

Directions for the Process

“OUR UNDERSTANDING OF OUR MINISTRY TOGETHER”

Before convening the Staff/Parish Relations Committee, the Spiritual Gifts Inventory should be distributed to all members of the Committee and to each clergy person appointed to the church (elders, deacons, local pastors). Each person involved in the process should complete the inventory and bring it with them to the meeting of the Committee.

At the meeting of the committee all participants should view together the DVD featuring Bishop Whitaker and Sharon Luther. You will note from the content of the DVD that the emphasis on this process is on how you all are doing as a team of clergy and lay persons serving at the same church.

If this is the first time for the process to be followed since a new clergy person joined your staff, you will then want to complete the Ministry Priorities work sheets. The clergy complete one set of questions, and the Committee members complete a complementary set. Discussion will need to follow to talk through the priorities seen by each – where they are similar and where they differ. A common agreement should be reached on what are the “A” priorities.

The other time you would use the Ministry Priorities worksheets is when there is a major shift in the congregation’s ministry goals. At that time, a reassessment of the clergy leadership’s priorities would be appropriate.

◆If your SPRC and current Pastor have utilized the previous Conference Clergy Evaluation Process you may be able to use the Ministry Priorities work sheets previously completed as your basis for Understanding your Ministry Together.

Prior to the meeting the clergy will complete the “Self-Reflections on Clergy Leadership” form and have copies ready to distribute to each member of the Committee. This process is designed to allow the clergy person to reflect on the particular gifts and graces that s/he possess, and how they relate to the ministry with this congregation. It is also designed to enable the members of the Committee to know more about the clergy person who is appointed to them, about what makes that clergy person really get excited about ministry, and how that might connect with the ministry of this congregation.

During this part of the meeting of the clergy and the Committee, there will be the opportunity for discussion around the topics on the self-reflection form. Enclosed is a guide for the Committee that includes example questions that can be used for discussion on the questions on the self-reflection form.

Finally, at the end of the discussion time, the Committee and the clergy should agree on the major points of their discussion as it relates to focus of the clergy's energy for the year to come and how the Committee will be supportive in that process. From that discussion the Chair of the Committee and the clergy will create a joint statement of "Our Understanding of Our Ministry Together." The items of the discussion should be included, and the statement should be signed by both the chair and the clergy and then forwarded to the district superintendent.

At churches where there is more than one clergy appointed, this process should be followed with each clergy on the staff. This would include the senior minister, associate minister(s) and deacon(s). This material could also be used with other staff of the church and you are invited to use it in that way.

Assessment and evaluation can often be a difficult process. In designing this process the committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry sought to focus on our ministry together. It is when clergy and laity work together effectively that the Kingdom is advanced. So, we are hopeful that this process will help identify and lift the areas where the clergy and the laity of a congregation can strengthen their teamwork.

If you have some suggestions or comments about the process, the committee would welcome those as we seek to make a more effective process. You can e-mail your suggestions to David Dodge at ddodge@flumc.org.