

Duties of the Pastor

2000 Book of Discipline. The United Methodist Church

¶ 331 Performance Evaluations

Persons serving as pastors of congregations shall be evaluated in part on the basis of the following list of responsibilities and duties:

Responsibilities and Duties of a Pastor—The pastor(s) shall oversee the total ministry of the local church in its nurturing ministries and in fulfilling its mission of witness and service in the world by: (1) giving pastoral support, guidance, and training to the lay leadership in the church, equipping them to fulfill the ministry to which they are sent as servants under the Lordship of Christ; (2) providing ministry within the congregation and to the world; (3) ensuring faithful transmission of the Christian faith; and (4) administering the temporal affairs of the congregation. In the context of these basic responsibilities, the pastor shall give attention to the following specific duties:

1. Ministering within the Congregation and to the World—
 - a) To preach the Word, oversee the worship life of the congregation, read and teach the Scriptures, and engage the people in study and witness.
 - b) To administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper and all the other means of grace. It shall be the duty of all appointed pastors, before baptizing infants or children, to prepare the parents and sponsors by instructing them concerning the significance of Holy Baptism, the responsibilities of the parents and the sponsor(s) for the Christian training of the baptized child, and how these obligations may be properly discharged (see ¶ 225.1). All appointed pastors may select and train lay members with appropriate words and actions to immediately deliver the consecrated communion elements to members confined at home, in a nursing home, or in a hospital.
 - c) To encourage reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant and renewal of baptismal vows at different stages of life. The practice of re-baptism does not conform with God's action in baptism and is not consistent with Wesleyan tradition and the historic teaching of the church. Therefore, the pastor should counsel any person seeking re-baptism to participate in a rite of re-affirmation of baptismal vows.
 - d) To give oversight to the total educational program of the church and encourage the distribution and use of United Methodist literature in each local church.
 - e) To provide leadership for the funding ministry of the congregation and to encourage giving as a spiritual discipline.
 - f) To lead the congregation by teaching and example in a ministry with people with disabilities.
 - g) To be involved and to lead the congregation in evangelistic outreach that others might come to know Christ, be baptized, and become members.
 - h) To encourage people baptized in infancy or early childhood to make their profession of faith after instruction so that they might become professing members of the church.
 - i) To perform the marriage ceremony after due counsel with the parties involved. The decision to perform the ceremony shall be the right and responsibility of the pastor. Qualifications for performing marriage shall be in accordance with the laws of the state and The United Methodist Church.
 - j) To counsel those who are under threat of marriage breakdown and explore every possibility for reconciliation.

- k) To counsel bereaved families and conduct appropriate funeral and memorial services.
 - l) To counsel with members of the church and community concerning military service and its alternatives.
 - m) To counsel persons struggling with personal, ethical, or spiritual issues.
 - n) To visit in the homes of the church and community, especially among the sick, aged, and others in need.
 - o) To participate in community, ecumenical, and interreligious concerns and to lead the congregation to become so involved through ministries of service and advocacy, relevant to specific and diverse community contexts; and to pray and labor for the unity of the Christian community.
 - p) To search out from among the membership and constituency men and women for pastoral ministry and other church-related occupations; to help them interpret the meaning of the call of God; to advise and assist when they commit themselves thereto; to counsel with them concerning the course of their preparation; and to keep a careful record of such decisions.
 - q) To give diligent pastoral leadership in ordering the life of the congregation for discipleship in the world.
2. Equipping and Supervising—
- a) To give diligent pastoral leadership ordering the life of the congregation for nurture and care.
 - b) To offer counsel and theological reflection in the following:
 - (1) The development of goals for fulfilling the missions of the congregation, the annual conference, and the general Church.
 - (2) The development of plans for implementing the goals of the congregation and a process for evaluating their effectiveness.
 - (3) The selection, training, and deployment of lay leadership within the congregation and the development of a process for evaluating lay leadership.
 - c) To lead the congregation in experiencing the racial and ethnic inclusiveness of The United Methodist Church and to help prepare it for participation in the itinerancy of all ordained men and women.
 - d) To participate in denominational and conference programs and training opportunities and to seek out opportunities for cooperative ministries with other United Methodist pastors and churches.
 - e) To be willing to assume supervisory responsibilities within the connection.
 - f) To lead the congregation in the fulfillment of its mission through full and faithful payment of all apportioned ministerial support, administrative, and benevolent funds.
3. Administration—
- a) To be the administrative officer of the local church and to assure that the organizational concerns of the congregation are adequately provided for.
 - b) To be responsible for the process of goal setting and planning through which the laity take responsibility for ministry in the church and in the world.
 - c) To administer the provisions of the Discipline and supervise the working program of the local church.
 - d) To give an account of their pastoral ministries to the charge and annual conference according to the prescribed forms. The care of all church records and local church financial obligations shall be included. The pastor shall certify the accuracy of all financial, membership, and any other reports submitted by the local church to the annual conference for use in apportioning costs back to the church.