

Intervention or Exit Process for Clergy
Missouri Conference, The United Methodist Church
Current: March 22, 2007

Intervention Process

1. The Cabinet will identify ordained, commissioned, or licensed clergy for whom an intervention process is necessary because there has been a pattern of ineffectiveness in ministry. Signs of ineffectiveness might include:
 - Decreasing worship and small group attendance in the local church.
 - Paralysis in the local church's ability to fulfill their mission because of poor leadership from the clergyperson.
 - History of dissatisfaction with the clergyperson expressed by the local church – a pattern of requests for the clergyperson to be moved.
 - Inability or unwillingness of the clergyperson to perform the basic duties of word, sacrament, order and service.
 - Inconsistent behavior in the effective practice of ministry.
 - Pastor contributes to an environment of stress and conflict.
 - Pastor is resistant to supervisory recommendations.
 - Efforts for improvement do not work.
 - Failure to lead the congregation in full payment of apportionments
 - Pastor is unwilling to itinerate.

2. The District Superintendent of the identified clergyperson, in addition to at least one other District Superintendent, will meet with the identified clergyperson. On behalf of the Cabinet, the District Superintendent will speak very directly about the concerns identified. It will be stressed that the concerns must be addressed immediately. The clergyperson shall have the right to be accompanied by another clergyperson in full connection, according to the terms of ¶362.3c, 2004 Book of Discipline.

At this meeting, the District Superintendent will express the current Cabinet beliefs:

- The Cabinet believes that to re-appoint the pastor to another church/charge will produce a continuation of ineffectiveness.
- The Cabinet believes the church/charge will continue to experience decline through this pastor's ministry.
- The Cabinet believes that the church/charge will not benefit from the pastor's leadership in one or more of these areas:
 - a. growth and professions of faith
 - b. energy and vitality
 - c. spirit and enthusiasm
 - d. vision for ministry
 - e. outreach and mission

- No District Superintendent wishes to appoint the clergyperson into his/her district.

At the time this meeting is planned, the Bishop and/or the District Superintendent will notify the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

3. As a result of this meeting, the District Superintendent and clergyperson will develop together a precise plan that is designed to lead to effectiveness. The following assessments are recommended in order to determine if there are physical or psychological issues, such as depression or substance abuse (among others):
 - A physical examination (using the clergyperson's health insurance coverage) to determine if health concerns are a factor in preventing optimal effectiveness.
 - An evaluation (paid by resources of the Board of Ordained Ministry in conjunction with the health insurance policy) to determine if emotional or psychological issues are factors in preventing the clergyperson from being effective in ministry. The District Superintendent will work with the psychologist and/or physician to outline the specific areas of concern.
 - Professional development and leadership assessment programs. A number of excellent programs may be funded through the MEF/Clergy Development Program. In all of these, an essential first step is a meeting with the program leader, clergyperson, and District Superintendent to clarify the issues and concerns. The following resources are currently available: (List to be developed)
 - A document releasing professional assessment information directly to the Cabinet must be signed by the clergy person.
4. Throughout the intervention process, it is imperative that the District Superintendent document interactions, meetings, and reports in a supervisory file.
5. The District Superintendent and the clergyperson will periodically evaluate whether there is any progress toward goals, and how any training/therapy is being integrated into more effective ministry.
6. The Cabinet will review the progress of the clergyperson. If there is no evidence of progress toward effectiveness, the Cabinet will recommend the Exit Process. The specific details of the Exit Process will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Exit Process

1. If the intervention process has not produced a satisfactory resolution, on behalf of the Cabinet, the District Superintendent will schedule a meeting with the clergyperson. At least one other District Superintendent will participate in meeting. The clergyperson shall have the right to be accompanied by another clergyperson in full connection, according to ¶362.3c, 2004 Book of Discipline.

At this meeting the clergyperson will be told that there are two choices:

- To exit voluntarily - considering retirement, honorable location, leave of absence, or, if applicable, to apply for incapacity leave.
 - To have a complaint of ineffectiveness brought by the Cabinet.
2. Information concerning options for career counseling and/or pension and health benefits will be offered to the clergyperson. Appropriate conference personnel will be available to answer questions and offer guidance about application for benefits.
 3. The clergyperson must state in a letter to the Bishop whether he/she is willing to exit voluntarily in one of the suggested relationships to the conference. The District Superintendent will give the clergyperson a due date for the letter.
 4. Following receipt of the letter, a meeting with the Coordinator of Clergy Relations and Benefits will be arranged for the clergyperson (and spouse if desired). The meeting is for the purpose of discussing pension and health benefit issues.
 5. If a letter stating voluntary exit is not received by the required date, the District Superintendent will proceed with bringing a complaint of ineffectiveness to the Bishop as outlined in ¶ 362, 2004 Book of Discipline.