

Introductory Meeting of Incoming Pastor with Staff Parish Relations Committee

The following are guidelines for the introductory meeting when the District Superintendent introduces the incoming pastor to the Staff Parish Relations Committee.

1. Often referred to as the “take-in” meeting, this meeting is not an interview but an introduction. The incoming pastor is appointed by the Bishop to serve the church (s) therefore the Staff Parish Relations Committee is not “hiring” the pastor but meeting the newly appointed pastor.
2. During the meeting, if any deep concerns are raised by either the pastor or SPRC about the new appointment, these should be communicated with the District Superintendent for consideration by the Bishop and Appointive Cabinet. However, matters of age, gender, or race are invalid reasons for concern and should not be raised.
3. Introductory Meeting Format
 - a. The SPRC should designate in advance a comfortable and private room or space in the church for the incoming pastor and his/her family to wait until invited into the SPRC meeting. Preferably, this location should not be within hearing distance of the SPRC meeting.
 - b. The SPRC meeting should be located in a room in the church that is private (if possible) and apart from any other spaces where other church activities are taking place. This is to ensure the privacy of the SPRC and the incoming pastor.
 - c. The District Superintendent usually spends a few minutes alone with the SPRC to provide the initial introduction of the incoming pastor. The D.S. will share a brief overview of the pastor’s gifts for ministry, personal background, and other pertinent information. The D.S. will also review the salary and benefits package for the incoming pastor. The SPRC will have opportunity to ask some initial questions in order to clarify information.
 - d. Following this initial introduction, the District Superintendent will bring the pastor into the SPRC meeting room. A spouse or other family members may accompany the pastor if desired. The District Superintendent should ask the family members in advance whether or not they would want to speak in the meeting.
 - e. In order to begin relationship building between the incoming pastor and SPRC, the District Superintendent will invite everyone to introduce themselves. In addition to sharing name and role in the church, it is helpful to have a particular question ready for all to answer. Some examples would be “Share a recent blessing you received.” Or “When did you recently see God at work and how?” The District Superintendent should begin the introductions, then the SPRC members, and then end with the new pastor.
 - f. When it is the new pastor’s turn to introduce himself/herself, the District Superintendent will invite the pastor to share more deeply about self and ministry for a few moments.
 - g. Once the introductions are completed, the Staff Parish Relations Committee will be invited by the District Superintendent to ask the new pastor questions and share information about the ministry. The D.S. should stress that questions should be focused on the new pastor and not family members, particularly if family members have opted not to speak. Questions should focus on the ministry and mission of the church

and how the new relationship between pastor and church will enhance the ministry. The D.S. will manage the conversation making sure that appropriate questions are asked and answered. If anything inappropriate is asked (i.e. about matters of age, gender, race, etc.), it will be the responsibility of the D.S. to intervene. If questions are lagging, the D.S. can insert questions to bolster conversation.

- h. The District Superintendent will also invite the incoming pastor to ask questions of the SPRC in order to gain a better understanding of the ministry and mission of the church (s).
 - i. When an appropriate time of questions and answers have transpired, the District Superintendent should ask if there are any other questions that need to be asked.
 - j. If all questions have been asked, the District Superintendent may invite the pastor and family to leave the room for a few moments. The D.S. will check-in with both the pastor and the SPRC during this time apart to see if there are any unanswered questions or concerns. This check-in time is not intended to be lengthy in nature, but long enough for the D.S. to determine if there are any concerns that need to be addressed.
 - k. Following this check-in time, the new pastor and family will come back into the SPRC meeting room. The District Superintendent will introduce the pastor as the newly appointed pastor of the church (s).
 - l. The District Superintendent will then review the Statement of Understanding with the SPRC and pastor. This document includes all of details about the agreed upon salary and benefits package, guidelines for the transition time between current and new pastor, and official start date. After discussion about the Statement of Understanding, the District Superintendent, the SPRC Chair, and the incoming pastor will sign and date the document. The D.S. will ensure that all parties receive a copy of the signed document. The D.S. should make sure that contact information is shared between the incoming pastor and SPRC chair.
 - m. As the meeting ends, the District Superintendent may pray or invite the new pastor to pray. A time of greeting may follow the meeting.
 - n. If arrangements have been made for the new pastor and family to have a walk-through of the parsonage (if the pastor will live in the home), the District Superintendent, incoming pastor and family, and SPRC Chair or designee will proceed to the parsonage for a walk-through.
 - o. DS will hand out copies of weeks 1-4 of the "Prayer Preparation by the Congregation" (see <https://www.wpaumc.org/Cross-Racial-Cross-Cultural> item IV. A)
4. Parsonage Walk-through
- a. The District Superintendent will make sure that all rooms and spaces in the parsonage shall be seen by the incoming pastor. Respect for the privacy of the current pastor will be honored, though. The incoming pastor should not open closet doors or drawers, etc. unless permission is granted by the current pastor.
 - b. If there are any concerns about the condition of the parsonage including needed repairs, cleanliness, etc., the District Superintendent should make note of these matters. The D.S. will be responsible for communicating with the church leadership to care for these matters before the new pastor moves into the home. It will not be the responsibility of the new pastor to manage these concerns.
 - c. The District Superintendent should encourage the current pastor to provide a list of community services to the new pastor before arrival (i.e. doctors, shopping, etc.)