

## **“CLERGY EFFECTIVENESS – AND WARNING SIGNS OF INEFFECTIVENESS”**

The following document defines “Clergy Effectiveness” for the West Michigan Conference of the United Methodist Church in 2011. This document has been created by a task-force composed of members of the Board of Ordained Ministry and the Appointive Cabinet and represents the definition required by ¶334.4 in The Book of Discipline 2008: “*If an elder fails to meet professional responsibilities (¶340), does not demonstrate vocational competence or effectiveness AS DEFINED BY THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE THROUGH THE BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY AND CABINET...*” It has been approved by the West Michigan Conference Board of Ordained Ministry and the Appointive Cabinet.

As you read and reflect on this document, we ask that you would consider the following:

- Healthy responsibility cannot be separated from healthy accountability. We in the church must have good systems and mechanisms for holding ourselves and each other accountable for being effective in ministry.
- It is vital that criteria for determining clergy effectiveness or ineffectiveness be as clear and measurable as possible. This will maximize objectivity and minimize subjectivity.
- The “signs of effectiveness” listed in the document is a very long list. However, we began working with a number of different documents and finally realized that the document which speaks most clearly to who we are and what is expected of us as United Methodist clergy is The Book of Discipline 2008. Thus, the list we chose to use comes right out of the BOD 2008.
- Although these “signs of effectiveness” are named in the BOD 2008 specifically as expectations for the ordained orders of elder and deacon, we believe they are basic expectations for *all* clergy in our conference. As is stated in a footnote on page 215 of the BOD 2008: “All clergy members of the annual conference are accountable as to character and effectiveness throughout their entire ministry”.
- The “warning signs” listed in the document are just that: *warnings* of possible ineffectiveness, not automatic verifications. Ministry is contextual. It is very possible to be “weak” in some area of ministry leadership, without automatically being “ineffective” overall.
- Our intent is that this document will be used by all our clergy for self-examination, reflection, and evaluation. This has the potential to be a tool that can be used by God to bring out the best in each of us throughout our years of service.
- We also intend for this document to be used by clergy and PPR/SPR committees for conversations and plans that lead to intentional and strategic improvement - because we *all* have areas in which we can grow and be strengthened for the making of disciples of Jesus Christ and the transformation of the world.
- In accordance with ¶334.4 this document will be used as an evaluative tool by the Bishop and Appointive Cabinet of West Michigan Conference.

It is our prayer that this document will be used in a spirit of truth and grace.

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## **CHARACTER & CALL** (Book of Discipline 2008, ¶304.1 and .2)

### 1. SIGNS OF EFFECTIVENESS:

- a. "Have a personal faith in Christ and be committed to Christ as Savior and Lord."
- b. "Nurture and cultivate spiritual disciplines and patterns of holiness."
- c. "Teach and model generous Christian giving with a focus on tithing as God's standard of giving."
- d. "Acknowledge a call by God to give themselves completely to ordained ministry following Jesus' pattern of love and service."
- e. "Communicate persuasively the Christian faith in both oral and written form."
- f. "Make a commitment to lead the whole church in loving service to humankind."
- g. "Give evidence of God's gifts for ordained ministry, evidence of God's grace in their lives, and promise of future usefulness in the mission of the Church."
- h. "Be persons in whom the community can place trust and confidence."
- i. "Accept that Scripture contains all things necessary for salvation through faith in God through Jesus Christ; be competent in the disciplines of Scripture, theology, church history, and Church polity; possess the skills essential to the practice of ordained ministry; and lead in making disciples for Jesus Christ."
- j. "Be accountable to The United Methodist Church, accept its Doctrinal Standards and Discipline and authority, accept the supervision of those appointed to this ministry, and be prepared to live in the covenant of its ordained ministers."
- k. "...Agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all personal relationships, fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness, social responsibility, and growth in grace and in the knowledge and love of God."

### 2. WARNING SIGNS:

- a. Doesn't talk or rarely talks about God or Christ or the Holy Spirit in a personal way.
- b. Spiritual indifference. Has no regular personal devotional time. Doesn't attend events that help develop spiritual growth. Does not regularly develop own deeper Biblical spirituality, and does not regularly practice spiritual disciplines.
- c. Doesn't give regularly. Doesn't tithe. Doesn't encourage others to give generously. Doesn't preach about tithing. Shows poor management of personal finances and/or church finances.
- d. Takes a second job ("moonlighting") when already in a full-time appointment. Doesn't demonstrate a passion for mission and ministry as a *servant*, but instead uses words and actions that reveal a sense of "career building."
- e. Does not use words of faith. Inconsistency between spoken message and life lived.
- f. General lack of initiative and/or follow through regarding pastoral ministry.
- g. Lack of engagement in missional outreach.
- h. Shows signs of racism, sexism, and lack of inclusivity.
- i. Cannot effectively share their call story, or expresses lack of clarity with and/or doubt about own call to ministry. Unwillingness to itinerate (when called to an itinerating ministry). Pattern of seeking new appointments. Frequent flirtation with change of status (leave of absence, etc.) Lack of self-awareness.
- j. Breaks confidences. Doesn't know when to keep mouth shut. Frequent use of language that is harsh, defensive, or sarcastic. Congregation doesn't want their pastor to be seen in public. Isn't invited to participate in wider community events. Unwillingness to cooperate with others in a connectional or ecumenical spirit.

- k. Theological practice of ministry doesn't reflect United Methodist doctrine and polity. Is not loyal to the United Methodist family of the body of Christ that has affirmed and confirmed the call to ministry, and does not live as a person who has taken sacred vows of covenantal relationship.
- l. Repeated failure to make continuing education an annual priority.
- m. Does not seek appropriate permission before engaging an evangelist who is not in good standing in The United Methodist Church (*see ¶341.1*)
- n. Has emotional or relational problems that are reflected in (but not limited to) the following behaviors: irresponsibility; overly reactive; hostility; negativity; blaming; lack of authenticity; self-preoccupation; inappropriate interpersonal interactions; resistance to critical examination by self or others; authoritative or inflexible leadership style; evidence of low self-esteem; inappropriate personal appearance in ministry context; substance abuse; addictive behaviors; impulse control.
- o. Self-isolating. Separates self and does not become involved in the life of the district and conference. Pattern of poor communication with District Superintendent through missed deadlines, unreturned phone calls, tardiness for meetings, etc.
- p. Lack of self-care. Does not seek or engage in therapeutic relationships (such as professional counseling, spiritual direction, 12 Step groups, etc.) when recommended to by those in supervisory role. Does not seek or engage in activities that promote physical health and well-being (exercise, diet, yoga, etc.) when recommended to by a physician.
- q. Engages in sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, or has sexually intimate relationship with another person outside of the boundary of marriage.

**WORD** (*Book of Discipline 2008, ¶340.2+*)

1. SIGNS OF EFFECTIVENESS:

- a. "To preach the word of God, lead in worship, read and teach the Scriptures, and engage the people in study and witness. To ensure faithful transmission of the Christian faith. To lead people in discipleship and evangelistic outreach that others might come to know Christ and to follow him."
- b. "To counsel persons with personal, ethical, or spiritual struggles."
- c. "To perform the marriage ceremony after due counsel with the parties involved and in accordance with the laws of the state and the rules of The United Methodist Church. The decision to perform the ceremony shall be the right and responsibility of the pastor."
- d. "To conduct funeral and memorial services and provide care and grief counseling."
- e. "To visit in the homes of the church and the community, especially among the sick, aged, imprisoned, and others in need."
- f. "To maintain all confidences inviolate, including confessional confidences except in the cases of suspected child abuse or neglect, or in cases where mandatory reporting is required by civil law."

2. WARNING SIGNS:

- a. SPRC cannot give examples of a connection between the pastor's preaching and something that impacted their soul and life. Preaching does not reflect inclusivity. Does not lead Bible studies or teach classes related to growth in faith. No "Professions of Faith" recorded in the annual report. Worship attendance reveals pattern of decline.
- b. Is unavailable to counsel persons. Does not refer persons to additional professional counselors when needed. Unaware of appropriate boundaries. Breaks confidentiality.
- c. Does not follow legal and Disciplinary standards for pre-marital counseling.

- d. Does not make sure that care and support are given to those who are known to be grieving.
- e. Does not visit in the homes of the church and the community, especially with those in crisis and in need, even when informed of particular people needing pastoral care.
- f. Shares confidential information in inappropriate public arenas. Does not recognize the difference between confidences and secrets. Uses confidences inappropriately to “make friends” and to “divide and conquer” (see ¶341.5).
- g. Performs a ceremonial celebration of a homosexual union (see ¶341.6).

**SACRAMENT** (Book of Discipline 2008 ¶340.2.b)

1. SIGNS OF EFFECTIVENESS:

- a. “To prepare the parents and sponsors before baptizing infants or children, and instruct them concerning the significance of baptism and their responsibilities for the Christian training of the baptized child.”
- b. “To encourage reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant and renewal of baptismal vows at different stages of life.”
- c. “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.”
- d. “To explain the meaning of the Lord’s Supper and to encourage regular participation as a means of grace to grow in faith and holiness.”
- e. “To select and train deacons and lay members to serve the consecrated communion elements.”

2. WARNING SIGNS:

- a. Does not understand, respect or follow the Disciplinary boundaries of when, where and how they are allowed to offer the Sacraments.
- b. Does not understand and/or respect the “open table”, and does not extend the invitation to all. Refuses to give communion.
- c. Does not take responsibility for making sure Holy Communion is taken to the ill and shut-in, either by self or trained laity.
- d. Does not regularly educate the congregation about the Sacraments. Does not intentionally educate those who want to have their children baptized. Does not seek out, invite and then educate youth and adults who have not yet been baptized.
- e. Re-baptizes. Refuses to baptize infants and/or children. Dedicates instead of baptizes (see ¶341.7).

**ORDER** (Book of Discipline 2008, ¶340.2.c)

1. SIGNS OF EFFECTIVENESS:

- a. “To give pastoral support, guidance, and training to the lay leadership, equipping them to fulfill the ministry to which they are called.”
- b. “To give oversight to the educational program of the church and encourage the use of United Methodist literature and media.”
- c. “To be responsible for organizational faithfulness, goal setting, planning and evaluation.”
- d. “To search out and counsel men and women for the ministry of deacons, elders, local pastors and other church related ministries.”
- e. “To administer the provisions of the *Discipline*.”
- f. “To give an account of their pastoral ministries to the charge and annual conference according to the prescribed forms.”
- g. “To provide leadership for the funding ministry of the congregation.”

- h. "To model and promote faithful financial stewardship and to encourage giving as a spiritual discipline by teaching the biblical principles of giving."
- i. "To lead the congregation in the fulfillment of its mission through full and faithful payment of all apportioned ministerial support, administrative, and benevolent funds."
- j. "To care for all church records and local church financial obligations, and 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."
- k. "To seek out opportunities for cooperative ministries with other United Methodist pastors and churches."
- l. "To be willing to assume supervisory responsibilities within the connection."
- m. "To lead the congregation in racial and ethnic inclusiveness."

## 2. WARNING SIGNS:

- a. Ministry centers around the pastor in ways that diminish the importance and role of the laity.
- b. Historical record of service indicates continuous decline in the vital signs of the churches where they serve (worship attendance, membership, financial strength, apportionments, mission program, etc.)
- c. Does not assume leadership for both congregational and connectional financial responsibilities (church budget, mission giving, ministry shares/apportionments, Conference Special Sundays, etc.)
- d. Detached from the administrative details of the church – does not understand that "the buck stops here." Pattern of being unaware of what is happening in the church (e.g. Not aware of what small groups are studying.)
- e. General lack of familiarity with the *Discipline*.
- f. Local church leadership and ministry is structured in ways that do not conform or are not permitted in the *Discipline*.
- g. Able to vision, but shows no fruit; or manages to the exclusion of big-picture, visionary thinking.
- h. Tenure has been three years or less for three consecutive appointments.
- i. Has been given SPRC and/or DS evaluations that reflect concerns about effectiveness in pastoral ministry in two or more appointments/ministry settings.
- j. Engages in a pattern of poor accountability for their own pastoral ministry, including lack of reporting (as required by the *Discipline* in the prescribed forms).
- k. Engages in relationships and/or behavior that undermine the ministry of another pastor. Crosses boundaries and ignores pastoral etiquette.
- l. Does not motivate local church laity to attend and be involved in training events (district, conference, and otherwise.)
- m. Shows a pattern of inattention to the need for church records to be cared for and maintained
- n. Does not partner in ministry with other United Methodist clergy and churches.
- o. Is not willing to assume supervisory responsibilities within the connection (mentoring, committee and task-force participation, etc.)
- p. Holds a religious service outside of the bounds of their appointment without first communicating and seeking the consent of the pastor (or campus minister or chaplain) or district superintendent (*see ¶341.4*).
- q. Arbitrarily discontinues services in a local church without consent of the charge conference and the district superintendent, or arbitrarily organizes a pastoral charge (*see ¶341.2 and .3*).

**SERVICE** (*Book of Discipline 2008, ¶340.2.d*)

1. SIGNS OF EFFECTIVENESS:

- a. "To embody the teachings of Jesus in servant ministries and servant leadership."
- b. "To give diligent pastoral leadership in ordering the life of the congregation for discipleship in the world."
- c. "To build the body of Christ as a caring and giving community, extending the ministry of Christ to the world."
- d. "To participate in community, ecumenical and inter-religious concerns and to encourage people to become so involved and to pray and labor for the unity of the Christian community."

2. WARNING SIGNS:

- a. "Lone Ranger." Doesn't partner with laity to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Doesn't empower laity to be fruitful in mission and ministry.
- b. Is unaware of the changing needs of persons and the community, and shows little or no leadership to work with others to meet those needs.
- c. Words, actions and leadership style escalate conflict instead of diffusing it.
- d. Selfish. Arrogant. Attempts to manipulate people and situations.
- e. Poor time management. Does not show up when expected (e.g. to lead worship; meetings; office hours) and does not communicate absence in advance.
- f. Is not welcoming of all persons.
- g. Limits pastoral focus and/or service to "those who think, act, speak like me."