

**CABINET  
WV ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**



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**TO:** STAFF/PASTOR RELATIONS COMMITTEES & PASTORS SCHEDULED TO MOVE  
**FROM:** THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE CABINET  
**SUBJECT:** VACATING THE PARSONAGE  
**DATE:** JUNE 2019

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Our United Methodist ministry style results in pastors moving from time to time. Parsonages are provided, which means that we live in a home that a local church or charge makes available to us. Our connectionalism creates a dependency upon each other, so that each helps keep the parsonage system viable and acceptable. When we move, we trust that a house will be ready for our moving in and establishing a home.

The parsonage guidelines give us some framework for vacating a home. They state that at the time of a move, the outgoing parsonage family is to:

- Remove all personal belongings from the parsonage
- Leave the house clean, particularly appliances, closets, cabinets, and bathrooms
- Remove or arrange for removal of all trash and discarded items
- Sanitize the house for pet odors and smoking odors

These guidelines remind the charge and the pastor that making certain the house is clean is the responsibility of the pastor, not the charge. Cleaning of carpets and drapes are the responsibility of the charge. All other cleaning, including windows and floors, is the responsibility of the pastor.

The word "clean" may mean one thing to one person, and something different to another. The Cabinet defines clean, at move time, as completely ready for habitation. The word sanitized may best describe the condition we expect.

Should the home not be readied for habitation, the charge will pay for cleaning, and the vacating pastor will be expected to pay the cost. Should inspection reveal pet or other damages caused by the vacating pastor, the pastor will be expected to pay for repairs.

# CHECK LIST FOR USE WHEN VACATING A PARSONAGE

**CHARGE** \_\_\_\_\_ **POTOMAC HIGHLANDS DISTRICT**  
**MINISTER** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

1. We have conferred about the following things which need the attention of the Church/Charge:

- A. \_\_\_\_\_  
 B. \_\_\_\_\_  
 C. \_\_\_\_\_  
 D. \_\_\_\_\_

2. The Parsonage Family has given careful attention to leaving the following in the parsonage and property in the indicated condition:

|  |     |    |       |
|--|-----|----|-------|
| A. Windows Clean   | Yes | No | Other |
| B. Drapery/Curtains clean  | Yes | No | Other |
| C. Rugs/Carpets clean  | Yes | No | Other |
| D. Hard Floors (wood, tile, linoleum) clean  | Yes | No | Other |
| E. Walls, woodwork, baseboards clean   | Yes | No | Other |
| F. Refrigerator clean  | Yes | No | Other |
| G. Range top clean   | Yes | No | Other |
| H. Oven clean  | Yes | No | Other |
| I. Cabinets, closets, furniture cleaned inside and out   | Yes | No | Other |
| J. Light fixtures cleaned  | Yes | No | Other |
| K. Functioning light bulbs in all sockets  | Yes | No | Other |
| L. Bathrooms (tub, sink, toilet, tile, floor) clean  | Yes | No | Other |
| M. Pet damage recorded and corrected (list damage and corrections needed on back)                        | Yes | No | Other |
| N. Yard and Shrubs in good condition   | Yes | No | Other |
| O. Attic and Basement swept and orderly  | Yes | No | Other |
| P. All appliances (kitchen and laundry) clean and in good working order (list repairs if needed on back) | Yes | No | Other |

3. Insofar as possible, the parsonage has been left in a condition comparable to that which I hope to find in my new home.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ (Signature of Minister)

I do \_\_\_\_\_ do not \_\_\_\_\_ concur with the above report \_\_\_\_\_ (Pastor/Parish Rel. Chairperson)

I do \_\_\_\_\_ do not \_\_\_\_\_ concur with the above report \_\_\_\_\_ (Trustees Chairperson)

I do \_\_\_\_\_ do not \_\_\_\_\_ concur with the above report \_\_\_\_\_ (Parsonage Com. Chairperson  
If applicable)

(PLEASE NOTE EXCEPTIONS ON THE BACK AND SIGN IN THE SPACES ABOVE.  
 IF THERE IS DISAGREEMENT, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR SUPERINTENDENT  
 AT ONCE SO CONSULTATION MAY TAKE PLACE)

❖ **Note:** All utilities should be left connected and ready for use by the incoming parsonage family.

**(THIS FORM IS TO BE COMPLETED ON MOVE DAY AND RETURNED  
 TO THE SUPERINTENDENT AS SOON AS COMPLETED)**

## Ministerial Ethics

The very nature of the Covenant relationship among members of the West Virginia Conference calls for accountability to those in the Connection. One area of concern is at the point of breaking relationships with a charge after a person has been assigned a new appointment.

Some clergy, on being appointed to a new charge, continually return to previous appointments to do pastoral service. These acts break the Covenant relationship. Most appointments are made early enough, and shared with both the pastor and the charge for the process of disengagement, and to lay foundations for the entry of new pastor. A part of the disengagement process would be eased if the person who is leaving would make it absolutely clear that after moving, he/she would not be available for continued pastoral functions. These duties should be referred to the person who is being appointed.

After moving to a new appointment, clergypersons should direct their energies to building relationships with the new parish. The clergyperson's time should be devoted to ministry in the new parish and not in returning to a former pastorate to administer the sacraments or to perform weddings and funerals.

Friends are left behind when a clergyperson leaves a community. Friendships do not have to end, but the former pastor and the congregation needs to come to a new understanding of their relationship. The former pastor is still their friend but no longer their pastor. The congregation needs to be aware of this relationship and when pastoral situations arise they are the responsibility of the clergyperson appointed to the charge as pastor. The congregation needs to realize that their former pastor will not seek nor accept invitations for ministry. The responsibility for discouraging persons in past pastorates in extending these invitations lies with the former pastor. A clergyperson must be covenantal and professional enough to know that return visits for pastoral functions are not helpful but are ultimately harmful to the present pastor's ministry and pastoral leadership of the Church. The burden for refusing to return to former congregations to do pastoral functions lies with the clergyperson who is no longer assigned to the charge.

Pastors who are faced with the situation of a former pastor's insensitivity at this point should adopt the following steps: 1) The present pastor should share her/his feelings with the former pastor hoping that persons can understand the difficulties created by the former pastor's continued returning to the charge. 2) If the problem persists, the present pastor should inform the District Superintendent and Bishop of the problem created by a former pastor's insensitivity to returning to the charge. 3) If a former pastor continues to be insensitive to the present pastor's wishes official charges could be brought for undermining the ministry of another clergyperson.

(¶ 2702.1g, 2008 *The Book of Discipline*)

When former pastors do wish to return, the nature of the invitation should be structured by the present pastor who should decide if the visit is necessary.

Clergypersons need to realize that they are no longer the pastor after they are moved and if they do love their former church they will do all that they can to help it to continue to grow. This means aiding the newly appointed pastor in becoming established as the pastoral leader of the congregation by being sensitive and thoughtful concerning returning to a former church. Former pastors must wait for an invitation from the present pastor before returning for any pastoral function.

Another extremely sensitive situation is when a retired clergyperson decides to place membership in a charge conference where that person has served previously as pastor. Many retired clergypersons have been requested by pastors and churches to provide additional pastoral leadership in the congregation where they have once served. Sometimes there is a conflict when a person retires to a charge and the pastor has not issued an invitation to participate in the pastoral functions of the charge. The retired person should let the pastor know if she/he is available to do pastoral functions and wait for the pastor to issue an invitation to assist in the pastoral ministry of that charge. Furthermore, retired clergy should follow the same covenantal and professional ethics that were demanded of them in their active ministry.