-visual equipment, tested and ready to go
- Table and chairs sufficient for everyone to be seated comfortably, facing one another
- Poster listing the names of all participants
- Poster paper and markers (plus tape if paper is not self-adhesive)
- Pastor & Parish DVD
- Pastor & Parish Facilitator Guide
- Pastor & Parish Participant Workbooks (kept by participants)
- Extra pens or pencils and blank paper
- You may also wish to have:
 - One copy of *The United Methodist Book of Discipline* (2012)
 - One copy of *The United Methodist Hymnal*

Welcome and Introductions (5 minutes)

Begin by welcoming everyone and thanking them for coming. If members are attending for the first time, ask everyone at the table to introduce themselves.

Lead the group in the following prayer or a similar one of your own design. Use the list you have created to ensure that each participant is named in the prayer.

“Lord, make us instruments of your peace. As Jesus healed in the villages of Galilee, by the power of your Spirit, equip us to be healers. Surprise each of us [*name everyone at the table*] with the opportunities you will give us for peace-making and for binding up wounds in this congregation. Amaze us with the grace that flows out of our lives, blessing and restoring our sisters and brothers in this place. We pray in the name of Jesus, who opened the eyes of the blind and empowered the lame to walk. Amen.”

Remind the group that they’ve agreed that their comments and responses will stay in the room.

Revisiting Sacred Bundle (10 minutes)

Call the group’s attention to the “For Further Reflection” section of the Sacred Bundle session (page 10). Invite a few participants to share an insight or question they had while reflecting over the previous week. Allow 8-10 minutes for this conversation.

Conclude this discussion with a statement that summarizes the insights and links them to the learning objective for Session 4: Truthful Naming.

Video and Discussion (50 minutes)

Using the DVD, play Session 4: Truthful Naming. *(Duration: 9:30)*

Refer the group to page 11 of the workbook. Explain this week's exercise, which is different from the other sessions: this week, the discussion will center on a scenario of a church in conflict.

Participants should have read the four scenarios on pages 12-13 prior to arriving, so briefly solicit input on which one the group would like to use as the basis for discussion. Ask for 3-4 volunteers to each read a paragraph of the selected scenario aloud. Then, instruct the group to answer the questions on pages 14-15. Allow 8-10 minutes for writing. If the group finishes writing sooner, feel free to move on.

Invite members to share and respond. Allow approximately 30 minutes for discussion. Ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to speak.

Continue this discussion until approximately 8 minutes prior to the scheduled conclusion of the session.

For Further Reflection (4 minutes)

Call the group's attention to the "For Further Reflection" section on page 15 of the workbook.

Encourage them to continue to pray for one another daily and to consider ways in which they could foster the practice of naming issues truthfully. Emphasize that though their discussion hinged on a sample scenario, they should use the time this week to think about how similar situations might emerge in your congregation. How might they use the skill of truthful naming to address or reconcile those issues?

Remind the group that the Pastor & Parish website (www.pastorandparish.com) contains a variety of resources for those who wish to read more on this topic. Call attention to "Circle Manners," mentioned by one of the pastors on the video, which is available online and could serve as a resource for engaging in productive discussions.

Ending the Session (4 minutes)

Confirm the date and time when the group will meet next. Session 5: Stewardship of the Pastor, often prompts discussion that lasts longer than usual. Decide as a group whether to extend the meeting time to 90 minutes.

Conclude with prayer. Use this prayer or one of your own design. Be certain that each person around the table is named:

"Lord, you taught us to pray that your will might be done on earth, even as it is done in heaven. This congregation is the answer to someone's prayer, and it is your will that we find that prayer. Heal us...empower us...restore us. Make *[name everyone at the table]* incarnations of your peace. We pray in the name of the Prince of Peace, Jesus, the Christ. Amen."

TIP

Remember to ask questions that require a different response than simply "yes" or "no." Ask follow-up questions to elicit richer answers.

Session 5

Stewardship of the Pastor

90 minutes

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To encourage SPRC members to see the committee's relationship with its pastor as one of care and respect, not control or management

Needed in the Gathering Space

- Audio-visual equipment, tested and ready to go
- Table and chairs sufficient for everyone to be seated comfortably, facing one another
- Poster listing the names of all participants
- Poster paper and markers (plus tape if paper is not self-adhesive)
- Pastor & Parish DVD
- Pastor & Parish Facilitator Guide
- Pastor & Parish Participant Workbooks (kept by participants)
- Extra pens or pencils and blank paper
- You may also wish to have:
 - One copy of *The United Methodist Book of Discipline* (2012)
 - One copy of *The United Methodist Hymnal*

Special items

- Large glass bowl of water in the center of the table (or the bowl from your church's baptismal font, if it is removable)
- One copy per participant of the Responsibilities and Duties of Elders and Licensed Pastors, found in the 2012 United Methodist Book of Discipline, ¶ 340 (pages 267-270)

Welcome and Introductions (5 minutes)

Begin by welcoming everyone and thanking them for coming. If members are attending for the first time, ask everyone at the table to introduce themselves.

Lead the group in the following prayer or a similar one of your own design. Use the list you have created to ensure that each participant is named in the prayer.

“O God beyond all praising, you have given us blessings beyond number and gifts beyond our power to count. In the Body of Christ you give us to one another as sisters and brothers, as teachers and friends, as pastors and laypeople. Unless we care for one another as your good gifts, the Gospel is hindered and your Kingdom is delayed. Enable all of us [*name everyone at the table*] to honor one another as a gift, and, in that honoring, to give you further praise. In the name of Jesus, before whom every knee shall bow. Amen.”

Remind the group that they've agreed that their comments and responses will stay in the room.

Revisiting Truthful Naming (10 minutes)

Call the group's attention to the “For Further Reflection” section of the Truthful Naming session (page 15). Invite a few participants to share an insight or question they had while reflecting over the previous week. Allow 8-10 minutes for this conversation.

Conclude this discussion with a statement that summarizes the insights and links them to the learning objective for Session 5: Stewardship of the Pastor.

Video and Discussion (65 minutes)

Using the DVD, play Session 5: Stewardship of the Pastor. *(Duration: 10:00)*

Refer the group to pages 16-18 of the workbook. Before they consider the questions listed under “Honoring the Work of the Holy Spirit,” ask them to look at the water on the table again and silently recall their own baptism. There are more questions for this session than in previous weeks, so allow 12-15 minutes for writing. If the group finishes writing sooner, feel free to move on.

Invite members to share and respond. Allow approximately 40 minutes for discussion (or 6-7 minutes per question). Ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to share and respond.

Continue this discussion until approximately 8 minutes prior to the scheduled conclusion of the session.

For Further Reflection (4 minutes)

Call the group’s attention to the “For Further Reflection” section questions on page 18 of the workbook.

Encourage them to continue to pray for one another daily and to consider ways in which they could encourage your pastor to care for himself or herself.

Remind the group that the Pastor & Parish website (www.pastorandparish.com) contains a variety of resources for those who wish to read more on this topic. Call special attention to The Connection, the Clergy Health Initiative’s blog, which offers theologically-framed resources for cultivating holistic health and well-being.

Ending the Session (4 minutes)

Confirm the date and time when the group will meet next. Session 6: Covenant for Ministry, often prompts discussion that lasts longer than usual. Decide as a group whether to extend the time to 90 minutes.

Explain that this session will involve the development of a covenant. During the session, the group will share insights based on the previous five sessions. You will then be asking for two volunteers who will assemble these thoughts into a draft of a covenant for the group to review together at a later date.

Conclude with prayer. Use this prayer or one of your own design. Be certain that each person around the table is named:

“Creator and Redeemer, all that we have comes from you, and you have set us amidst your creation to care for it and to nurture it. Enable all of us *[name everyone at the table]* to be more faithful stewards of your holy church, of its ministries, of its pastors and of one another. May this be so, that we may bring manna to a starving world. In the strong name of Jesus, whose church we hold in trust until His coming again. Amen.”

TIP

In advance of this session, alert your pastor that part of the discussion hinges on clarifying the many duties and responsibilities of clergy. The pastor should come prepared to discuss these with the group.

Session 6

Covenant for Ministry

90 minutes

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To encourage SPRC members to create a practical and spiritual covenant that will guide the committee in its ministry

Needed in the Gathering Space

- Audio-visual equipment, tested and ready to go
- Table and chairs sufficient for everyone to be seated comfortably, facing one another
- Poster listing the names of all participants
- Poster paper and markers (plus tape if paper is not self-adhesive)
- Pastor & Parish DVD
- Pastor & Parish Facilitator Guide
- Pastor & Parish Participant Workbooks (kept by participants)
- Extra pens or pencils and blank paper
- You may also wish to have:
 - One copy of *The United Methodist Book of Discipline* (2012)
 - One copy of *The United Methodist Hymnal*

Special items

- One copy per participant of any covenant that your church and/or SPRC may have developed

Welcome and Introductions (5 minutes)

Begin by welcoming everyone and thanking them for coming. If members are attending for the first time, ask everyone at the table to introduce themselves.

Lead the group in the following prayer or a similar one of your own design. Use the list you have created to ensure that each participant is named in the prayer.

“Loving God, you journeyed with the disciples on the Emmaus Road and showed them the glory of your resurrection. You are always with your faithful people, wherever the road may take them. You have been with us, with *[name everyone at the table]* as we have journeyed toward deeper understanding of our ministry in this congregation. Let your Spirit be among us now, guiding our conversation and our thinking, that the covenant we make may please you and strengthen the proclamation of your Gospel. We pray in the name of our Lord, Jesus, the Christ. Amen.”

Remind the group that they’ve agreed that their comments and responses will stay in the room.

Revisiting Stewardship of the Pastor (10 minutes)

Call the group’s attention to the “For Further Reflection” section of the Stewardship of the Pastor session (page 18). Invite a few participants to share an insight or question they had while reflecting over the previous week. Allow 8-10 minutes for this conversation.

Conclude this discussion with a statement that summarizes the insights and links them to the learning objective for Session 6: Covenant for Ministry.

Video and Discussion (20 minutes)

Using the DVD, play Session 6: Covenant for Ministry. *(Duration: 7:30)*

Refer the group to page 19 of the workbook. For added interest, ask for three volunteers to each read one of the paragraphs aloud. Ask the group to turn to the Sample Covenant on page 22. Again, consider going around the table, asking individuals to read aloud one of the bullets.

Ask the group what strikes them about the sample covenant. What specifics are included? In some cases, it's more general – why? How might the use of this covenant enable the committee of this sample church to better do its work? Spend no more than 10 minutes on this discussion.

Covenant Writing Exercise (45 minutes)

Transition the group into the exercise of generating ideas for the covenant. Emphasize that the sample covenant they've been discussing truly is a sample. While the wording might be nice, it is important that the committee use the time in this session to work out phrases and ideas that best reflect your church's unique needs.

Ask the group to suggest ideas that emerge from each of the clauses listed on the Covenant Template on pages 20-21. This is something to be carefully considered, and treated with openness and generosity. What has emerged from your conversation and reflection over the past several weeks that is meaningful to your work...in your church...with your SPRC?

Jot down these ideas on the poster paper or whiteboard/chalkboard if available, and ask another committee member to take notes. Allow 8-10 minutes for each topic, for a total of 45 minutes.

Ending the Session (10 minutes)

Request that two members of the group volunteer to use the notes to draft a covenant for the SPRC. Ask that they then share the draft with everyone on the committee in advance of the next SPRC meeting. Emphasize that not everything mentioned during the brainstorming session will be included in the covenant, but that key ideas will be represented.

Confirm the date and time when the group will meet next to discuss the covenant draft.

Conclude with prayer. Use this prayer or one of your own design. Be certain that each person around the table is named:

“God of Abraham and Sarah, of the prophets and apostles, of our mothers and fathers in the faith, and of our children in all ages to come: when we were baptized, you came to the waters and called each of us by name. You invited *[name everyone around the table]* to be in covenant with you, and you have been faithful ever since to the promises you made to us. We give you thanks and praise for our place in your one, holy church, and for the ministry we share in *[name your local congregation]*. Through your Holy Spirit, grant that the covenant we create together for the work of the SPRC may graciously enable the ministries you intend for your people in this place, that *[name your local congregation]* may be a foretaste of your kingdom. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, crucified and risen. Amen.”

TIP

Using a camera to take a photo of each page of group-generated notes is a quick way of capturing the information, so that it can be transcribed later.

Next Steps

"I've always looked at pastor-parish as business, but to actually incorporate the spiritual side, that's strong."

"I think we're engaging in things as a committee that I don't know I would have assumed were the purview of the staff-parish committee."

SPRC members, one year after completing the Pastor & Parish program

Extending the Impact

While Pastor & Parish is not intended to address the day-to-day business of the SPRC, it is likely that the topics you have discussed together will have an impact on how you approach the operations of the committee in the months and years to come.

Enhancing the SPRC's planning and process

Your group may have identified some practical items of business to address that fall outside of the spiritual intent of the covenant, but which might bear good fruit.

- Perhaps the SPRC would like to establish a new mid-year planning retreat to address important but non-urgent concerns.
- Another way to address business with great intentionality would be to establish a process for agenda-setting that functions across the year, rather than month-to-month or meeting-to-meeting.

Sharing Pastor & Parish with new committee members or a new pastor

One of the aspects of Pastor & Parish that churches have found most valuable is its capacity to foster community within a committee and between SPRCs and clergy.

- Since the SPRC has a rolling membership, consider repeating the curriculum annually at the point when new members are joining the committee, affording them the opportunity to contribute to the SPRC's covenant.
- Likewise, going through the program with a newly appointed pastor offers clergy joining a congregation a wonderful lens into the church's character and the SPRC a way to get to know and connect with their new leader.

Encouraging your congregation to embrace the teachings of Pastor & Parish

While designed with the needs of the SPRC in mind, the theological concepts presented in Pastor & Parish could be beneficial for the wider congregation.

- Consider sharing one or more of the videos at an evening gathering, discussing how, as baptized individuals, we each have a call to serve as disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Share with other church leaders the covenant your SPRC has created, encouraging them to likewise reflect on their committees' responsibilities as a ministry in service to the local church.

Regardless of the specific actions you take, we encourage you to continue to engage in conversation with one another, drawing on the principles you've explored through this series.

Notes

Pastor & Parish is funded by a grant from

James R. Duke

THE DUKE ENDOWMENT



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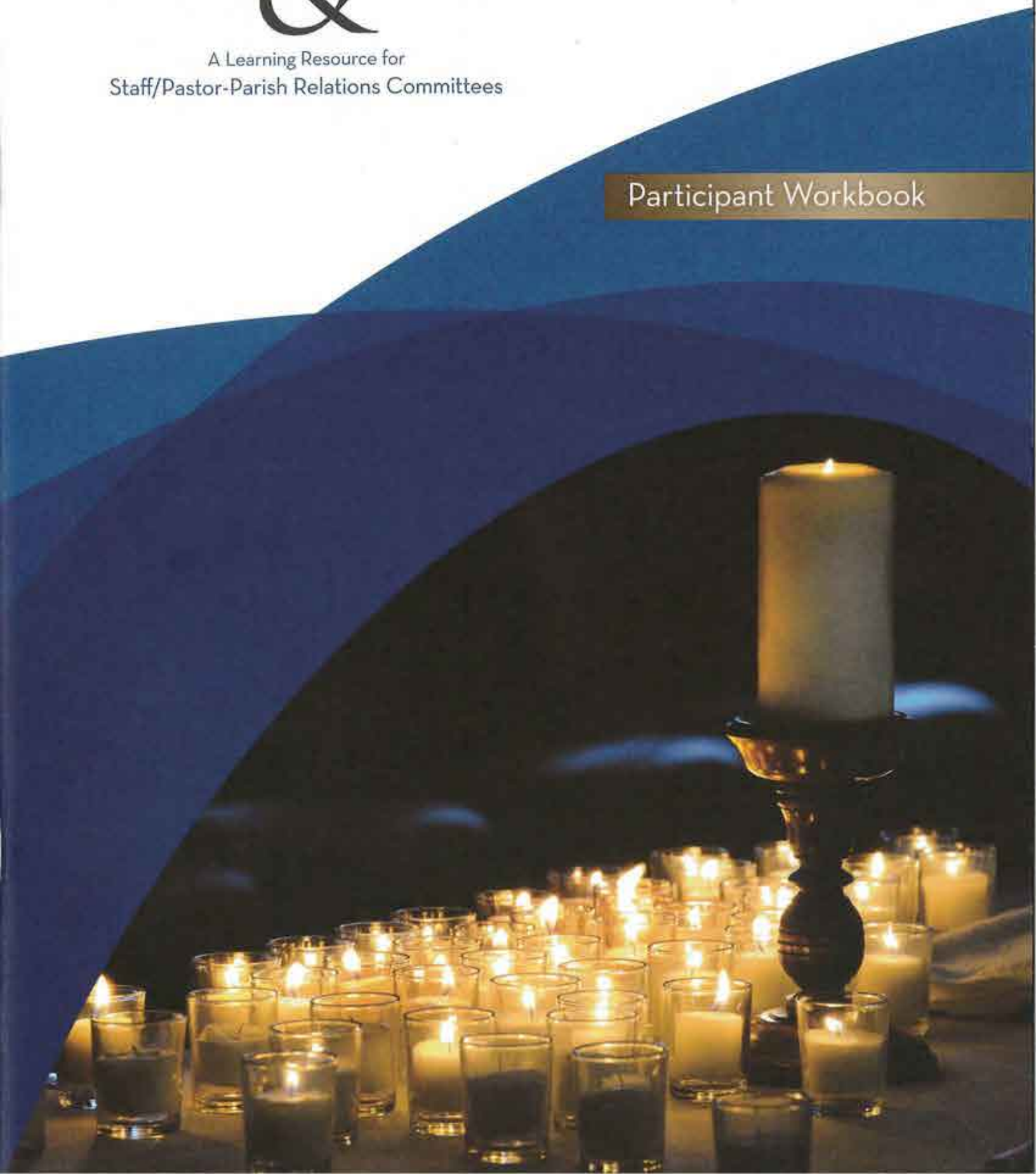
www.pastorandparish.com

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Pastor & Parish™

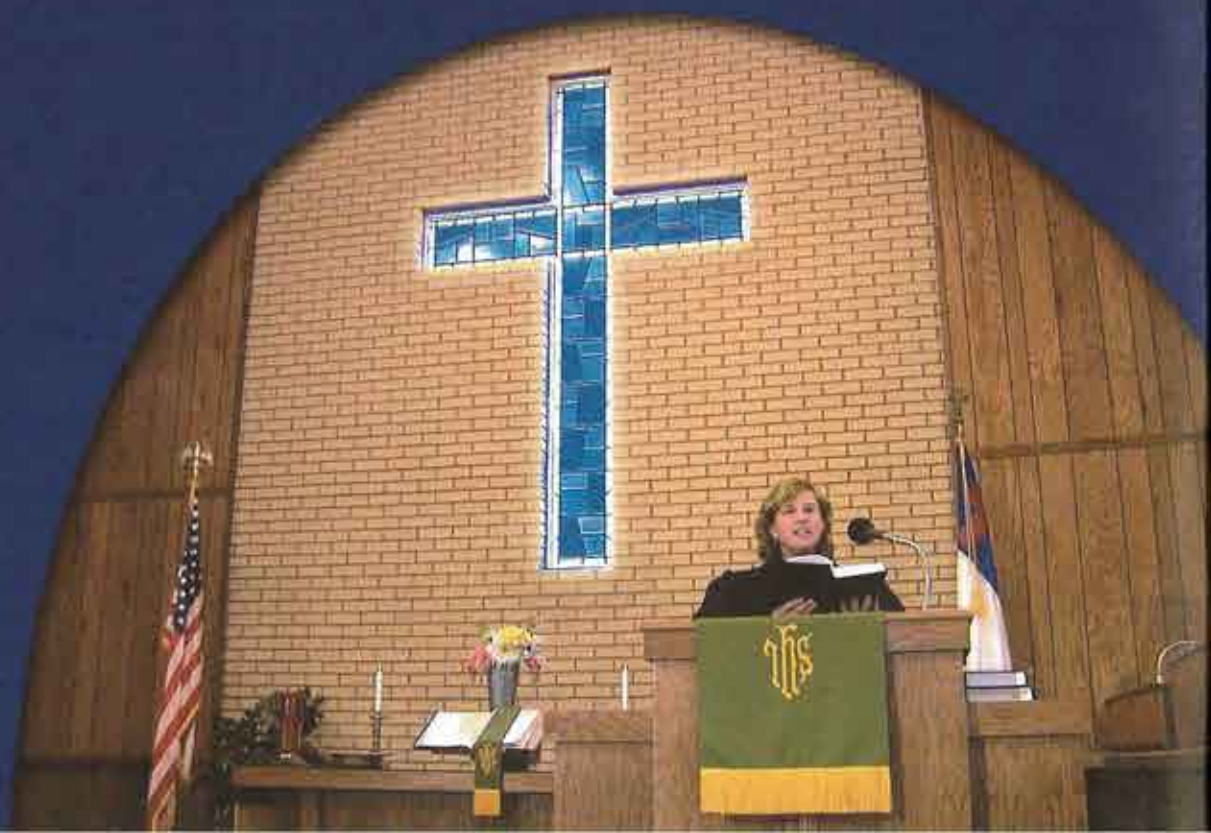
A Learning Resource for
Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committees

Participant Workbook



Depending on the size of your church, your committee may refer to itself in one of two ways. United Methodist churches served by multiple clergy generally call this group the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC), whereas congregations served by one pastor often use the term Pastor-Parish Relations Committee (PPRC).

We have chosen to use the broader term of SPRC throughout this series. In places where we refer to 'your pastor' for simplicity, you should consider the point to extend to all clergy.



Pastor & Parish™

In agreeing to be part of this program, you have taken a critical step in the ongoing growth and development of your congregation.

The United Methodist Church describes the Staff-Parish Relations Committee as being “the administrative unit in a local church, where staff and congregational interests are integrated to focus on the mission of the church.”

Pastor & Parish™ is a theologically-framed formational activity for SPRCs that encourages discussion within your committee about the unique character of your church. It will help you identify ways for committee members to work in partnership with your pastor, other staff, and the congregation in strengthening your local church.

Participant Workbook

What to Expect	3
Session 1: Baptism	4
Session 2: Discipleship	6
Session 3: Sacred Bundle	8
Session 4: Truthful Naming	11
Session 5: Stewardship of the Pastor	16
Session 6: Covenant for Ministry	19
Next Steps	23
Notes	24

About the Duke Clergy Health Initiative

The Duke Clergy Health Initiative was formed in 2007 when the North Carolina and Western North Carolina Conferences of the United Methodist Church partnered with Duke Divinity School and The Duke Endowment to seek solutions to their growing concerns about declining clergy health and increasing health costs.

Findings from our early research established a clear picture of clergy health and the factors affecting it. We now know with certainty that United Methodist clergy in North Carolina are more likely to suffer from obesity, chronic disease, and depression than other comparable state residents. We also have a better understanding of the factors in the lives of clergy that expose them to greater risks of poor health. One key driver of well-being is the quality of the relationship that a pastor has with the members of his or her congregation.

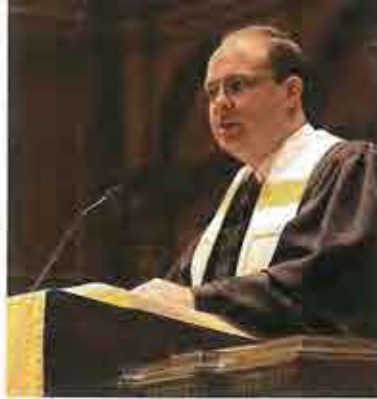
In 2010, we enrolled more than 1,100 North Carolina-based United Methodist clergy in Spirited Life, a multi-year wellness program and behavioral health study. Through it, pastors learn to manage stress; care for their bodies in a healthy, mindful way; and find spiritual renewal.

We hope that the skills you will learn in Pastor & Parish will augment your pastor's efforts to care for himself or herself and will enable your SPRC to build the quality of its leadership.

To learn more about the Clergy Health Initiative and our research findings, visit our website: www.clergyhealthinitiative.org.



What to Expect



Pastor & Parish is a six-session small group learning experience. It is an opportunity for your SPRC to grow in community with one another in a forum separate from your regular committee meetings.

Each of the sessions is meant to last about an hour. During each session, you will view a short video and then individually answer several questions in this workbook. Your group's facilitator will guide you in a discussion of these ideas, which you can continue to explore on your own through additional readings. By discussing candidly in this safe space what your church does well and how it might improve, you will increase the effectiveness of your committee.

This series is unique among training resources for SPRCs in that it ties the committee's responsibilities back to their spiritual beginnings. At the conclusion of this course, you will have the opportunity to craft a covenant to capture what your SPRC has learned and use it to guide your committee's ministry as you work with your pastor to preserve and develop your church's unique character.

Should you wish to delve more deeply into any of the topics presented in Pastor & Parish, links to articles, books and additional resources are available online at www.pastorandparish.com.



Pastor & Parish™

Session 1

Baptism

Your presence on this committee is, before anything else, a ministry in response to your baptism. The baptism we receive signifies not only God's gift of grace, but also our covenant with God to strengthen the local church by carrying on Christ's work until He comes again.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To encourage committee members to see their work on the SPRC as a ministry in response to the sacrament of baptism

Remembering Our Baptism

Do you remember – or have you been told – details about your baptism? How old were you? When and where did it take place? Who performed the sacrament? Were other important people in your life present? Are there photos to commemorate the event?

Not everyone who attends a United Methodist church was raised in the Methodist tradition. How might your baptism have differed from others on your committee? List your recollections below and share some of them with the group.

As members of the church, we all are called to ministry in some way. What does your baptism into the church mean for the way you live your life?

*So if anyone
is in Christ,
there is a new
creation:
everything old
has passed away;
see, everything
has become new!*

2 Corinthians 5:17

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

In the space below, write the names of the members of your SPRC and your pastor. Pray for each of them by name every day, asking for the power and presence of the Holy Spirit as they go about their ministries. Be sure to pray for yourself, too!

Study "Wash, O God, Our Sons and Daughters," the hymn that introduced this session's video. Sing or read it several times over a few days, asking the Holy Spirit to open new understanding for you. What images in the lyrics speak powerfully to you? Why? What kind of congregation does the hymn long for?



HYMN

Wash, O God, Our Sons and Daughters

United Methodist Hymnal, #605

*Wash, O God, our sons and daughters,
where your cleansing waters flow.*

*Number them among your people;
bless as Christ blessed long ago.*

*Weave them garments bright and
sparkling; compass them in love and light.*

*Fill, anoint them; send your Spirit,
Holy Dove and heart's delight.*

*We who bring them long for
nurture; by your milk may we be fed.*

*Let us join your feast, partaking
cup of blessing, living bread.*

*God, renew us, guide our footsteps;
free from sin and all its snares,*

*One with Christ in living, dying,
by your Spirit, children, heirs.*

*O how deep your holy wisdom!
Unimagined, all your ways!*

*To your name be glory, honor!
With our lives we worship, praise!*

*We your people stand before you,
water-washed and Spirit born.*

*By your grace, our lives we offer.
Recreate us; God, transform!*

*Used by permission of Augsburg-Fortress (music)
and The United Methodist Publishing House (lyrics)*

Session 2

Discipleship

The word apostle comes from a Greek verb meaning "to send." To be baptized is to *consent to be sent*, in the name of Jesus Christ. Often God's call to discipleship involves getting up and moving from the comfortable and the familiar, and journeying out in faith.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To encourage SPRC members to partner with their pastor in developing fresh, vibrant ministry appropriate to the mission of the parish

The SPRC should:

- Work with the pastor to discern God's plan for the congregation
- Assist in sharing that vision
- Support the pastor

Examining Our Path

As disciples, we are sent out to share the good news and to make sure that the good news is being received. This requires discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit. Consider the experiences and tendencies of your congregation when answering the questions below. Then share some with the group.

Are the comforts of the familiar restraining your congregation's ability to explore new forms of worship or witness? If yes, what are some of these restraints?

How might your committee assist the pastor in recognizing opportunities for your congregation to journey out in faith?

If the place your congregation is being sent requires a shift in the ways your church seeks to fulfill its mission, how might the SPRC support your pastor in making that transition?

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Continue to pray daily for everyone on your committee and for your pastor, naming each before God. What other prayers might you make, in light of what you've learned this week?

Consider the opportunities your congregation offers for its members to advance the mission of the United Methodist Church, "To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." What is your church doing well? What could you do better?

*Then I heard
the voice of the
Lord saying,
'Whom shall
I send, and who
will go for us?'
and I said, 'Here
am I; send me!'*

Isaiah 6:8



Mission of the United Methodist Church:

To make disciples of Jesus Christ
for the transformation of the world

Session 3

Sacred Bundle

An important part of your committee's work is to recognize the contents of your congregation's sacred bundle and to interpret them for the pastor. Unless your pastor understands them, he or she cannot minister effectively.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To encourage SPRC members to recognize and share congregational memories, taboos, and traditions that define their church's culture, but may not be readily apparent to a new pastor

Interpreting your Congregation's Sacred Bundle

In the space below, name something from your congregation's sacred bundle that you feel defines or shapes your church, but that your pastor may not know. Agree amongst your group that everyone's responses will be kept in confidence. Then share your response with the group.



In the session on Discipleship, your committee discussed habits or traditions that may be inhibiting your congregation's ability to explore new forms of worship or witness. Some members might consider these traditions to be part of the church's sacred bundle.

How do you decide what should remain in the sacred bundle, and what should be acknowledged, but let go? And how might you support the pastor in communicating that decision?

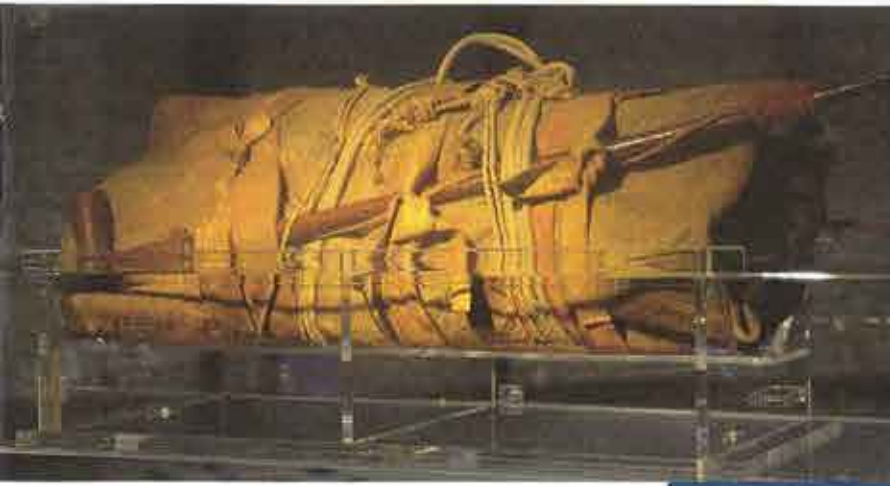
Continued on page 10.

What is a Sacred Bundle?

Some Native American cultures had an object they called a sacred bundle. It served as the people's portable history.

Usually made from animal hide, the sacred bundle included everyday objects that seemed unremarkable to someone from outside the community.

But in the hands of a skilled narrator, these artifacts could tell where a people had come from, their journey across the years, their triumphs and tragedies, their heroes and prophets, their joys and sorrows.



Used by permission of the Kansas State Historical Society

Session 3 continued

Sacred Bundle

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Continue to pray daily for everyone on your committee and for your pastor, naming each before God. What other prayers might you make, in light of what you've learned this week?

*But speaking
the truth in love,
we must grow
up in every way
into him who
is the head,
into Christ.*

Ephesians 4:15

The writer of Ephesians encourages the church to speak the truth in love within its walls so that its mission to those outside may be strengthened. Reflect upon how your committee might ensure that its members "speak the truth in love" every time you meet.

Session 4

Truthful Naming

Conflict in the church is not necessarily bad, for it means that passion and energy are present. But to move past the conflict, a church must learn to redirect this passion and energy into ministry and mission. This begins with truthful naming.

Naming Issues Honestly

The stories on the following pages describe congregations facing conflict due to changes the churches are experiencing.

Your leader will guide you in selecting a scenario to discuss. Spend a few minutes answering the questions that follow the scenarios, and then share some of your insights with the group.

Continued on page 12.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To equip SPRC members with tools for dealing responsibly with conflict that arises in the local church



Truthful Naming

Scenario 1: Carruthers UMC

Carruthers UMC is fortunate to be in a fast-growing community, and in the last two years, many new families have begun to join the church. CUMC has historically been a close-knit, rural congregation where everyone knew everyone, but now that sense of community is in transition.

Sally Brownstone has served for years as Sunday School superintendent as well as a teacher, and has taken pride in getting to know all of the children in the church. Usually good-natured and cooperative, Sally has, over the last year, become argumentative and has opposed nearly everything the pastor and other leaders have done to respond to the congregation's growth. She has spoken unfavorably of the pastor's leadership every time there has been an opportunity and now has begun to suggest that "we may need a change." Because they love and respect her, others in the congregation have begun to agree.

At a church council meeting, Sally intends to criticize the pastor's plans to add another Christmas Eve service to accommodate all of the families with younger children. As Sally begins to distribute copies of her list of concerns around the table, a young woman Sally has known from infancy says, "Aunt Sally, what's bothering you? I was baptized and raised here at Carruthers, and it is painful to see all this bitterness and conflict. Can you tell us all what the real problem is?"

Stunned, Sally is silent for a moment, and then she begins to cry. "I can't know the names of all the children anymore," she says. "There are just too many."

Scenario 2: Avalon UMC

Avalon UMC is a medium-sized, urban parish with a history of missional outreach to the community – the sort of local church that understands that ministry needs to extend "beyond the walls." The congregation's witness in the community has historically received broad support among its members, though there have occasionally been reasonable differences in opinion. Now, though, mission has led to divisiveness.

Because the number of homeless people in AUMC's neighborhood is increasing, some members of the congregation think the homeless should be able to pitch tents on the church's side lawn and have access to AUMC's restrooms 24/7, provided a mission volunteer is on hand. Others, citing city ordinances and liability risks, think the church's present ministry to the homeless – hot meals several days a week, counseling, and transportation to a free clinic – is sufficient.

At a council meeting, Sam Steadman, the finance chair, comments, "Tents and trash on the lawn will discourage people from coming to church on Sunday, not to mention frighten the office workers who use our walks to get to their jobs on weekdays. We need to remember that the present strength of our congregation is what makes mission possible in the first place."

A youth member of the council says, "Why don't we pray and wait for the guidance of the Holy Spirit?" Sam sighs and responds, "Sarah, the Holy Spirit doesn't have to pay the bills."

Scenario 3: Hostetler UMC

Hostetler UMC used to have 1,300 members and a Sunday worship attendance of 450; now there are 800 members and a good Sunday finds about 325 in the pews across two services. While finances are strong and the congregation is well engaged in ministry, there is a growing sense that some change needs to happen.

The pastor, Jessica Moreau, is in her sixth year, is a strong preacher and good administrator, and is generally well liked, though a minority of members thinks she is “trying to change things too quickly.” At the congregation’s annual spring planning retreat, Jessica presents a plan to reorder one of the Sunday services from very traditional to a blended style. This would provide opportunities for more members to share in leading worship – especially the youth – and should prove attractive to people who know neither the Lord’s Prayer nor the Apostles’ Creed by memory.

While most people at the retreat receive Jessica’s plan warmly, a few wonder how Trevor, the long-time church organist and choir director, who is classically trained and devoted to traditional worship, will react. During lunch at the retreat, someone calls Trevor and gives him a report. Trevor responds that any change to the worship format will result in his immediate resignation. This is reported back at the afternoon session of the retreat, and gloom settles in.

Scenario 4: Piney Corners UMC

Piney Corners UMC is a close-knit congregation of 120 members, with a Sunday attendance of about 70. Every five years the United Methodist Women of PCUMC publish a new cookbook; they’ve been doing so for more than fifty years. PCUMC takes great pride in this project, for the considerable funds it raises go to mission.

The gathering of the recipes has traditionally been entrusted to the women of the Jennings family, descended from the founder of the congregation, who laid the cornerstone more than 150 years ago. The UMW cookbook seldom varies from the country cuisine favored by Piney Corners’ older members: heavy on butter, cream, cheese and red meat, with little thought given to other styles of cooking.

Some younger members have asked that next year’s cookbook include healthier recipes that are lower in sugar, salt and fat. A number of them have sent their favorite recipes to Melinda Jennings, assuming she would welcome variety. Sally Compton, pastor at Piney Corners for two years, submitted several vegetarian favorites of her own.

At a meeting of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, one of the members reads a letter from Melinda Jennings, resigning from her position as editor of the UMW cookbook and citing the pastor’s “interference” as the principal reason for her decision. “Sally,” asks the chairperson, “has Melinda spoken with you about this?” “No,” says Sally, “this is the first I’ve heard of her concerns.”

Continued on page 14.

Session 4 continued

Truthful Naming

But when [Peter] came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood self-condemned.

Galatians 2:11

In the video for this session, one of the pastors suggests that she has found it easier to encourage her congregants to name things truthfully when she asks them to consider “How does that make you feel?” rather than “What do you think about that?” How might reframing the discussion in this way change the outcome in this scenario?

What would be the next steps in working through the conflict productively? What actions could make the conflict worse?

What responsibility does the SPRC have in situations of conflict, and to whom is the committee accountable?



What principles might your committee agree to adhere to when reconciling different points of view?



FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Continue to pray daily for everyone on your committee and for your pastor, naming each before God. What other prayers might you make, in light of what you've learned this week?

What steps might you take to encourage yourself in the ongoing practice of naming issues truthfully?

Session 5

Stewardship of the Pastor

Christian stewardship is more than the financial support we offer the church - it is the reverent care for all the gifts we have received from God. Your pastor is one of those gifts.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To encourage SPRC members to see the committee's relationship with its pastor as one of care and respect, not control or management



Honoring the Work of the Holy Spirit

The United Methodist Book of Discipline requires that the SPRC “reflect biblically and theologically on the role and work of the pastor and staff as they carry out their leadership responsibilities.” (2012, ¶258) Consider the ways in which your committee can support your pastor in his or her work; then, share some of your responses with the group.

In what specific ways does your committee model Christian stewardship in its care of your pastor?

Is your pastor encouraged to set aside adequate time for Sabbath and vacation? Is there a willingness within your congregation to accept care from other clergy during your pastor's absence? What is the SPRC's role in providing support?

Does the congregation have a clear understanding of the pastor's connectional responsibilities and his or her need for continuing education? If not, how might the SPRC better communicate these to the congregation?

Does your committee share with your pastor what the group feels he or she is doing well and provide insight into areas where his or her further development could most benefit the church? How might you enrich this analysis and conversation?

If your pastor resides in a parsonage, is there thoughtful, gracious provision for the property's care? Is the pastor's family's privacy respected? What role might the SPRC play in advocating for a space that is truly the pastor's own?

The SPRC should assist the pastor and staff in:

- Assessing their gifts
- Maintaining holistic health and work-life balance
- Setting priorities for leadership and service

United Methodist Book of Discipline
(2012) ¶ 258

Continued on page 18.



Session 5 continued

Stewardship of the Pastor

And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

Matthew 25:40

Are there tasks currently performed by your pastor that might instead be done by a layperson, affording that person a new opportunity for ministry?

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Continue to pray daily for everyone on your committee and for your pastor, naming each before God. What other prayers might you make, in light of what you've learned this week?

The comfort that your pastor feels in asking for what he or she needs may vary depending on past experiences or the extent to which such requests seem welcomed by the congregation. What are some of the ways that you can encourage your pastor to care for himself or herself?

Session 6

Covenant for Ministry

When your SPRC crafts a covenant to guide its work, it submits to specific obligations and relationships that honor the promises made at baptism. Though these obligations and relationships may be challenging, they have the potential to be transformative in your congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

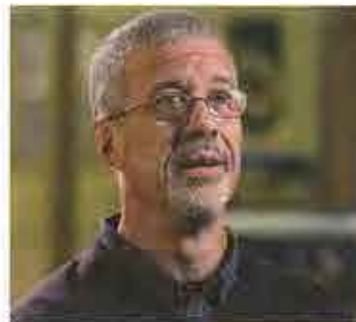
To encourage SPRC members to create a practical and spiritual covenant that will guide the committee in its ministry

Creating a Covenant for Your SPRC

On the following pages, you will find a sample SPRC covenant as well as a template for crafting your own. Notice that both are structured around the topics we covered in *Pastor & Parish*, beginning with baptism. Work through each clause as shown in the template. What ideas have emerged from your conversation and reflection that are meaningful to your work, in your church, with your SPRC?

The covenant you create should be written specifically for your parish setting, reflecting the journey you have taken during this study. This is something to consider carefully and treat with openness and generosity. You should revisit it periodically to ensure that it continues to guide your work.

Continued on page 20.



Session 6 continued

Covenant for Ministry

COVENANT TEMPLATE

*For God so loved
the world that
He gave His only
Son, so that
everyone who
believes in Him
may not perish
but may have
eternal life.*

John 3:16

We will:

Remember our baptism by...

Aid in the church's mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by...

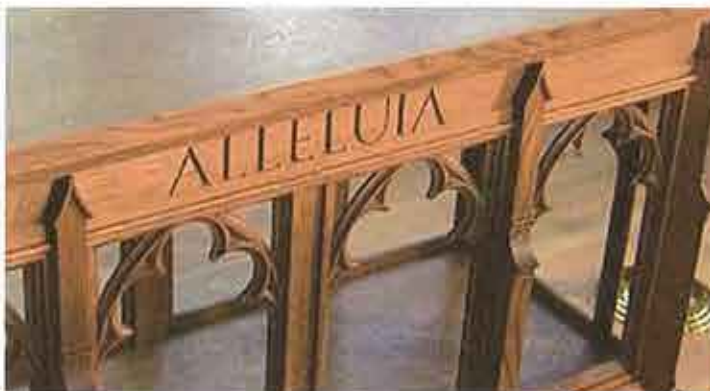
Honor our church's sacred bundle by...

Practice truthful naming by...

And act as good stewards of our pastor by...

We do all these things prayerfully, to promote the life of faith in our committee, and the thriving of our pastor.

Continued on page 22.

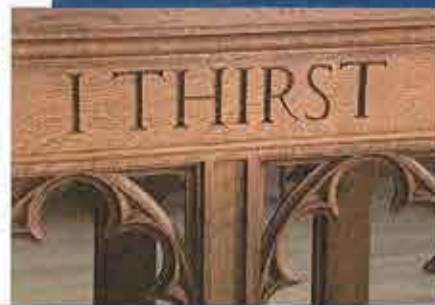


What is a Covenant?

Although sometimes equated with an agreement or a contract, covenant in our faith tradition implies something much deeper because of what is at stake.

When God makes a covenant with us, He gifts us with forgiveness and eternal life, promising never to abandon us. That promise came at a cost, named in Jesus' utterance on the cross: "I thirst."

The expectation – at once simple and challenging – is that we will live our lives in service to Christ, carrying on His work until He comes again.



Covenant for Ministry

SAMPLE COVENANT

The Staff-Parish Relations Committee of Bedford Falls United Methodist Church, in thankful response to the grace of God poured out upon us in our baptisms, makes this covenant for ministry to guide us as we work with pastor George Bailey to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel in this parish. After prayer, study and reflection, we agree that we will...

- Pray daily for one another and for Reverend Bailey, by name, and that we will begin and conclude each of our committee meetings with prayer, remembering the covenant that God made with us at baptism.
- Be mindful that making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world is the principal mission of our congregation, the church being Christ's own creation to carry on His work until his coming again.
- Conduct ourselves in our meetings so as to bring honor to the name of Jesus Christ and an increase to His Kingdom in our parish, keeping confidence when appropriate and practicing truthful naming, so that our reflection and decisions may be above reproach.
- Be careful stewards of pastor Bailey and his family, honoring George's connectional responsibilities and need for continuing education and attending to the family's needs for privacy, vacation and a safe and comfortable home so that all may flourish.
- Be generous in support and reserved in judgment, open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and holding one another accountable for faithfulness to this covenant for ministry.
- To review annually and, when necessary, revise this covenant, so that it may continue to serve the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, the Bedford Falls congregation, the larger connection of the United Methodist Church, and be pleasing in the sight of the One who has called us into ministry, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Extending the Impact

While Pastor & Parish is not intended to address the day-to-day business of the SPRC, it is likely that the topics you have discussed together will have an impact on how you approach the operations of the committee in the months and years to come.

Enhancing the SPRC's planning and process

Your group may have identified some practical items of business to address that fall outside of the spiritual intent of the covenant, but which might bear good fruit.

- Perhaps the SPRC would like to establish a new mid-year planning retreat to address important but non-urgent concerns.
- Another way to address business with great intentionality would be to establish a process for agenda-setting that functions across the year, rather than month-to-month or meeting-to-meeting.

Sharing Pastor & Parish with new committee members or a new pastor

One of the aspects of Pastor & Parish that churches have found most valuable is its capacity to foster community within a committee and between SPRCs and clergy.

- Since the SPRC has a rolling membership, consider repeating the curriculum annually at the point when new members are joining the committee, affording them the opportunity to contribute to the SPRC's covenant.
- Likewise, going through the program with a newly appointed pastor offers clergy joining a congregation a wonderful lens into the church's character and the SPRC a way to get to know and connect with their new leader.

Encouraging your congregation to embrace the teachings of Pastor & Parish

While designed with the needs of the SPRC in mind, the theological concepts presented in Pastor & Parish could be beneficial for the wider congregation.

- Consider sharing one or more of the videos at an evening gathering, discussing how, as baptized individuals, we each have a call to serve as disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Share with other church leaders the covenant your SPRC has created, encouraging them to likewise reflect on their committees' responsibilities as a ministry in service to the local church.

Regardless of the specific actions you take, we encourage you to continue to engage in conversation with one another, drawing on the principles you've explored through this series.

Notes

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Pastor & Parish is funded by a grant from

James B. Duke

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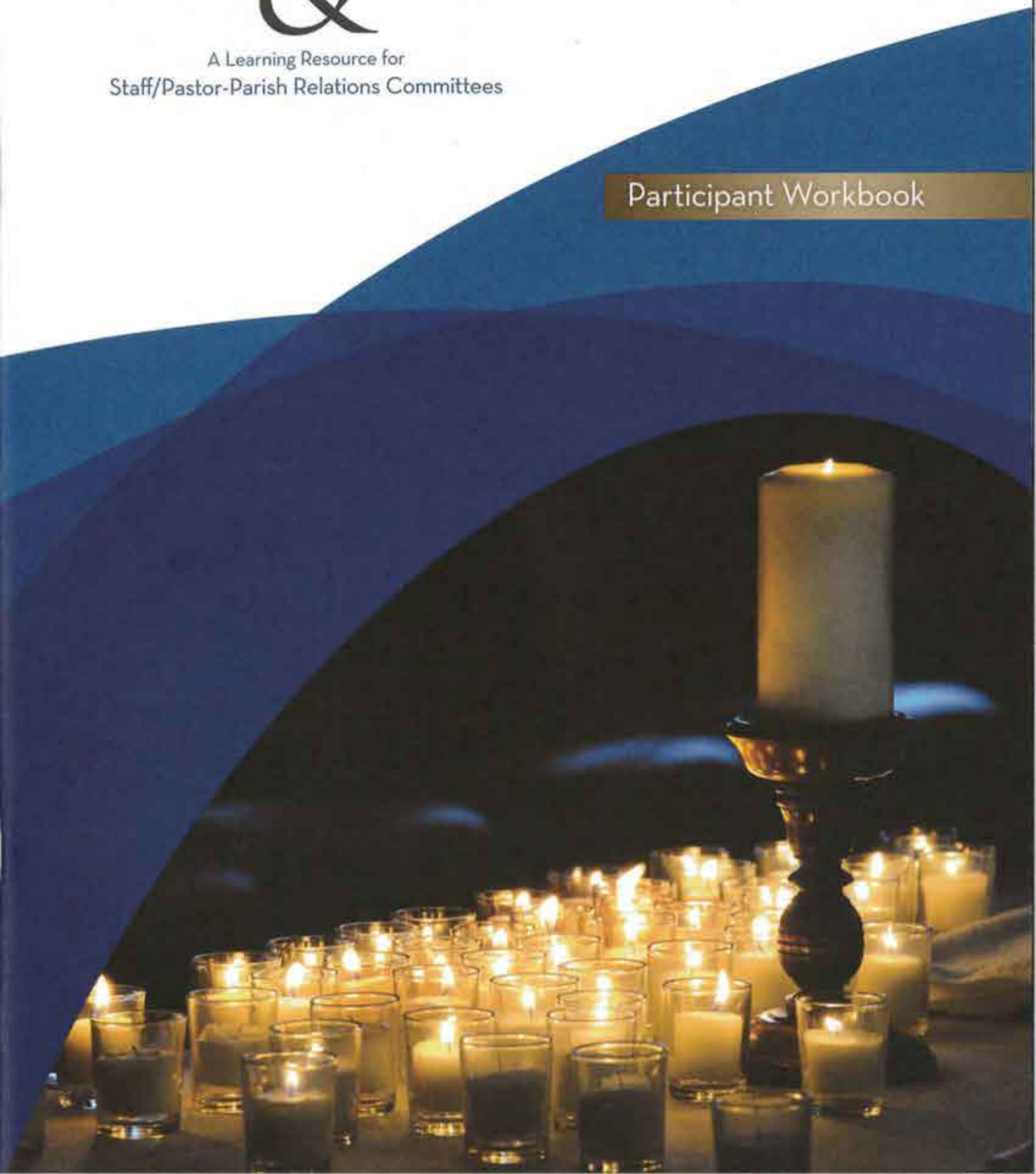
www.pastorandparish.com

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Pastor & Parish™

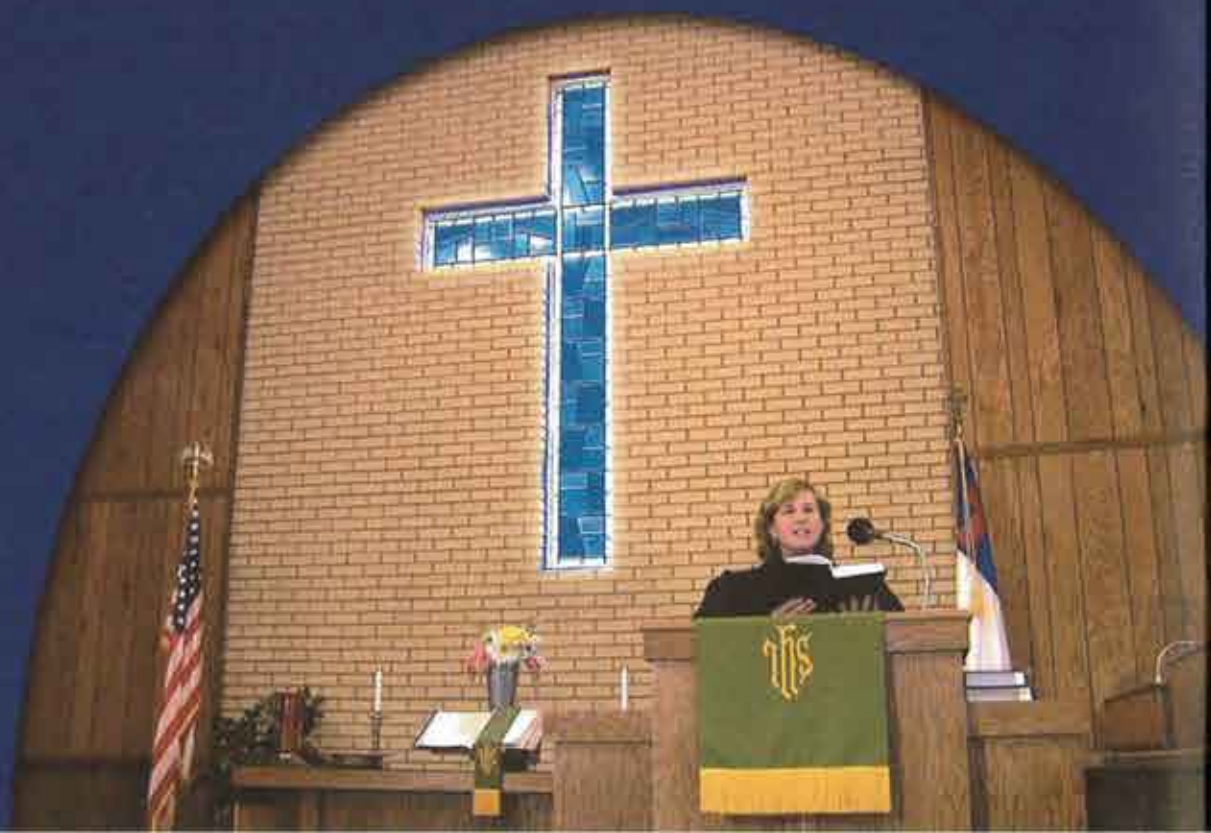
A Learning Resource for
Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committees

Participant Workbook



Depending on the size of your church, your committee may refer to itself in one of two ways. United Methodist churches served by multiple clergy generally call this group the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC), whereas congregations served by one pastor often use the term Pastor-Parish Relations Committee (PPRC).

We have chosen to use the broader term of SPRC throughout this series. In places where we refer to 'your pastor' for simplicity, you should consider the point to extend to all clergy.



Pastor & Parish™

In agreeing to be part of this program, you have taken a critical step in the ongoing growth and development of your congregation.

The United Methodist Church describes the Staff-Parish Relations Committee as being “the administrative unit in a local church, where staff and congregational interests are integrated to focus on the mission of the church.”

Pastor & Parish™ is a theologically-framed formational activity for SPRCs that encourages discussion within your committee about the unique character of your church. It will help you identify ways for committee members to work in partnership with your pastor, other staff, and the congregation in strengthening your local church.

Participant Workbook

What to Expect	3
Session 1: Baptism	4
Session 2: Discipleship	6
Session 3: Sacred Bundle	8
Session 4: Truthful Naming	11
Session 5: Stewardship of the Pastor	16
Session 6: Covenant for Ministry	19
Next Steps	23
Notes	24

About the Duke Clergy Health Initiative

The Duke Clergy Health Initiative was formed in 2007 when the North Carolina and Western North Carolina Conferences of the United Methodist Church partnered with Duke Divinity School and The Duke Endowment to seek solutions to their growing concerns about declining clergy health and increasing health costs.

Findings from our early research established a clear picture of clergy health and the factors affecting it. We now know with certainty that United Methodist clergy in North Carolina are more likely to suffer from obesity, chronic disease, and depression than other comparable state residents. We also have a better understanding of the factors in the lives of clergy that expose them to greater risks of poor health. One key driver of well-being is the quality of the relationship that a pastor has with the members of his or her congregation.

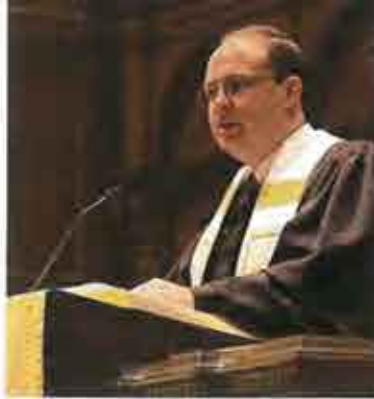
In 2010, we enrolled more than 1,100 North Carolina-based United Methodist clergy in Spirited Life, a multi-year wellness program and behavioral health study. Through it, pastors learn to manage stress; care for their bodies in a healthy, mindful way; and find spiritual renewal.

We hope that the skills you will learn in Pastor & Parish will augment your pastor's efforts to care for himself or herself and will enable your SPRC to build the quality of its leadership.

To learn more about the Clergy Health Initiative and our research findings, visit our website:
www.clergyhealthinitiative.org.



What to Expect



Pastor & Parish is a six-session small group learning experience. It is an opportunity for your SPRC to grow in community with one another in a forum separate from your regular committee meetings.

Each of the sessions is meant to last about an hour. During each session, you will view a short video and then individually answer several questions in this workbook. Your group's facilitator will guide you in a discussion of these ideas, which you can continue to explore on your own through additional readings. By discussing candidly in this safe space what your church does well and how it might improve, you will increase the effectiveness of your committee.

This series is unique among training resources for SPRCs in that it ties the committee's responsibilities back to their spiritual beginnings. At the conclusion of this course, you will have the opportunity to craft a covenant to capture what your SPRC has learned and use it to guide your committee's ministry as you work with your pastor to preserve and develop your church's unique character.

Should you wish to delve more deeply into any of the topics presented in Pastor & Parish, links to articles, books and additional resources are available online at www.pastorandparish.com.



Pastor & Parish™

Session 1 Baptism

Your presence on this committee is, before anything else, a ministry in response to your baptism. The baptism we receive signifies not only God's gift of grace, but also our covenant with God to strengthen the local church by carrying on Christ's work until He comes again.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To encourage committee members to see their work on the SPRC as a ministry in response to the sacrament of baptism

Remembering Our Baptism

Do you remember – or have you been told – details about your baptism? How old were you? When and where did it take place? Who performed the sacrament? Were other important people in your life present? Are there photos to commemorate the event?

Not everyone who attends a United Methodist church was raised in the Methodist tradition. How might your baptism have differed from others on your committee? List your recollections below and share some of them with the group.

As members of the church, we all are called to ministry in some way. What does your baptism into the church mean for the way you live your life?

*So if anyone
is in Christ,
there is a new
creation:
everything old
has passed away;
see, everything
has become new!*

2 Corinthians 5:17

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

In the space below, write the names of the members of your SPRC and your pastor. Pray for each of them by name every day, asking for the power and presence of the Holy Spirit as they go about their ministries. Be sure to pray for yourself, too!

Study "Wash, O God, Our Sons and Daughters," the hymn that introduced this session's video. Sing or read it several times over a few days, asking the Holy Spirit to open new understanding for you. What images in the lyrics speak powerfully to you? Why? What kind of congregation does the hymn long for?



HYMN

Wash, O God, Our Sons and Daughters

United Methodist Hymnal, #605

*Wash, O God, our sons and daughters,
where your cleansing waters flow.*

*Number them among your people;
bless as Christ blessed long ago.*

*Weave them garments bright and
sparkling; compass them in love and light.*

*Fill, anoint them; send your Spirit,
Holy Dove and heart's delight.*

*We who bring them long for
nurture; by your milk may we be fed.*

*Let us join your feast, partaking
cup of blessing, living bread.*

*God, renew us, guide our footsteps;
free from sin and all its snares,*

*One with Christ in living, dying,
by your Spirit, children, heirs.*

*O how deep your holy wisdom!
Unimagined, all your ways!*

*To your name be glory, honor!
With our lives we worship, praise!*

*We your people stand before you,
water-washed and Spirit born.*

*By your grace, our lives we offer.
Recreate us; God, transform!*

Used by permission of Augsburg-Fortress (music)
and The United Methodist Publishing House (lyrics)

Session 2

Discipleship

The word apostle comes from a Greek verb meaning "to send." To be baptized is to *consent to be sent*, in the name of Jesus Christ. Often God's call to discipleship involves getting up and moving from the comfortable and the familiar, and journeying out in faith.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To encourage SPRC members to partner with their pastor in developing fresh, vibrant ministry appropriate to the mission of the parish

The SPRC should:

- Work with the pastor to discern God's plan for the congregation
- Assist in sharing that vision
- Support the pastor

Examining Our Path

As disciples, we are sent out to share the good news and to make sure that the good news is being received. This requires discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit. Consider the experiences and tendencies of your congregation when answering the questions below. Then share some with the group.

Are the comforts of the familiar restraining your congregation's ability to explore new forms of worship or witness? If yes, what are some of these restraints?

How might your committee assist the pastor in recognizing opportunities for your congregation to journey out in faith?

If the place your congregation is being sent requires a shift in the ways your church seeks to fulfill its mission, how might the SPRC support your pastor in making that transition?

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Continue to pray daily for everyone on your committee and for your pastor, naming each before God. What other prayers might you make, in light of what you've learned this week?

Consider the opportunities your congregation offers for its members to advance the mission of the United Methodist Church, "To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." What is your church doing well? What could you do better?

*Then I heard
the voice of the
Lord saying,
'Whom shall
I send, and who
will go for us?'
and I said, 'Here
am I; send me!'*

Isaiah 6:8



Mission of the United Methodist Church:

To make disciples of Jesus Christ
for the transformation of the world

Session 3

Sacred Bundle

An important part of your committee's work is to recognize the contents of your congregation's sacred bundle and to interpret them for the pastor. Unless your pastor understands them, he or she cannot minister effectively.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To encourage SPRC members to recognize and share congregational memories, taboos, and traditions that define their church's culture, but may not be readily apparent to a new pastor

Interpreting your Congregation's Sacred Bundle

In the space below, name something from your congregation's sacred bundle that you feel defines or shapes your church, but that your pastor may not know. Agree amongst your group that everyone's responses will be kept in confidence. Then share your response with the group.



In the session on Discipleship, your committee discussed habits or traditions that may be inhibiting your congregation's ability to explore new forms of worship or witness. Some members might consider these traditions to be part of the church's sacred bundle.

How do you decide what should remain in the sacred bundle, and what should be acknowledged, but let go? And how might you support the pastor in communicating that decision?

Continued on page 10.

What is a Sacred Bundle?

Some Native American cultures had an object they called a sacred bundle. It served as the people's portable history.

Usually made from animal hide, the sacred bundle included everyday objects that seemed unremarkable to someone from outside the community.

But in the hands of a skilled narrator, these artifacts could tell where a people had come from, their journey across the years, their triumphs and tragedies, their heroes and prophets, their joys and sorrows.



Used by permission of the Kansas State Historical Society.

Session 3 continued

Sacred Bundle

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Continue to pray daily for everyone on your committee and for your pastor, naming each before God. What other prayers might you make, in light of what you've learned this week?

*But speaking
the truth in love,
we must grow
up in every way
into him who
is the head,
into Christ.*

Ephesians 4:15

The writer of Ephesians encourages the church to speak the truth in love within its walls so that its mission to those outside may be strengthened. Reflect upon how your committee might ensure that its members "speak the truth in love" every time you meet.

Session 4

Truthful Naming

Conflict in the church is not necessarily bad, for it means that passion and energy are present. But to move past the conflict, a church must learn to redirect this passion and energy into ministry and mission. This begins with truthful naming.

Naming Issues Honestly

The stories on the following pages describe congregations facing conflict due to changes the churches are experiencing.

Your leader will guide you in selecting a scenario to discuss. Spend a few minutes answering the questions that follow the scenarios, and then share some of your insights with the group.

Continued on page 12.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To equip SPRC members with tools for dealing responsibly with conflict that arises in the local church



Truthful Naming

Scenario 1: Carruthers UMC

Carruthers UMC is fortunate to be in a fast-growing community, and in the last two years, many new families have begun to join the church. CUMC has historically been a close-knit, rural congregation where everyone knew everyone, but now that sense of community is in transition.

Sally Brownstone has served for years as Sunday School superintendent as well as a teacher, and has taken pride in getting to know all of the children in the church. Usually good-natured and cooperative, Sally has, over the last year, become argumentative and has opposed nearly everything the pastor and other leaders have done to respond to the congregation's growth. She has spoken unfavorably of the pastor's leadership every time there has been an opportunity and now has begun to suggest that "we may need a change." Because they love and respect her, others in the congregation have begun to agree.

At a church council meeting, Sally intends to criticize the pastor's plans to add another Christmas Eve service to accommodate all of the families with younger children. As Sally begins to distribute copies of her list of concerns around the table, a young woman Sally has known from infancy says, "Aunt Sally, what's bothering you? I was baptized and raised here at Carruthers, and it is painful to see all this bitterness and conflict. Can you tell us all what the real problem is?"

Stunned, Sally is silent for a moment, and then she begins to cry. "I can't know the names of all the children anymore," she says. "There are just too many."

Scenario 2: Avalon UMC

Avalon UMC is a medium-sized, urban parish with a history of missional outreach to the community – the sort of local church that understands that ministry needs to extend "beyond the walls." The congregation's witness in the community has historically received broad support among its members, though there have occasionally been reasonable differences in opinion. Now, though, mission has led to divisiveness.

Because the number of homeless people in AUMC's neighborhood is increasing, some members of the congregation think the homeless should be able to pitch tents on the church's side lawn and have access to AUMC's restrooms 24/7, provided a mission volunteer is on hand. Others, citing city ordinances and liability risks, think the church's present ministry to the homeless – hot meals several days a week, counseling, and transportation to a free clinic – is sufficient.

At a council meeting, Sam Steadman, the finance chair, comments, "Tents and trash on the lawn will discourage people from coming to church on Sunday, not to mention frighten the office workers who use our walks to get to their jobs on weekdays. We need to remember that the present strength of our congregation is what makes mission possible in the first place."

A youth member of the council says, "Why don't we pray and wait for the guidance of the Holy Spirit?" Sam sighs and responds, "Sarah, the Holy Spirit doesn't have to pay the bills."

Scenario 3: Hostetler UMC

Hostetler UMC used to have 1,300 members and a Sunday worship attendance of 450; now there are 800 members and a good Sunday finds about 325 in the pews across two services. While finances are strong and the congregation is well engaged in ministry, there is a growing sense that some change needs to happen.

The pastor, Jessica Moreau, is in her sixth year, is a strong preacher and good administrator, and is generally well liked, though a minority of members thinks she is “trying to change things too quickly.” At the congregation’s annual spring planning retreat, Jessica presents a plan to reorder one of the Sunday services from very traditional to a blended style. This would provide opportunities for more members to share in leading worship – especially the youth – and should prove attractive to people who know neither the Lord’s Prayer nor the Apostles’ Creed by memory.

While most people at the retreat receive Jessica’s plan warmly, a few wonder how Trevor, the long-time church organist and choir director, who is classically trained and devoted to traditional worship, will react. During lunch at the retreat, someone calls Trevor and gives him a report. Trevor responds that any change to the worship format will result in his immediate resignation. This is reported back at the afternoon session of the retreat, and gloom settles in.

Scenario 4: Piney Corners UMC

Piney Corners UMC is a close-knit congregation of 120 members, with a Sunday attendance of about 70. Every five years the United Methodist Women of PCUMC publish a new cookbook; they’ve been doing so for more than fifty years. PCUMC takes great pride in this project, for the considerable funds it raises go to mission.

The gathering of the recipes has traditionally been entrusted to the women of the Jennings family, descended from the founder of the congregation, who laid the cornerstone more than 150 years ago. The UMW cookbook seldom varies from the country cuisine favored by Piney Corners’ older members: heavy on butter, cream, cheese and red meat, with little thought given to other styles of cooking.

Some younger members have asked that next year’s cookbook include healthier recipes that are lower in sugar, salt and fat. A number of them have sent their favorite recipes to Melinda Jennings, assuming she would welcome variety. Sally Compton, pastor at Piney Corners for two years, submitted several vegetarian favorites of her own.

At a meeting of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, one of the members reads a letter from Melinda Jennings, resigning from her position as editor of the UMW cookbook and citing the pastor’s “interference” as the principal reason for her decision. “Sally,” asks the chairperson, “has Melinda spoken with you about this?” “No,” says Sally, “this is the first I’ve heard of her concerns.”

Continued on page 14.

Session 4 continued

Truthful Naming

*But when [Peter]
came to Antioch,
I opposed him
to his face,
because he
stood self-
condemned.*

Galatians 2:11

In the video for this session, one of the pastors suggests that she has found it easier to encourage her congregants to name things truthfully when she asks them to consider “How does that make you feel?” rather than “What do you think about that?” How might reframing the discussion in this way change the outcome in this scenario?

What would be the next steps in working through the conflict productively? What actions could make the conflict worse?

What responsibility does the SPRC have in situations of conflict, and to whom is the committee accountable?



What principles might your committee agree to adhere to when reconciling different points of view?



FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Continue to pray daily for everyone on your committee and for your pastor, naming each before God. What other prayers might you make, in light of what you've learned this week?

What steps might you take to encourage yourself in the ongoing practice of naming issues truthfully?

Session 5

Stewardship of the Pastor

Christian stewardship is more than the financial support we offer the church - it is the reverent care for all the gifts we have received from God. Your pastor is one of those gifts.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To encourage SPRC members to see the committee's relationship with its pastor as one of care and respect, not control or management.



Honoring the Work of the Holy Spirit

The United Methodist Book of Discipline requires that the SPRC “reflect biblically and theologically on the role and work of the pastor and staff as they carry out their leadership responsibilities.” (2012, ¶258) Consider the ways in which your committee can support your pastor in his or her work; then, share some of your responses with the group.

In what specific ways does your committee model Christian stewardship in its care of your pastor?

Is your pastor encouraged to set aside adequate time for Sabbath and vacation? Is there a willingness within your congregation to accept care from other clergy during your pastor's absence? What is the SPRC's role in providing support?

Does the congregation have a clear understanding of the pastor's connectional responsibilities and his or her need for continuing education? If not, how might the SPRC better communicate these to the congregation?

Does your committee share with your pastor what the group feels he or she is doing well and provide insight into areas where his or her further development could most benefit the church? How might you enrich this analysis and conversation?

If your pastor resides in a parsonage, is there thoughtful, gracious provision for the property's care? Is the pastor's family's privacy respected? What role might the SPRC play in advocating for a space that is truly the pastor's own?

The SPRC should assist the pastor and staff in:

- Assessing their gifts
- Maintaining holistic health and work-life balance
- Setting priorities for leadership and service

United Methodist Book of Discipline
(2012) ¶ 258

Continued on page 18.



Session 5 continued

Stewardship of the Pastor

And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

Matthew 25:40

Are there tasks currently performed by your pastor that might instead be done by a layperson, affording that person a new opportunity for ministry?

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Continue to pray daily for everyone on your committee and for your pastor, naming each before God. What other prayers might you make, in light of what you've learned this week?

The comfort that your pastor feels in asking for what he or she needs may vary depending on past experiences or the extent to which such requests seem welcomed by the congregation. What are some of the ways that you can encourage your pastor to care for himself or herself?

Session 6

Covenant for Ministry

When your SPRC crafts a covenant to guide its work, it submits to specific obligations and relationships that honor the promises made at baptism. Though these obligations and relationships may be challenging, they have the potential to be transformative in your congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To encourage SPRC members to create a practical and spiritual covenant that will guide the committee in its ministry

Creating a Covenant for Your SPRC

On the following pages, you will find a sample SPRC covenant as well as a template for crafting your own. Notice that both are structured around the topics we covered in Pastor & Parish, beginning with baptism. Work through each clause as shown in the template. What ideas have emerged from your conversation and reflection that are meaningful to your work, in your church, with your SPRC?

The covenant you create should be written specifically for your parish setting, reflecting the journey you have taken during this study. This is something to consider carefully and treat with openness and generosity. You should revisit it periodically to ensure that it continues to guide your work.

Continued on page 20.



Session 6 continued

Covenant for Ministry

COVENANT TEMPLATE

*For God so loved
the world that
He gave His only
Son, so that
everyone who
believes in Him
may not perish
but may have
eternal life.*

John 3:16

We will:

Remember our baptism by...

Aid in the church's mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by...

Honor our church's sacred bundle by...

Practice truthful naming by...

And act as good stewards of our pastor by...

We do all these things prayerfully, to promote the life of faith in our committee, and the thriving of our pastor.

Continued on page 22.



What is a Covenant?

Although sometimes equated with an agreement or a contract, covenant in our faith tradition implies something much deeper because of what is at stake.

When God makes a covenant with us, He gifts us with forgiveness and eternal life, promising never to abandon us. That promise came at a cost, named in Jesus' utterance on the cross: "I thirst."

The expectation – at once simple and challenging – is that we will live our lives in service to Christ, carrying on His work until He comes again.



Covenant for Ministry

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- Be mindful that making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world is the principal mission of our congregation, the church being Christ's own creation to carry on His work until his coming again.
- Conduct ourselves in our meetings so as to bring honor to the name of Jesus Christ and an increase to His Kingdom in our parish, keeping confidence when appropriate and practicing truthful naming, so that our reflection and decisions may be above reproach.
- Be careful stewards of pastor Bailey and his family, honoring George's connectional responsibilities and need for continuing education and attending to the family's needs for privacy, vacation and a safe and comfortable home so that all may flourish.
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Extending the Impact

While Pastor & Parish is not intended to address the day-to-day business of the SPRC, it is likely that the topics you have discussed together will have an impact on how you approach the operations of the committee in the months and years to come.

Enhancing the SPRC's planning and process

Your group may have identified some practical items of business to address that fall outside of the spiritual intent of the covenant, but which might bear good fruit.

- Perhaps the SPRC would like to establish a new mid-year planning retreat to address important but non-urgent concerns.
- Another way to address business with great intentionality would be to establish a process for agenda-setting that functions across the year, rather than month-to-month or meeting-to-meeting.

Sharing Pastor & Parish with new committee members or a new pastor

One of the aspects of Pastor & Parish that churches have found most valuable is its capacity to foster community within a committee and between SPRCs and clergy.

- Since the SPRC has a rolling membership, consider repeating the curriculum annually at the point when new members are joining the committee, affording them the opportunity to contribute to the SPRC's covenant.
- Likewise, going through the program with a newly appointed pastor offers clergy joining a congregation a wonderful lens into the church's character and the SPRC a way to get to know and connect with their new leader.

Encouraging your congregation to embrace the teachings of Pastor & Parish

While designed with the needs of the SPRC in mind, the theological concepts presented in Pastor & Parish could be beneficial for the wider congregation.

- Consider sharing one or more of the videos at an evening gathering, discussing how, as baptized individuals, we each have a call to serve as disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Share with other church leaders the covenant your SPRC has created, encouraging them to likewise reflect on their committees' responsibilities as a ministry in service to the local church.

Regardless of the specific actions you take, we encourage you to continue to engage in conversation with one another, drawing on the principles you've explored through this series.

Notes

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Pastor & Parish is funded by a grant from

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