

***A CODE OF ETHICS FOR THE MINISTERS OF THE
SUSQHEHANNA CONFERENCE
(POLICY)***

The term “minister” herein shall mean all those persons who have the status of Full Member, Provisional Member, Associate Member, Local Pastor, Candidate for Ministry, or Certified Lay Minister. Ministers of the Gospel have various roles and responsibilities according to their divine calling. It is of utmost importance to celebrate and respect the calling to which you have been called and the calling of others.

Primary responsibility for maintaining these guidelines rests with each individual minister, as a part of her/his covenant relationship within the annual conference. Additionally, as a part of the ongoing work and responsibility of the local charge's Pastor/Parish Relations Committee (§259.2), the appropriate Disciplinary paragraphs and these guidelines should be reviewed annually.

1. Ethical Conduct

It is the responsibility of all ministers in the Susquehanna Conference of The United Methodist Church:

- To keep spiritually, mentally, physically, and emotionally fit.
- To give the time a family expects and to which they are entitled, and give guidance, through training and experience, that will contribute to their fulfillment and enrichment.
- To maintain a high moral standard in speech and conduct.
- To remember in all times to conduct ourselves with humility, having the heart of a servant in our ministries
- To be Christ-like in attitudes and conduct toward all people — not setting aside convictions to win popular favor and regarding all persons with equal love, concern, and understanding, impartially considering the needs of all.
- To keep confidences except in cases of suspected or actual child abuse and other information mandated to report by law.
- To be “intellectually honest” in teaching and preaching, giving credit for the ideas and words of others.
- Not to use the pastoral office to seek, solicit or encourage any bequests, gifts, discounts or other material benefit for ourselves or members of our families.

2. Personal Conduct

It is the responsibility of the pastor:

- To be attired and groomed so as not to hinder effectiveness as a pastor.
- To follow such a life style that the parsonage is kept in presentable condition and upon leaving, to have the parsonage clean and presentable for one’s successor.
- To be attentive to the needs and aspirations of the disadvantaged and the victims of injustice and prejudice.
- To share the love of Christ to all persons regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, sexual orientation, age or handicap.
- To adhere to the “Duties of a Pastor” as described in the current *Discipline*, paying particular attention to the consequences of chargeable offenses.

- To serve as pastor, preacher, teacher and administrator, and observe proper work habits and responsible schedules, doing all things in a manner above reproach.
- To share leadership with staff members and duly elected lay persons and encourage continuing education for all.
- To be a pastor to all in the community and encourage the church to participate in community and ecumenical concerns.
- To accept “Full-time Service” to mean that the pastor is not substantially supported in non-pastoral work without the knowledge of the District Superintendent and the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee of the local charge.
- Upon leaving the appointment, including retirement, to sever all pastoral relationships with the parish, recognizing that all future weddings, baptisms, communions, counseling, visitations, and funerals should be fulfilled by the successor pastor, unless an unusual situation exists and is approved by the successor pastor.

3. Connectional and Community Support

It is the responsibility of the minister:

- To work with the local church leaders to make provisions for the regular assessment of our performance, being responsive to constructive criticism, and striving to be the best possible representative of The United Methodist Church.
- To have all records and membership lists current and well organized.
- To perform no pastoral functions in any church or charge to which one is not appointed, except at the request and under the direction of the pastor in charge.
- To make no disparaging remarks about the work or life style of a predecessor, successor or other ministers, nor encourage members in their real or imagined grievances, nor interfere in the work of other congregations.
- To give loyal support to the pastor of the congregation into which one retires.
- To fulfill the obligation to the connectional fellowship of the United Methodist Church, giving full support to its efforts to extend the Kingdom of God.
- To interpret to the congregations their responsibilities to the denomination.
- To support and interpret the appointive system.
- To become familiar with the missions, programs, structure and budget of the District and Annual Conference and interpret them to the local congregation for their participation.
- To practice the same ministerial code of ethics with pastors and congregations of other denominations as would be expected in The United Methodist Church.
- To participate in community action and service and encourage members of the congregation to serve as well.
- To be active in positive programs to alleviate injustice and prejudice, and be sensitive to the needs and aspirations of the disadvantaged.
- To cooperate with agencies that build character as well as working with agencies offering human services.
- To recognize that The United Methodist Church is a connectional fellowship in which obligations to support and to criticize constructively are to be accepted so that the Kingdom of God may be extended.
- To participate in the work of the ecumenical church, and support whatever measures may be proposed toward the strengthening of the fellowship and mission of Christians everywhere.