



Valley Ridge District
Virginia Conference
United Methodist Church

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October 15, 2023

United Methodist Valley Ridge District Churches
SPPR Committees and Appointed/Assigned Pastors

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

The annual process of making pastoral appointments in the United Methodist Church begins in the winter with a time of reviewing the ministry of each appointment and continues until appointments are set by the Bishop at Annual Conference and the new appointment year begins on July 1, 2024.

While the Bishop is given authority to make all appointments in an annual conference, both the Pastor and the Staff/Pastor-Parish Committee each have a vital role in this process. Please be mindful of the dates in this document.

First, at its next meeting, preferably in November or early December the pastor and the **current** members of S/PPRC should invite the **incoming** members to be part of the conversation regarding the review of the appointment. The questions to be considered are:

What are the priorities for mission and ministry of our church/charge?

What are our church/charge's three greatest strengths?

In what area(s) does our church/charge need to develop strength?

What are the current or anticipated needs for clergy leadership in this/these congregation(s)?

What roles or tasks of clergy leadership are most critical to advancing this ministry's mission and vision?

What are the gifts and skills of clergy that are need in the life of this / these congregation(s)?

The resources needed to assist in this discussion are available on the Conference website at <https://vaumc.org/spprcresources/> They include: Duties of the pastor as defined in ¶340 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. The mission of the church as defined by the Book of Discipline, as well as the Characteristics of Effective Clergy in the Virginia Conference.

Second, at a meeting in December the S/PPRC (classes 2024, 2025, 2026) and the pastor should continue the discussion using these questions:

What gifts and skills does the appointed clergy possess that are needed most in this church/charge at this time?

How does the appointed clergy effectively meet the defined needs for clergy leadership in the life of this/these congregation(s)?

During this meeting the appointed clergy should consider these questions:

What are the needs for clergy leadership in this/these congregation(s) at this time?

What are my gifts and skills that are needed most in this/these congregation(s) at this time?

Do I want to be engaged in meeting the defined needs of this/these congregation(s) for clergy leadership in the coming year?

What are the areas of growth that are needed within myself that would help this/this church(es) fulfill its mission and ministry?

Am I willing to continue to develop these skills for the coming year in serving this/these congregation(s)?

Then together the pastor and S/PPRC should complete the JOINT Annual Recommendation to the Cabinet.

Please remember that while members of the S/PPRC class of 2023 may have been part of the discussion leading to the completion of this form, they cannot vote nor sign it; that work belongs to the members of the Classes of 2024, 2025, and 2026. The Virginia Annual Conference S/PPRC and Pastor JOINT Annual Recommendation to the Cabinet is available on the Conference website at <https://vaumc.org/spprcresources/> in Section 4: "Appointment Resources." The original signed copy should **be returned before January 1, 2024**:

by mail to: Valley Ridge District Office, 26 Orr Drive, Fishersville, VA 22929 or

by email to: DonnaDesper@vaumc.org

Please also, complete the Pastor and Church Profiles by January 1, 2024. The manner in which this work is done is essential to the maintenance of a spirit of goodwill throughout your congregation(s). Congregational meetings, polls, or petitions with reference to the return or departure of a pastor are not acceptable within our process. They inevitably lead to hurt feelings, divisions, and unrealistic expectations. This is, rather, a time for honest evaluation and reflection, prayer, discernment, and planning for the future. The Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee is the representative body within the church that has sole responsibility to work with the pastor on this task. Thank you for your willingness to serve in this capacity.

Once I have received the completed forms, I will schedule times to meet with the SPPRCs of churches expecting a move. If you have questions about any step in this process, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Grace and peace, Douglas Forrester