

November 28, 2017

**TO:** Chair of the Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations or Staff-Parish Relations

**FROM:** Dr. Tim Trent, District Superintendent

I am pleased you will be serving as chair of the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee for your charge or church in 2018. The beginning of the calendar year is the standard time for consultation concerning your pastoral leadership as we plan for the 2018-2019 appointment process.

As you know, your position is a very significant one in the life and ministry of the church. Your election to this office indicates the respect and trust your church holds for you. Your pastor and your congregation will depend on you to be a considerate and reasonable leader who listens to and understands the congregation and the pastor. You and your committee are crucial in interpreting the level of your pastor's effectiveness in your congregation.

In the weeks ahead, you will consider the emerging needs of your congregation and how they match the gifts and graces of the pastor(s). It is **essential** you call together the **entire** Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee of your church or charge at the earliest convenient time. Please discuss the goals and mission of your church and how your church members and pastor(s) are addressing these. It is advisable that your pastor(s) excuse themselves before finalizing the SPRC Response Form.

As you consider your goals and mission and pastoral leadership, your committee and pastor should be honest, thorough, and prayerful. Do **not** poll the congregation concerning your pastor's appointment. The recommendations related to pastoral leadership are entrusted specifically to your committee. Also, your committee should **not** vote on the pastoral appointments but listen carefully to one another through thorough discussion. If concerns emerge, please contact me **before** your committee makes any decisions.

This year, I am asking you to do the following:

1. Call your committee together during January for dialogue with your pastor(s).
2. Return the enclosed S/PPR Response Sheet to me by **January 31, 2018**. Note: if you wish to meet with me, call me (as well as send in the response sheet) as soon as possible to set a meeting date.

If you do not request a meeting with me, I will assume you desire your pastor(s) to continue in ministry at your church for another year. If you do request a meeting with me, it does not necessarily mean you desire a pastoral change. I will also reserve the right to request a meeting with your committee. If your pastor has indicated a plan to retire this year, please complete the form and request a meeting time with me.

3. I would ask that each member of the S/PPR committee go online and view Bishop Graves' S/PPR video. You may want to do this as an entire committee at your first meeting of the new year. We will send you the information about where to find the video online by the end of the work day on January 2, 2018.
4. In addition, I will have a consultation with your pastor(s) in the coming weeks.

My assumption is that all clergy (including those in extension ministries) are always available to move from or remain in their appointment. This understanding is crucial to our United Methodist system of itineracy. The S/PPR Committee or pastor or bishop/cabinet may initiate a move. Initiating a move will normally result in dialogue and consultation with the S/PPR Committee, pastor and district superintendent. **Initiating a move does not always result in a move, regardless of who requests the move.** My prayers are with you as you participate in these important deliberations.

Sincerely,

Dr. Tim Trent  
Pensacola District Superintendent

cc: Pastor

Enclosure: S/PPR Response Sheet to return