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Rules and Policies of the Wisconsin Conference

Clergy Housing Policy

60.1.0 General

60.1.1 Whether building a new parsonage, purchasing existing housing for a parsonage, or correcting an existing parsonage, the parsonage should provide attractive and comfortable living space for an average-sized family. Energy efficiency and minimum maintenance should be high priorities in parsonages.

In new parsonages, as well as existing ones, energy saving installations should be considered. Parsonages should provide a model in values consistent with Christian stewardship.

Minimum Requirements

Living room at least 200 square feet. Three bedrooms at least 11 feet by 11 feet. Modern kitchen with ample built in cupboards and work area for food preparation. Utility area with water conditioning as needed, stationary tubs, hookup for automatic washer-dryer, space for interior and exterior clothes lines. Dining area sufficient to seat at least eight persons. Adequate closet space in each bedroom, near front and rear exits, and for general cleaning equipment such as vacuum cleaners. Adequate heating for each room and adequate cooling, especially in bedroom areas. Zoning for areas should be considered to save energy. Two car garage with adequate storage for lawn and garden equipment. Recently inspected wiring, plumbing and heating and, if necessary, brought up to current code. One and one-half bathrooms.

Other considerations

Parsonages are provided for living space for pastoral families and not for the purpose of church activities. Wherever possible, parsonages should be handicap accessible and in the planning or purchasing of a parsonage, serious consideration should be given to a bedroom and bathroom on the first floor.

In no case should bedroom space be planned or utilized in below ground areas unless windows of such size as to provide safe and easy egress to the outside are provided adjacent to bedroom areas. Fire walls shall be installed around the furnace when bedrooms are near heating units.

An office shall be provided in the church building unless specific exemption is granted by the cabinet. Each charge shall have a telephone line independent from the parsonage telephone line.

Minimum Parsonage Equipment

Stove Refrigerator Drapes Carpeting or Rugs Hardware for over-sized windows Television antenna or cable hook-up. Telephone with one-party line which is unique to the parsonage Washer and dryer Carbon monoxide detectors Smoke detector

Annual Equipment Inspection

Parsonage equipment owned by the local church should be inspected annually by the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and Trustee chairpersons and repaired or replaced before deterioration affects operation.

Inspection at Moving

Upon moving, the out-going pastor shall have the condition of the parsonage inspected by the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee chairperson and the Trustee chairperson. The condition of the parsonage for the incoming pastor shall be the responsibility of the congregation.

Parsonage Care Responsibility a. The charge and pastor share a common goal of maintaining adequate, comfortable, well-kept residential surroundings. b. Each party assumes certain responsibilities and tasks to meet this goal. c. Each person involved as a resident should recognize that we hold parsonages in trust and that certain tensions can be expected when individuals or families live in homes that are not their own, or when they have responsibility for the care of people in homes that belong to someone else. d. Experience has shown that consideration and communication can make such tension work for rather than against churches and pastors. e. These guidelines are designed to assist in clarifying responsibilities and in encouraging communication.

Parsonage Maintenance - Multiple Point Charges

a. The charge shall have a joint parsonage committee. The committee shall be made up of representation

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from all churches in the charge. The committee's duties, at a minimum, will be: 1. to do an annual inspection of the parsonage, as per Policy 60.5.0.

2. to meet as necessary to review, and as needed, plan maintenance for the parsonage.

b. Expenses for maintenance shall be shared by the churches in the charge.

Communication Plan

a. The resident is expected to share in initiation of actions when parsonage maintenance needs emerge and in follow-through of such actions. b. The resident, however, has limited power to act. c. Parsonage Committee members, or Trustees, or members of the Staff/Parish Relations Committee should be assigned to care for parsonage property. d. The designated person or persons should be the individual(s) to whom the pastor turns regarding maintenance needs. e. When such designated persons do not act within a reasonable period of time, the pastor shall report maintenance concerns to one or more of the following bodies: the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, the Trustees, the Administrative Council.

Occupancy

a. The parsonage is provided for the pastor and his/her family.

b. It is expected that they shall have the same options of having guests and entertaining that would be inherent in the occupancy of any family home.

c. Residents shall not sublet or make the home, or parts thereof available for an extended period without the approval of the Administrative Council.

d. Because of the tax exempt status of parsonages, partisan political signs, etc., may not be displayed publicly thereon. Pastors and families are encouraged to find other appropriate ways to express their values and convictions in the electoral process.

Pets

While pets provide pleasure to individuals and families and are generally not to be discouraged, some churches have experienced justifiably angry feelings toward pastors whose pets have been destructive to parsonage structures. Where such destruction or uncleanness results, Pastor-Parish Relations Committees shall call such a matter to the attention of the pastor and negotiate the means by which refurbishing or cleaning shall be done.

An agreement for payment of expense shall be worked out and put in writing. If a dispute over charges occurs or if payment is not made as per the agreement, the District Superintendent shall intervene. If it is evident that no change in the care of pets occurs or if a pastor leaves an appointment where pets have abused the property or left offensive odors, a report shall be filed immediately with the District Superintendent. That report shall be shared with the pastor with the recommendation that a security deposit of no less than \$250 shall be required upon the receipt of a new appointment. The security deposit shall be kept in the Conference treasury, to be returned when that pastor moves and has provided evidence that the parsonage has been properly cared for.

Procedure for Approval of Repairs and Maintenance Emergencies a. The pastor determines the nature of the emergency (leaks, water heater failure, safety hazard such as electric shorts, flooding, etc.) b. The pastor calls the chairperson of the appropriate committee or the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee chairperson immediately. c. The pastor proceeds on his/her own initiative when the situation demands and advises appropriate persons as soon as possible of the emergency. d. A list of electricians, plumbers, etc. acceptable to the church should be provided to the pastor for purposes of emergency contact and be delivered to the new pastor on the day of arrival in the parsonage by the Trustee chairperson or another delegated by the chair.

Routine

a. Requests for repair may be initiated by the pastor, by the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and Trustee chairpersons on their annual inspection, or by the parsonage committee or others designated to care for the parsonage.

b. The local church may provide the pastor the right to have or make repairs up to a designated dollar amount.

c. Major repairs or improvements are to be made in consultation with all appropriate bodies.

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60.10.0 Local Church Responsibilities

The Local Church will be responsible for: a. Cleaning of drapes and carpets at the time of occupancy or one time during occupancy. b. Painting and general upkeep of all buildings, storms, doors, and screens that are part of the parsonage. c. Repair to all buildings on the parsonage property. d. Upkeep and repair of appliances, plumbing, heating units, fireplaces, and fixtures that are a part of the building or are furnished by the appropriate body. e. Maintenance and installation of all walks, drives, steps, gutters, and grades to provide drainage, convenience, and safety. f. Replacement, major pruning or treatment of shrubs and trees on the property. g. Care and inspection when house is unoccupied between moves of pastors. Pastors will be expected to care for the property when they are on vacation. h. Inspection of the property on an annual basis by the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and Trustee chairpersons as per *The Discipline*.

60.11.0 Pastor Responsibilities

The Pastor will be responsible for: a. Normal cleaning, polishing, and maintenance of all interior surfaces, including cleaning of drapes and carpeting with steam vacuum, where possible. b. Prompt reporting of emergencies or unusual circumstances and needs. c. Semi-annual cleaning of downspout and gutters (spring and fall). d. Regular cleaning and replacement of furnace filters (recommended monthly cleaning of filters and quarterly replacement is recommended on most units), and oiling of bearings as prescribed. e. Regular routine pruning and watering of shrubs. f. Keeping grounds presentable and provide for trash and waste disposal consistent with the area. Mowing and other normal outdoor care consistent with good appearance and safety including the furnishing of necessary equipment. g. Pastors will not make permanent attachments to walls, shelf surfaces, appliances, etc., without consultation with the assigned appropriate body. h. Pastors will not add permanent structures to the ground without prior approval of the appropriate body. i. Maintenance of smoke alarms and fire extinguisher.

60.12.0 Accessory Items Provided by the Appropriate Body

In each parsonage the following appliances and conveniences will be supplied: a. Drapes (to be chosen and changed in consultation between pastors and the appropriate body). b. Shades in all windows where needed. c. Storm doors, windows and screens in good repair. d. Range and refrigerator (with freezer compartment). e. Wiring for all regular appliances. f. Power lawnmower and power snowblower in special cases only. g. Television antenna or the installation of cable TV. h. Smoke alarms and fire extinguisher.

60.13.0 Pastors are expected to provide the following

- a. Humidifiers and dehumidifiers, and other accessories for reasons of health and convenience, unless required because of some unusual circumstances connected with the location or type of building.
- b. Fuses, light bulbs, and other small items connected with day-to-day comfort and convenience.
- c. If desired, subscription service for cable TV.

Guidelines For Housing Allowances

All pastors serving full-time in local churches, and all Conference clergy staff members and district superintendents shall be provided either a parsonage or housing allowance. A housing or rental allowance shall be negotiated between the pastor and congregation in consultation with the district superintendent (where applicable), or in the case of a Conference clergy staff person or district superintendent, with the approval of the appointee, the Personnel Committee, the Council on Finance and Administration, and the cabinet. Full-time clergy serving on the Conference staff shall receive the same Base Housing Allowance as the District Superintendents. It shall be understood that this agreement shall not be a primary factor in consideration for future appointments for either party.

In setting the housing allowance the following shall be included: a. An amount to cover the utilities in an average three bedroom home in good condition in that community. The term "average" will vary with communities and shall be open to negotiation. b. An amount to cover, at least, the principal and interest that would be required for an average three bedroom home in good condition in the community after a down payment of no less than 15% and a twenty-five year mortgage. c. For persons desiring rental living, the allowance shall be cost of rental, plus utilities, or: 1. the rental value of the type of a home in the community the ordained person is expected to live in. 2. plus, the actual cost of utilities 3. plus, the amount of incidental home costs related to home for business purposes. The total housing allowance may not exceed the smaller of the two methods of determining housing allowance. If a local church provides a housing loan for a pastor, provision shall be made by the pastor involved to guarantee repayment of that

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loan in full prior to moving to a different charge. a. Such guarantee (as a second mortgage or other collateral) shall be made in writing upon receipt of the loan and shall be agreed upon by the church or charge Conference in consultation with the district superintendent. b. A pastor shall be responsible for securing mortgage insurance payable to the church equal to the amount of the church provided loan. If the existing parsonage is sold by a local church intending to provide a housing allowance, the proceeds from that sale shall be invested (except where legal restrictions prevent it) until such time that a church Conference and the district superintendent shall decide a parsonage is no longer necessary on that charge. The interest from that investment may be used to underwrite the housing allowance.

60.14.7 The charge shall allow the pastor who receives a housing allowance to live where he/she chooses. If the pastor chooses to live outside of the communities served, he/she must receive the consent of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and the district superintendent.

60.14.8 A housing allowance shall be subject to annual approval of the Charge Conference.

60.14.9 The Charge Conference shall not have the authority to reduce the housing allowance without negotiation with and the consent of the pastor and district superintendent.

60.14.10 Expenses of searching for a home are the responsibility of the pastor unless otherwise negotiated.

70.0.0 Policy and Procedures Regarding Sexual Misconduct

I. Purpose

The Wisconsin Annual Conference stands against all unacceptable behaviors as identified in ¶2702 as chargeable offenses, particularly noting sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and sexual immorality as unacceptable behaviors.

II. Scope

This Policy and Procedures shall apply to ordained and licensed clergy, diaconal ministers, lay employees, volunteers, and church members of the Wisconsin Annual Conference and its churches. It shall be distributed to all local churches.

III. Theological Affirmations

Children of God

All human beings are children of God and deserve respectful, non-violating relationships. No one should be exploited in any way, including sexually. **Nature of the church** The church is to be a place of safety and encouragement for all its participants. Sexually exploitative and disrespectful behavior violates this basic principle.

IV. Chargeable Offenses for sexual misconduct (¶2702)

A. Sexual harassment B. Sexual misconduct C. Sexual abuse D. Child abuse

V. Judicial Proceedings (¶2701)

All chargeable offenses are entered initially as judicial complaints, which will be taken seriously and may lead to a change of Conference relationship. (¶2702)

VI. Responsibilities of the Conference

A. Officers of the Conference will follow The Book of Discipline in working on every complaint. Both the complainant (the accuser) and the respondent (the accused) will be treated respectfully. B. Should a complainant or respondent so desire, s/he has the right to select a support person and/or advocate who may or may not be from the advocates trained by the church (¶ 362.1b and ¶2701.3)

C. The Conference will assist as necessary all parties to set up systems of care giving to provide support during the complaint process. D. The Conference shall protect the confidentiality of all parties throughout the process.

VII. Misunderstandings and False Accusations

There is some fear concerning the issues of misunderstandings and false accusations; therefore, care shall be taken by those involved in the process to determine the validity of a complaint and the appropriate response.

VIII. Covenant Responsibility

A. A single person beginning or continuing a romantic relationship with a single person with whom she or he has a pastoral relationship bears the full burden of demonstrating there is no exploitation in that

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relationship. B. All church professionals, like other professionals such as therapists and counselors, should avoid a romantic relationship with a counselee past or present. C. God's forgiveness is available to all who have sinned and who repent of their sin. Church leaders involved in sexual misconduct may receive this forgiveness like anyone else. Forgiveness does not mean that one can avoid the consequences of actions which follow professional misconduct.

D. Sexual misconduct has a dramatic effect on its victims. Perpetrators who think their behavior can go unnoticed or who use threats or inappropriate authority to silence their victims are in serious error.

Procedures

**I. Procedures for Response to Sexual Misconduct
If You Believe Misconduct has Happened to You**

1. Seek immediate medical care if necessary and report the event to the proper authorities. 2. Write down (or report to someone who will write down) exactly when, where, and what happened. Documentation of the allegation must show the merit of the grievance.
3. Sign and have the report sent immediately to the District Superintendent or, if s/he is the accused, to the Bishop. If the Bishop is the accused the report should be sent to the President of the Jurisdictional College of Bishops. 4. Whatever level of violation has occurred, you have the right to seek out a support person and/or advocate to help you understand the complaint process. You have the right to have your advocate with you at any time during the process.
5. Confidentiality is extremely important. Respect for all parties involved assists one to avoid retaliation and liability from defamation charges. 6. Avoid contact with the accused to protect yourself from future violations. 7. Be assured that the District Superintendent and the Bishop will take you seriously. The Book of Discipline directs their role to make certain that church law is followed (§362). Questions about the process are always in order.
8. You are encouraged not to give up on the church or your faith in God even though both may be difficult or seemingly impossible to you at this time.

If You are the Accused

1. No matter what allegation is made, treat it seriously. 2. Avoid contact with the complainant.
3. When a complaint has been alleged, you are encouraged to seek out a support person and/or advocate to help you understand the complaint process. You have the right to have your advocate with you at any time during the process. 4. Confidentiality is extremely important. Respect for all parties involved assists one to avoid retaliation and liability from defamation charges.
5. You may request up to thirty (30) days to prepare a response to the allegations, and do have thirty (30) days to prepare for a hearing on the complaint (§2704). 6. Request the written complaint and all supporting materials. Gather all your own materials, such as; correspondence, calendars, notes, names of witnesses, to assist you in preparing your response.
7. The Bishop and Superintendent will presume innocence (unless you acknowledge the complaint is accurate) until the conclusion of all processes (§362). The Book of Discipline directs their role to assure that church law is followed (§404). Questions about the process are always in order.
8. Fair Process under §362 and §2701 begins when a complaint is signed. No action may be taken to change a person's Conference relationship unless a complaint is signed. 9. You are encouraged not to give up on the church or your faith in God even though both may be difficult or seemingly impossible to you at this time.

If Specific Behavior is Reported to You

1. By law, child abuse including sexual misconduct with a minor is to be reported to the proper civil and church authorities. 2. Help the one making an allegation to determine if a response to this incident through the church complaint process would be appropriate. Alert the complainant to this Policy and Procedures.
3. If the allegation is a criminal or civil law violation, assist the person to report it to the proper civil and church authorities.

If You Observe Inappropriate Behavior

1. Write down or report to someone who will write down exactly when, where, and what happened. 2. Follow the guidelines above (see Procedures I.A).

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II. Responding to the Complaint

A. Confidentiality is critical to protect both the complainant and respondent from further harm. Both parties must be protected from retaliation and false accusation. B. The complaint must contain the date, time, place, and events alleged to have taken place.

C. Witnesses and potential witnesses noted by the complainant may be interviewed. Facts must be obtained and be specific (when, where, and what happened). D. The complainant reviews the complaint and investigative material. The complainant may withdraw the complaint at this point or sign the complaint and send it to the District Superintendent/Bishop/President of the Jurisdictional College of Bishops (hereafter known as Recipient).

1. If the Recipient finds the complaint and supporting materials not in order or inappropriate, the complainant will be contacted for clarification or additional materials or ask the complainant to consider withdrawing the complaint. 2. If the Recipient finds the complaint and its supporting materials in order, a copy is sent to the Bishop, the respondent is contacted stating there is a complaint, informs him/her about Fair Process rights and the right to have a support person and/or advocate, encourages him/her to gather a support group, and negotiates a time and place to present the materials. No action may be taken to change the Conference relationship of the respondent without these materials.

E. Investigation may be undertaken by the respondent. Whatever evidence is necessary to respond to the complaint and its supporting material will be obtained. Witnesses and potential witnesses noted by the respondent may be interviewed. F. The respondent reviews the evidence gathered and determines his/her response to the complaint which is given to the Recipient. The Book of Discipline ¶362 and ¶2701, protects the rights of the respondent.

1. If the respondent acknowledges guilt, then s/he may look at various options such as: entering into voluntary negotiations with the Recipient seeking mediation, remedial actions, withdrawal from ministry, or church trial. 2. If the respondent denies the complaint, the Recipient has the responsibility to: end the matter, refer it to the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and/or to mediation by trained neutral third parties who are not members of the supervisory structure of the Conference for mediation, or forward the complaint (¶362.1d).

G. If the Recipient is unable to obtain a voluntary resolution satisfactory to all parties and a complaint is sent to the appropriate body, the administrative or judicial process of the church as set forth in The Book of Discipline will proceed. (¶362 and 2701).

III. Policy and Procedure Review A. General Conditions

1. This Policy and Procedures Document becomes the Policy and Procedures of the Wisconsin Annual Conference when adopted by the Conference. 2. This Policy and Procedures will be superseded by The Book of Discipline at any points where they are in conflict with it.

3. When action is taken that appears to be in conflict with The Book of Discipline, clarification may be requested of the District Superintendent with appeal to the Bishop.

B. Review

1. This Policy and Procedures Document is open to annual review for improvement for effectiveness and to meet Conference needs as they continue to evolve in this area. 2. Suggestions for improvement are to be addressed to the Bishop who will direct them to the appropriate body for consideration and presentation to the succeeding Conference Session.

3. New interpretations of church law by the Judicial Council or changes by the General Conference will immediately be enforced by the Bishop, with notification to the Conference through normal channels. Those changes will be sent to the appropriate body for integration into this Policy and Procedures Document. (Updated 2002)

Policy for Clergy Time Away

All persons under appointment to local churches and agencies of the Conference are to have a minimum of one-month (4 Sundays) vacation, including those in part-time appointments. All clergy are to have at least one full day (24 hours) a week for time off.

80.1.3 The time which the clergy person spends in continuing education, the conference camping program, mission projects or youth/young adult ministry programs shall not be counted against vacation time.