

## PARSONAGE GUIDELINES

The Discipline of the United Methodist Church provides that the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee assume responsibility of the parsonage. 1996 Discipline, Par.262.2.f.5.

“The parsonage is to be mutually respected by the pastor’s family as the property of the church and by the church as a place of privacy for the pastor’s family.” Par. 262.2(f.5). The parsonage is primarily the home of the minister and his/her family and in deference to them, careful planning should go into the building of the parsonage. As a rule, the parsonage should be built, not bought. The type and cost of the house will vary according to the community.

Most charges seek to provide adequate housing for the parsonage family and offer such furnishings as will assure comfort, safety and maintenance in keeping with the location of the parsonage in the community. These guidelines are intended to offer direction and goals for local church leaders in decisions regarding the construction of new parsonages and/or the upgrading and maintenance of existing parsonages.

A local church, or charge, planning to build or purchase a parsonage shall meet all the requirements of Paragraph 2543. When the Charge Conference appoints a Building Committee, it is recommended that the minister and spouse be ex-officio members of the committee. The parsonage family, having lived in a number of parsonages, has valuable knowledge that will aid the committee in making choices. Parsonages should be designed so that pastoral appointments can be made to meet the needs of the charge.

### I. THE PARSONAGE SHOULD HAVE

- A. At least three bedrooms (four bedrooms, if possible) with ample closet space in each (double closets, if possible). In two story houses, one bedroom with a full bath should be on the ground floor to accommodate handicapped family members.
- B. At least two full baths with shower facilities in each.
- C. A family room or den.
- D. A living room separate from the den.
- E. Adequate room in the kitchen for family meals or a breakfast nook.
- F. An adequate dining room.
- G. Adequate kitchen cabinets with counter tops of standard heights.
- H. Storage space for cleaning equipment.
  - I. Dry storage space large enough for extra mattresses, furniture, trunks, books, out-season-clothes, etc. (Basements are not usually satisfactory)
- J. A separate closet for linens.
- K. Sufficient electrical receptacles, fire extinguishers and smoke detectors. Check on local building codes and requirements.
- L. Modern energy-efficient central heat/air conditioning system with humidity control. Attic exhaust fan. System should be designed so any unused areas can be turned off.
- M. Insulation in ceilings, floors, exterior walls should meet current building codes.
- N. Storm windows and doors or insulated windows and doors.
- O. Double garage or carport.
- P. Dead bolt locks on all outside doors.
- Q. Outside storage space.
- R. Fenced play area.
- S. Foundation shrubbery and shade trees.

### II. A. THE PASTORAL CHARGE SHOULD PROVIDE:

- 1. Inside the house:
  - a. Frost-free refrigerator with freezer compartment.
  - b. Kitchen stove and dishwasher.
  - c. Standard water heater: 40 gallon minimum: quick recovery, energy efficient.
  - d. Double sink.
  - e. Washing machine and dryer.
  - f. In addition to basic furniture for each room there should be chests, bedroom

- chairs, bookcases, lamps, washable mattress pads.
- g. Window treatments (curtains, drapes, or blinds).
- h. Carpeting, or other floor covering for the entire house.
- i. Purchase telephone.

2. Outside the house:

- a. Power lawn mower. (In safe working condition)
- b. TV antenna or Cable.
- c. Clothesline (optional)
- d. Porch and/or lawn furniture.
- e. Adequate parking

- B. Discarded furnishings SHOULD NOT be placed in the parsonage.
- C. Pastor is to furnish linens, quilts, blankets, cooking and eating utensils.

### III. CARE AND MAINTENANCE

- A. Trustees are responsible for care and maintenance as authorized by Church Council (Board)
- B. Parsonage family is responsible for routine care of the parsonage grounds such as cutting grasses and/or raking yard unless the church assumes the responsibility. Fertilizer, straw, spray are the responsibilities of the church.
- C. Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, or the Parsonage Committee, is amenable to the Church Council (Board). Members of the committee should have some expertise in home furnishings.
- D. PPRC should meet twice annually, once for full review, in the parsonage with pastor and spouse to discuss needs openly, set goals and priorities and make recommendations to the Church Council (Board).
- E. Periodically the PPRC should hold Open House in cooperation with and consent of the parsonage family.
- F. Current inventory of furnishings should be kept by PPRC
  - 1. Pastor and chairperson of PPRC should each have a copy.
  - 2. Gifts to the pastor and/or parsonage should be clearly designated.
  - 3. For insurance purposes, a file should be kept in the church's safety deposit box - photos of each room's furnishings, purchase date and cost.
- G. A book or file of pertinent information should be compiled by the PPRC chairperson and kept in the parsonage. It should include:
  - 1. Service and repair phone numbers
  - 2. Appliance invoices, warranties, repair information, etc.
  - 3. Cleaning methods for carpets, draperies, walls, windows, and furniture.
  - 4. Heating, cooling and plumbing systems warranties, manuals, service and records.
  - 5. Yard equipment manuals, warranties, etc.
- H. Insurance equal to 90% of the replacement value of the house and furnishings should be carried as a minimum to be paid by the charge. Ministers are encouraged to provide for insurance on their personal property.
- I. Annual pest control inspection, and treatment if necessary.
- J. Annual church budget should include adequate funds for maintenance
- K. The parsonage should be kept well painted inside and outside. It is preferable that the painting of the parsonage interior coincide with the beginning of pastorates.
- L. The parsonage family SHOULD NOT keep pets inside the parsonage. The parsonage family IS responsible for any and all damage done to the parsonage by their pets.

### IV. CHANGE OF PASTORS

When an impending move is evident, as soon as the District Superintendent informs the chairperson of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, the PPRC should meet at the parsonage with the pastor and inspect the parsonage using the following guidelines:

- A. Check complete inventory.
- B. Inspect each room for needed repairs, refurbishing, paint, etc.
- C. Evaluate conditions of structure, inside and out, including furnishings, appliances and systems.

- D. Pastor shall provide information about condition of appliances and systems that only the person living in the house would know.
- E. Inspection of electrical, heating, cooling and plumbing systems.
- F. PPRC should arrange for needed repairs, refurbishing, painting, etc. and make recommendation to Church Council (Board) for funding.
- G. Pastor is to clean thoroughly the parsonage; and to cooperate by vacating, at the church's expense, the parsonage a few days early if deemed necessary for major renovations.
- H. PPRC shall plan, communicate and work toward making the move pleasant for both incoming and outgoing pastor's families.
- I. Make sure the utilities are on for the incoming pastor. Utilities should be in the church's name with the parsonage address to negate termination of services.
- J. Insure outgoing pastor has left a full tank of oil or gas, if applicable. (If tank not full when new pastor moves in, it should be filled immediately and noted for future moves.)
- K. If the new pastor finds unacceptable conditions and the PPRC is not functioning, contact the District Superintendent.

V. COVENANTS

A. Pastor's

1. Inspect the parsonage jointly with the PPRC to determine that it is in good order and repair and submit report to D.S.
2. Keep parsonage in a clean and sanitary condition including yard, attic, basement.
3. Have repaired at his/her expense any damage due to negligence, children and/or pets.
4. Conform to guidelines for moving out as set forth herein.
5. Pay pro rata share of all utilities. Leave a full tank of oil or gas, if applicable. If this policy is not already in use, the charge and pastor should negotiate for the tank to be left full for the next pastor.

B. Charge's

1. Inspect the parsonage jointly with the pastor to determine if it is in good order and repair and submit report to D.S.
2. Maintain the parsonage in good condition.