

Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee Training

Dr. Blake Bradford, District Superintendent



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Presenter:



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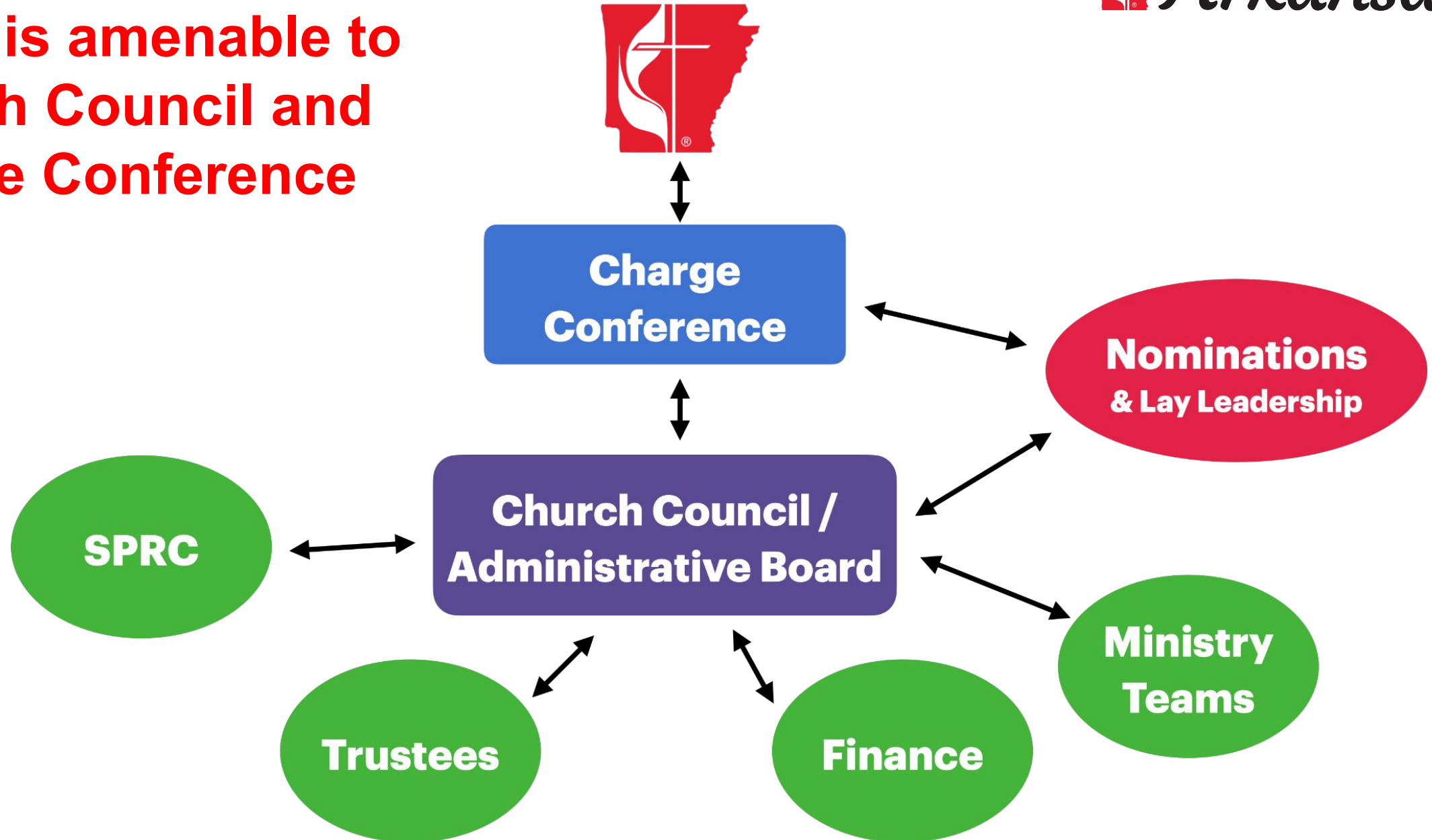
What is the SPRC?



Duties and membership defined by ¶258.2

The Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee is the administrative unit in the local church where staff/pastor and congregational interests are integrated to focus on the mission of the church.

**SPRC is amenable to
Church Council and
Charge Conference**



Who is the SPRC?



- Professing members of the local church
- People engaged and attentive to our own Christian spiritual development
- Elected by Church Conference
- Lay Member to Annual Conference and Lay Leader (with voice & vote)

Who we cannot be...

- Staff members
- Immediate family members of the pastor or staff
- More than one immediate family member from the same household

Organization

- Between 5 and 9 persons (one shall be a young adult and one may be a youth); all must be professing members
- Three year classes; members shall be able to succeed themselves for an additional three-year term
- Congregation on a charge meet separately when appropriate. Congregations of a Cooperative Parish meet together to consider leadership needs of the cooperative parish ministry

Meetings

- Meets at least quarterly (recommend Monthly)
- Meets at the request of the Bishop, DS, pastor, any other person accountable to the committee, or chairperson of the committee
- Meets only with the knowledge of pastor and/or DS
- Pastor shall be present unless s/he excuses self
- May meet with DS without the pastor or appointed staff
- Shall meet in closed session
- All information shared is confidential!

Monthly Meetings



Staff Parish Relations Committee Annual Timeline 2021-2022

Blessings in your ministry of leadership of a local church and its people! This Annual Timeline was created to help SPR Committees and pastors plan monthly meetings. It is offered to you by the Bishop and Appointive Cabinet to equip you in your ministry of leadership. Every month in the recommended SPRC Annual Timeline has up to three categories:

- First are **suggested monthly meeting emphases**, offered to provide a framework for discussion. Included in several of the meeting emphases is a Suggested Mission Field Accountability Conversation. This agenda item offers the SPRC an opportunity to discuss a particular aspect of your congregation's engagement with your community mission field.
- Second, some months in the timeline include a section for **new appointments**. Experience has shown that congregational and pastoral intentionality in the welcoming and first several months makes a huge difference in the fruitfulness of a new pastor.
- Third, **reminders** are included so that the SPRC can stay on track to submit required forms. Conference forms are a primary tool for the appointive process. Your clarity, self-awareness, and feedback are vital to ensuring appropriate pastoral leadership for your community's mission field and congregation.

NOTE:

Ministry in a COVID-impacted culture will be radically different than in our past. Clergy and lay leadership will need to adapt ministries and worship, rethink how to make relational connections in a time of physical distancing, and encourage creative experimentation. For congregations receiving new pastors, the usual systems designed to assist a new pastor in meeting members and community leaders, such as cottage meetings or town halls, may need adaptation.

Visit <https://arumc.org/pastors-in-transition/> for a document titled *Critical Questions During a Transition*. This document has standard transition questions plus a whole page set aside for leadership questions during COVID. Your answers will shape your work and planning, especially during a pastoral transition.

July

- **Monthly SPRC Meeting Emphasis:**
 - Getting to know each other (New Appointments).
 - Suggested Mission Field Accountability Conversation: Discuss the pastor's and church's plans for guest follow-up and evangelism opportunities for the post-COVID and Back-To-School season.
- **New Appointment Recommendations:**
 - Hold a welcome celebration for the new pastor; Churches are encouraged to share a pastoral transition with wider community and local media as an evangelism opportunity.
 - Begin a process of intentional relationship building and orientation through Cottage Meetings or Listening Sessions with congregation members, adapted, as needed, for COVID precautions.
- **Reminders:**
 - New appointments take effect July 1 and incoming pastor compensation forms are due in advance

August

- **Monthly SPRC Meeting Emphasis:**
 - Provide immediate feedback with the pastor and discuss mutual expectations.

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who make disciples equipped and sent to transform lives, communities, and the world.



Staff Parish Relations Committee Annual Timeline 2021-2022

January

- **Monthly SPRC Meeting Emphasis:**
 - Discuss congregational and pastoral leadership goals for the new year.
 - Welcome and onboarding for new SPRC members.
 - Suggested Mission Field Accountability Conversation: Discuss the pastor's and church's plans for community evangelism, guest engagement, and guest follow-up during Lent and Easter.

February

- **Monthly SPRC Meeting Emphasis:**
 - Discussion of the year-end statistics submitted to the Annual Conference.
 - Suggested Mission Field Accountability Conversation: Discuss the pastor's progress in leading the congregation in the creation of an intentional discipleship system (or review of your current system).
 - Prepare process for lay staff evaluations.

March

- **Monthly SPRC Meeting Emphasis:**
 - Suggested Mission Field Accountability Conversation: Conversation about what we have learned about our Mission Field and our ministry in and with it.
 - Report and discuss lay staff evaluations.

April

- **Monthly SPRC Meeting Emphasis:**
 - Discuss the pastor's and church's progress on goals and expectations, using the pastoral appointment letter, previous SPRC assessment and consultation forms, and quarterly Vital Signs statistics as conversation tools. Discuss next steps for achieving goals.
- **New Appointment Recommendations:**
 - If your church will be experiencing a pastoral change in July, SPRC should begin the process of saying "goodbye" and "hello" well.
 - Transition resources are available at arumc.org.

May

- **Monthly SPRC Meeting Emphasis:**
 - Suggested Mission Field Accountability Conversations: Discuss the pastor's and church's plans for engaging guests during summer.
 - Continue discussion from the April meeting concerning goals, strategies, and continued feedback.
- **New Appointment Recommendations:**
 - If your church will be experiencing a pastoral change in July, the SPRC should prepare and plan for a goodbye celebration for the current pastor and make arrangements (in consultation with the incoming pastor) for an intentional welcome and orientation of the new pastor with the church and community.
 - Full-time pastors receiving a new appointment will attend the Pastors in Transition Workshop.
- **Reminder:**
 - Clergy receiving new appointments will need to submit complete and signed compensation forms to the District Office.

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Duties and Responsibilities of the SPRC



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Mission and Ministry

- ▶ Encourage and support the pastor, staff, and families
- ▶ Confer, consult, and counsel with pastor & staff on relationships with congregation, priorities, skills, and goals
- ▶ Provide an annual evaluation of pastor and staff to encourage effective ministry
- ▶ Communicate and interpret to the congregation the nature and function of ministry in the UMC regarding open itinerancy, inclusiveness and diversity, preparation for ordained ministry, and the Ministerial Education Fund
- ▶ Enlist, interview, evaluate, review, and recommend candidates for ministry.

Personnel Issues

- Develop and approve job descriptions for staff in cooperation with the lead pastor
- Recommend to the Church Council, after consultation with the pastor, other staff positions to meet ministry needs.
- Consult with pastor and staff on continuing education and renewal leave – making recommendations to Church Council
- Consult with pastor and staff on pulpit supply, compensation, travel, vacation, insurances, pension, housing – making recommendations to the Church Council.
- With Trustees and pastor make an ANNUAL review of parsonage
- With the pastor, hire, contract, evaluate, promote, retire, and dismiss non-appointed staff.

Appointment Issues

- Confer with pastor and/or appointed members of the staff when it becomes evident that the best interests of the church and pastor(s) will be served by a change.
- Cooperate with the pastor(s), DS, and bishop in securing clergy leadership.
- Such conferring and cooperating with the DS and bishop is advisory only.

Committee Development

- Keep informed of personnel matters in relationship to Church policy, professional standards, liability issues, and civil law
- Communicate, interpret, and implement *ARUMC Policies and Procedures*
 - *Safe Sanctuaries Policy*
 - *Sexual Misconduct Questionnaire – remembering ALL who use building!*
- Participate in educational and training opportunities provided by the conference or district

Consultation (When You Need Assistance/Advice/etc!)

- Contact your District Superintendent

Reporting Concerns



- ❖ **Allegation of sexual misconduct:** Immediately report any incident or allegations of sexual misconduct to the District Superintendent.
- ❖ **Other possible chargeable offenses:** Immediately report any potential clergy chargeable offenses (2702) to the District Superintendent.

Relational Skills for the SPRC

- Maintain confidentiality
- Create a climate of effectiveness
- Listening and feedback vs. polling for complaints (**no anonymous complaints**)
- Make facts known vs. rumors.
- Provide professional, constructive feedback in a system of evaluation
- Be aware of the conference rules on sexual misconduct. Report any allegations directly to the DS immediately
- Engage conflict well

Engaging Conflict Well: A Process Based on Matthew 18:15-17

◆ **Step 1: Communicate**

- If A has an issue with B, A must address B

◆ **Step 2: Companions**

- If A and B cannot resolve the issue, then someone from SPRC can sit with A and B while they continue to dialogue.

◆ **Step 3: Council**

- If A and B and someone from SPRC cannot find resolution, then take it to the whole SPRC.
- If the SPRC cannot resolve the issue, call District Superintendent and request that s/he be present for continued dialogue.

Confidentiality/Integrity Issues

- No Secret Meetings without Pastor* (Disciplinary exception for meetings with the DS)
- Issues are discussed during meeting, not between meetings
- All matters under discussion are kept in strict confidence, i.e., a “safe”, confidential space
- All input brought to the meeting is held in confidence, but is “owned” input (no anonymous complaints)
- May invite someone outside the committee to speak but individual may not stay for deliberations
- Minutes and evaluations are confidential. It’s recommended that the chair collect and keep this material.
- There should be careful reporting to the Church Council of each meeting, ensuring that confidentiality is maintained.
- Be transparent about Processes, but not deliberations
- All members need to leave the meeting on the same page

Annual Assessment Cycle



Reasons for **REGULAR** Evaluations

- **To establish and maintain good working relationships between the congregation and pastor**
- **To provide an opportunity for the congregation and pastor to confer at periodic intervals on his or her performance.**
- **To offer a procedure for comprehensive and dispassion appraisal in a setting other than during a time of crises.**
- **An annual Assessment and an annual Consultation involve the DS/Bishop/Appointive Cabinet**

Evaluation should be an on-going communication process and not just a once-a-year conference or written report.

Clergy Compensation Guidelines



Compensation:

Role of the SPRC

- Compensation is for the position, not the person
- Assess the current compensation situation and how it relates to the leadership needs of the local church.
- Be an advocate for the pastor.
- Compensation can only be changed by act of the Charge Conference
- By Discipline, Compensation can only be decreased at the new appointment year (July 1) or when a new pastor is appointed.
- Compensation is now set for the Appointment Year (July-June)
- Note Conference Minimum Compensation rates

Compensation:

Questions the SPRC Should Ask

- How does our salary package compare with that of similar churches?
- How does our pastor's salary compare with the incomes of similarly trained people in our community?
- Is the compensation package likely to match the quality of pastoral leadership we want or need for our church?
- Is this package consistent with our best image of what Christ wants our church to be?

Compensation: Factors That Should Not Be Considered

- **Whether the Pastor is Male or Female**

Equal pay for equal service is a basic principle of the modern church.

Discrimination in pay on the basis of gender is prohibited by law and raises issues of morality.

- **Spouse's Income**

Income earned by the spouse of the pastor is strictly a private matter.

Reducing the salary to which a pastor is otherwise entitled, because of a spouse's income, is a gross inequity.

Total Compensation Package (for Full-Time Clergy)

- **Salary**
- **Parsonage or Housing Allowance**
- **Accountable Reimbursements**
 - **Travel & Professional Expenses**
 - **Continuing Education**
- **There are no Conference Health Benefits**
- **Pension Program through WesPath (Full Time Clergy)**

Notes on Clergy Taxes

- Clergy are employed by the local church for income tax purposes
- Clergy are considered self-employed for social security purposes
- Clergy are not Independent Contractors
- The Housing Allowance is excluded from income taxes
- IRS Reporting Requirements
 - The church does not withhold or pay FICA
 - The church is responsible for submitting a W2

ARUMC Clergy Policies



- **Leave Paid By the Church**

- Vacation – Minimum Scale set by Annual Conference
- Continuing Education – 2 weeks annually*

- **Parsonage Standards**

- **Minimum Compensation (FT) and Salary Arrearage**



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