

Parish/Pastoral Relations Committee

Statement of Purpose -- The Parish/Pastoral Relations Committee holds in trust the relationship between congregation and pastor, pursuing the best interests of both equally. It supports and maintains this relationship, and helps the pastor and members of the church share ideas, hopes, dreams, and interpretations of mission. It lets the pastor know what people in the church are thinking. It provides a framework in which conflict can be dealt with creatively.

Responsibilities -- For the Parish/Pastoral Relations Committee to be effective, the pastor and committee members must be willing to communicate openly and honestly, and must recognize that all information shared, except that which is clearly stated otherwise or reveals illegal acts or a breach of professional ethics, is strictly confidential. The committee will have the following responsibilities in consultation with the pastor:

- working for improved communication, interpretation and understanding between the congregation and the pastor
- exploring areas of potential conflict between the pastor's ministry and that of the congregation and assisting in developing alternative solutions and possibilities for avoiding destructive conflict
- openly and honestly communicating feelings and reactions of church members to the pastor
- acting as a sounding board for the pastor
- providing an opportunity for the pastor to reflect in confidence about personal concerns, hopes, ambitions, and frustrations
- being alert to the pastor's concerns between meetings
- demonstrating concern and support for the pastor's family
- encouraging the pastor to plan time for recreation, exercise, relaxation, family, and solitude

Practical Guidelines

- The Parish/Pastoral Relations Committee should be related to the Church Council and there should be periodic reports to the Council
- The committee members should be approved by both the Church Council and the pastor (i.e., either should have veto power over any potential member)
- At least one deacon should serve on the committee
- When new members are needed they should be approved by the Church Council and the pastor
- The committee will meet on a regular basis (probably three or four times a year)
- Any member of the committee or the pastor may call for a special meeting of the committee at any time it is deemed appropriate
- The PPRC should have 6 members, each serving one 3 year term, staggered such that 2 will leave and 2 new members will come on each year.