

When there is a change of appointment . . . suggestions for the leaving pastor

1. Be patient with yourself and others. Moving is difficult. There is grief in leaving a congregation, a house, and friends. There is anxiety in moving into a new community, new responsibilities, new pastoral relationships. If you have family, they are experiencing their own grief and anxiety. Give yourselves time to say proper goodbyes. Take the time to care for family relationships. Take seriously what your family may be feeling.
2. Be honest in your leaving. Let people know that leaving was something you agreed to do. Do not take parting shots. Express sincere appreciation to the congregation for the privilege of being their pastor. Preach the good news. Say a good word for the arriving pastor, and say it as many times as you can. Help the arriving pastor have a positive start by speaking with hope for the future of the congregation and its ministry.
3. Be clear that you will no longer be this congregation's pastor after June 30. You will be fully occupied by your new responsibilities. Encourage people to help the arriving pastor begin well by contacting her or him to do funerals, weddings, hospital calls. *It is not ethical* for you to return to the congregation for weddings or funerals or hospital calls or to take part in any ongoing function of the church.
4. Permit the congregation to say farewell. They need an opportunity to express their care and concern for you (and your family). Do not reject a farewell event because you find it hard to say goodbye.
5. Soon after you know that you will be moving, invite the chairpersons of the Trustees/ parsonage committee and S/PPRC to walk with you through the house, noting things that need to be replaced or repaired.
6. Think about what the arriving pastor may need for a good beginning: up-to-date membership rolls, a list of persons with special care needs, a pictorial directory, an officer list with contact information, a list of those who are homebound, up-to-date financial reports, copies of the most recent statistical reports. You may want to invite the arriving pastor to a meal, to see the parsonage again and to talk about what you have valued and enjoyed in the congregation.
7. Leave the parsonage clean. Mow the lawn, trim the shrubs, dispose of trash, clean out the refrigerator, vacuum the floors, etc. Leave keys and garage door openers, appliance manuals and a list of the parsonage's idiosyncrasies . . . anything unusual or distinctive about the house or garage. You may also want to recommend a physician, a dentist, a mechanic, a plumber.
8. Pay your bills before leaving, or make honorable arrangements for paying. Not to do so reflects poorly on your ministry and makes more work for the new pastor.
9. Pray for the arriving pastor and for the people of the congregation - and do not go back.

When there is a change of appointment . . . suggestions for the arriving pastor

1. Between the introductory and the move-in day, do not visit the community or congregation to which you are moving, except with the permission of the district superintendent or at the invitation of the leaving pastor. It is appropriate to initiate a conversation with the pastor whom you will follow to talk about the strengths of the congregation, ongoing projects or concerns. Be sure to affirm that pastor's work.
2. *If you are new* to the West Virginia Conference, contact Kathy Damron in the Treasurer's Office (304-344-8331, ext 41 or kdamron@wvumc.org) for information about enrolling in the conference health insurance and pension plans. **Anyone invested in the Personal Investment Plan (PIP) should contact her to update his or her contact information upon moving.**
3. Speak well of the leaving pastor. Say thank you for any effort made by that pastor to make your move easier.
4. Prepare for your first Sunday by working with a lay reader and/or musician to plan the service.
5. After you arrive, ask immediately who needs to be visited in the hospital or at home. Make those visits. Preach the good news of Jesus Christ. Apart from this essential work in the first days, give your attention to your family and the work of settling into a new home.
6. Shortly after arrival, invite the chairpersons of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and the Trustees or parsonage committee to walk with you through the house, noting things that need to be replaced or repaired, and the general condition of each room. You should have a report form from your district superintendent on which to make this report.
7. Pray for the leaving pastor and for the people of your new congregation.

When there is a change of appointment . . . suggestions for the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee

1. Celebrate the ministry of the pastor who is leaving.
 - Plan events which permit the congregation to say thank you and goodbye.
 - Give a gift that will remind the pastor of your congregation.
 - Use the *Order of Farewell to a Pastor* in the United Methodist Book of Worship as a guide for the last worship service at which the leaving pastor will preside.
2. Walk through the parsonage with the leaving pastor and the Trustees chairperson to note what needs to be replaced or repaired. Those who have lived in the house will know where the problems are. Review the conference parsonage standards.
3. Offer meal(s) and, if necessary, lodging for the leaving pastor while packing and preparing for the move. Remember that moving is a difficult time for the pastor and family.
4. Provide cold drinks and snacks for the movers and others who are helping both with the moving out and moving in.
5. Coordinate any work that needs to be completed in the parsonage with the Trustees and pastors – preferably after one moves out and before the other moves in. Are there rooms that need to be painted? (Consult with the arriving pastor about colors.) Does the carpet need to be cleaned or replaced?
6. Offer meals and, if necessary, lodging for the arriving pastor while unpacking and settling after the move. Do not overwhelm the pastor and family with visitors or work during the first couple days.
7. Assist the arriving pastor in making a good start:
 - Make sure that information, such as pressing pastoral care needs, is easily available.
 - Connect the pastor with key leaders in church and community.
 - Arrange for small groups to meet the pastor during the first few weeks of appointment so that stories can be shared.
 - Ask members to wear nametags for worship and all events for several months.
8. Celebrate the appointment of the arriving pastor.
 - Plan a reception or meal to welcome the pastor and family.
 - Use the *Order for the Celebration of an Appointment* in the United Methodist Book of Worship as a guide for the first worship service at which the arriving pastor will preside.
9. Walk through the parsonage with the leaving pastor and the Trustees chairperson to note the current condition, as well as any renovations or repairs. Review the conference parsonage standards.
10. Confirm the compensation (approved by charge conference and signed by pastor, S/PPRC chairperson and district superintendent) with the congregation's treasurer. Note that salary and benefits are to be paid to the leaving pastor through June 30 and to the arriving pastor from July 1.
11. Remind the congregation that it is not appropriate to ask the leaving pastor to return for weddings, funerals or hospital calls. Help the congregation understand the importance of beginning a new relationship with the arriving pastor.

12. Avoid comparing the arriving pastor with previous pastors. Be receptive to new ideas which the pastor will bring. Speak positively about your fellow parishioners.
13. Help the arriving pastor and family to get acquainted in the community. If the pastor has children, make a special effort to connect them with other children in the congregation.
14. Plan monthly meetings of the S/PPRC for at least six months.
15. Pray for both the leaving and arriving pastors and for your congregation.