Pastor/Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) Training

minnesotaumc.org/rivervalley

November 10, 2018
Question?
Training Overview

1. Role and Functions
2. Support for Effective Ministry
3. Role in Assessment
4. Role in Appointment Process
5. Behavioral Boundaries
6. Culture of Call
7. Connectional Clergy Support
8. Q&A and Other Resources
SPRC Role & Function: Committee Membership

- 5-9 nominated and elected members on 3-year-rotation, 1-2 terms at a time, one young adult, all professing or associate members (unless unchartered congregation)
- Lay leader and a lay delegate to Annual Conference added with no term limit
- Represent cross-section of congregation with particular skills in human relations, management and communications - demonstrated commitment to worship, discipleship and stewardship
- NO church employees, staff family members or more than one person from a household
- SPRC meets only with clergy or DS present in closed session - no one else attends without invitation by the chair and pastor
- Staff must be informed in advance of a meeting where their appointment or employment status will be discussed and informed immediately following of any decisions
- Single Board Governance Model
Role & Functions: Annual Cycle of Responsibilities

- **January-March:** Orientation and training of new members, review constructive communication practices, mid-year check-in on staff/pastor/congregational goals
- **April-June:** Update job descriptions and assess staffing needs, develop liaison relationships with staff, identify potential ministry candidates, manage process for pastoral transition (if applicable)
- **July-September:** Ministry clergy evaluation and staff evaluations, new program year goal setting, salary/housing or parsonage/benefit package review
- **October-December:** Staff budget forecasting, update church profile and consult with district superintendent, review and update policies and procedures with adoption by Church Council
- **Year-round:** Encourage and support the pastors, staff and their families; confer about personnel conditions and life-work balance; hiring, promoting, retiring and dismissing staff who are not under appointment; conduct screening and background checks for staff and volunteers
SPRC Support for Effective Ministry

- Expected Outcome: Strong, positive and effective relationship between staff and congregation to make disciples of Jesus for transformation of world
- Chair: Spiritual maturity, relational and functional competence, primary contact with Bishop and DS related to appointed pastors, sets agenda, leads meetings, follows up on actions and implementation, familiar with UM resources and organizations
- Meet regularly and often (at least quarterly)
- Prepare for meetings, have an agenda, stay focused and identify topics for future meetings
- Allow adequate time establish partnership with pastor and share mutual information
- Observe confidentiality (not secrecy or anonymity)
- Provide support and accountability with a “We are in this together” attitude
SPRC Support for Effective Ministry: What SPRCs Need From Clergy

- Cooperation, receptivity and open mindedness
- Attempt to understand members’ needs and concerns
- Clear communication of mission field and vision for ministry
- Honest information about issues and needs
- Openness to improvement and attempts to change
SPRC Support for Effective Ministry: What Clergy Need from SPRCs

- Honest, balanced, objective, timely and candid feedback
- Respect and support role of pastor as head of staff
- Avoid triangulation
- Personal care and sounding board
- Advocacy and education for pastoral and staff roles as related to missional purpose, not personal preferences
SPRC Support for Effective Ministry: Feedback IS:

- Sincere and plain speaking
- Humbly invited, humbly offered
- Contains useful insights
- Self-revealing on the part of the giver of the feedback
- Dialogue with the pastor
- Personal and interactive
- Tool for improvement
- On-going process in the midst of ministry
- At its best, love in action
SPRC Support for Effective Ministry: Feedback *IS NOT*: 

- Winning a point or coercing another
- Passing rumors
- Hiding behind what someone else says
- Advocating a theological perspective
- Something done *to* the pastor
- Weapon to be used against an enemy
- Defending one’s self or others
- Saving up complaints for a one-time session
- Objective truth
SPRC Support for Effective Ministry: Giving Feedback

- Sharing tone and tenor of the congregation
- Clarifying concerns: performance, personal preference, unrealistic expectations

Performance Issues:
- Calling: well empty; right fit
- Character: illness, divorce, addition, etc
- Competence: skill development
Dealing with Concerns

Path of Five

1. Have you ever been to “B”?
   - NO
   - YES

2. Do you feel comfortable going to “B”?
   - NO
   - YES

3. Would you like me to go with you to talk to “B”?
   - NO
   - YES

4. Do I have your permission to go to “B” to take your concerns?
   - NO

5. Are you aware then that I cannot help you?

Context for Right Relationships:
- Not to speak of the faults of others
- Not to create discord in the community
- Not to raise myself up by putting others down
SPRC Support for Effective Ministry: Conflict Resolution

- Confidentiality vs. Anonymity
- Feedback

Matthew 18:15-20

15 “If another member of the church[a] sins against you,[b] go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one.[c] 16 But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17 If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. 18 Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. 19 Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” NRSV

Practicing the Rule of Christ
SPRC Role in Assessments: Affirmation and Evaluation

- Purpose of evaluation:
  - To examine the effectiveness of the church in achieving its mission
  - To examine the effectiveness of the pastor(s) and staff in leading the church toward fulfillment of the mission

- Evaluation Steps:
  - Gather information
  - Discern what, who and how feedback will be shared
  - Present affirmations and areas for growth
  - Thank all contributors and participants

- Formative vs. Summative Feedback
  - Evaluation = 90% formative and 10% summative
SPRC Role in Assessments: Missional Alignment Plan (MAP)
SPRC Role in Assessments: Clergy Evaluation Questions

1. Pastor _____’s stated ministry goals for this year:
2. What are your congregation’s strategies for:
   a) Growing in love of God and neighbor?
   b) Reaching new people?
   c) Healing a Broken World?
3. How (and how effectively) is your pastor equipping your congregation to implement these strategies?
4. What are you as leaders doing to support your pastor in these efforts?
5. Is there anything else you want your district superintendent to know or provide?
SPRC Role in Appointments

- Preparedness: Annual updates of clergy evaluations and church profile for DS
- Episcopal and itinerant system (Bishop appoints for missional purpose)
- Change of appointment (clergy to depart)
  - Private conversations with some leaders
  - Public announcement by pastor both verbal and letter
  - DS to consult with SPRC for profile
  - Cabinet discernment, projection and clergy consultation
  - Introductory meeting and appointment
  - Intentional Farewell and Welcome
Behavioral Boundaries

- Podcasts: minnesotaumc.org/audio
  - Sexual Misconduct Reporting
  - Dual Relationships
  - Social media
  - Pastoral Transitions

- Misconduct Policy
- Personal and Professional Boundaries
- Safe Gatherings
  - minnesotaumc.org/safegatherings
  - $32.25 for background check and online training
Connectional Clergy Support

- MAC Compensation Guidelines
- Board of Pension and Health Benefits (retirement, medical and death/disability)
- Maternity/Paternity Leave (13 weeks)
- Medical/Incapacitation Leave (0-8 weeks, 9-26 weeks, 26 weeks+)
- Ministerial Education Fund (25% remains in MAC)
- Renewal Leaves
- Lily Grant
- Equitable Compensation
Culture of Call

- Where do local church pastors come from?
- Who is God calling? Could it be you?
- Inquiring Candidate
- Declared Candidate
- Certified, Licensed, Commissioned and Ordained
- Your call to cultivate “YES” and your responsibility to say “NO”
10. Q&A and Other Resources
Resources: Vocational Discernment

- Beyond the Burning Bush: Hearing and Answering God’s Call (ISBN# 9780938162810)
- The Book of Discipline (¶¶304, 310-314)
- The Ministry Inquiry Process (ISBN# 9780938162827)
- Ordained Ministry in The United Methodist Church DVD (Item# X534642)
Resources: Support and Accountability

- Guidelines for Leading Your Congregations 2017-2020 - Pastor-Parish Relations: Connecting the Pastor, Staff, and Congregation
- Guidelines for Leading Your Congregations 2017-2020 - Pastor-Parish Relations: Connecting the Pastor, Staff, and Congregation, Download Edition
Resources: Congregational Covenants


