

**2010 STAFF-PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE
TRANSITION WORKSHOP
AGENDA**

Rev. Dr. Cedrick D. Bridgeforth, Facilitator
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GATHER TOGETHER

ONE: The Lord is with us

MANY: **AND WE ARE GRATEFUL!**

PRAYER

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time; Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
Taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it;
Trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to [God's] Will;
That I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with [God] forever in the next. Amen. --*Reinhold Niebuhr*

INTRODUCTIONS (Name, Church, Sending/Receiving... Word of Hope)

SPRC CHECKLIST

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Informing & Involving the lay leadership/staff (p 3 – p 10)

SAYING “GOOD-BYE” (p 11 – p 14)

SAYING “HELLO”

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POLICIES, FORMS & PROCESSES

Understanding Salary & Benefits form [salary vs. paycheck] (p 22)

Reviewing/Approving Reimbursement Policy (p 23)

Parsonage Report and Maintenance Schedule (p 24 – p 25)

Completing the New Appointment Covenant (p 26)

Appointive Process and Pastor Profile (p 27 – p 30)

Pastor's Certification of Payment (p 31)

GENERAL CONVERSATION / QUESTIONS

DEPART

Resources during transition:

Items included in this packet

Your District Office / Superintendent

Keep a copy of everything

Former SPRC Chair

Cal-Pac website: www.cal-pac.org (Resources)

SPRC TRANSITIONS CHECKLIST

- ___ Determine outgoing Pastor's last day in the Office _____
- ___ Determine outgoing Pastor's last Sunday in Worship _____
(see Order of Farewell with a Pastor, pg 598, *Book of Worship*)
- ___ Determine outgoing Pastor's personal moving days _____
- ___ Receive outgoing pastor's **Certification of Payment** form (www.cal-pac.org) pg 31 in packet
- ___ Share copies of the Incoming Pastor's bio to the congregation prior to arrival
- ___ Provide a copy of the latest pictorial directory
- ___ Provide a copy of the update Membership Roster
- ___ Identify the non-elected, but recognized leaders?
- ___ Share a copy of Charge Conference Reports (past 3 years)
- ___ Provide phone numbers and email addresses of SPRC Members
- ___ Provide a copy of the Church Calendar, including routine meetings
- ___ Provide a copy of the current Budget, balance sheet, etc.
- ___ How does the incoming Pastor prefer to be addressed? _____
- ___ Plan a "Welcome" for the incoming Pastor and Family _____
- ___ Plan a "Sending Forth" for the outgoing Pastor and Family _____
- ___ Determine incoming Pastor's personal moving days _____
- ___ Determine incoming Pastor's first Sunday in Worship _____
(see Celebration of An Appointment, pg 595, *Book of Worship*)
- ___ Determine incoming Pastor's first day in the Office _____
- ___ Who will introduce the incoming Pastor on her/his first Sunday? _____
- ___ What will be the incoming Pastor's Office hours? (Include in Covenant)
- ___ Provide Finance Cmte & Treasurer with signed copy of Salary & Benefits form **before July 1st**
- ___ Update **Statement of Information** form with Secretary of State
- ___ Who will be assigned to welcome the Pastor's spouse? Children? Parent(s)?
- ___ Who will assist the family with locating schools, childcare? _____

Music Musing #53: June 3, 2005
Fifteen Ways to Welcome a New Pastor

by Dean McIntyre

It is annual conference season across The United Methodist Church, and many congregations will be welcoming new pastors appointed by the bishop and cabinet within the succeeding weeks. Here are some suggestions for the preparation and welcoming process for those involved in the church's worship and music areas. Many of these may be handled by other groups in the church, but the church's musicians can certainly lend their help.

Before the Move

1. Telephone the New Pastor

Introduce yourself — who you are, what you do, how you support or guide the congregation's worship and music. If your church has a website, let the pastor know and provide the URL. If the church has a pattern for staff e-mail addresses, provide it. Ask if the new pastor yet knows when the moving date and first Sunday will be. Is there anything you can begin to do to make those two dates come and go smoothly? Offer to answer any questions he or she may have. Do not talk about problems of the past, and do not overwhelm the new pastor with details.

2. Provide Information to Choir Members

This should of course include names of the pastor and family and the age of any children. Where did the pastor receive theological training? What have been his or her past appointments? Is there anything specifically related to worship or music that you have learned from talking with the pastor or from the district superintendent that you can share?

3. Have a Meeting with Choir Directors and Accompanists

This is an ideal time to evaluate the church's music ministry. Does the schedule for rehearsals, worship, concerts, and special services need to be altered? What do you need to change or do differently? What does the new pastor need to know?

4. Pick Up, Straighten Up, Clean Up the Choir Room, and File Music

Most of us don't do this weekly. Make a good first impression.

5. Offer to Help with Cleaning and Fixing Up the Parsonage

Contact the parsonage committee or Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) and ask if members of the choir can assist with cleaning and repairs, mowing the lawn, weeding the flowerbeds, painting, and the like.

6. Interim Worship Sunday

The week between old and new pastors is busy and pressured. Cooperate with SPRC, your worship committee, and the new pastor to make plans for the first Sunday's service. Offer to assist where you are able: planning the service, liturgy, prayers, responses, picking hymns. Does the new pastor want to lead worship that Sunday? Preach? Will there be Holy Communion, and if so, who will preside? Perhaps you can prepare a mostly music service, or a Great Day of Singing service. Suggest this Sunday's service be led by laity and musicians.

During the Move

7. Help With the Move

Organize choir members to help. Is it a U-Haul move? Can someone go to the pastor's old home to help with packing and loading? Bring help to unload the truck. Organize a schedule for choir members to bring in meals for the first few days.

8. Don't Forget the Kids

If there are young children or youth, arrange for them to meet others of similar age in the church and get acquainted. In the pressure of moving day, children can feel in the way, abandoned, bored, even scared. Help them to feel at home.

After the Move

9. Welcome the Pastor and Family

Include an order for welcoming or receiving the pastor in the first worship service. Plan a congregational after-church dinner, or a Sunday evening hymn sing and ice cream social.

10. Invite the New Pastor/Spouse/Family to the End of the Choir Rehearsal

Plan for a shorter rehearsal time this evening. Introduce the family and the choir. Give the pastor a chance to say something to the choir. Leave a short time for fellowship. Provide edibles.

11. Request a Time for the Pastor to Meet the Music Staff

This can be a time to get to know each other and for the pastor to put names and faces together. Ask the pastor ahead of time what he or she would like to do at this meeting, if anything. Prior to the meeting provide the pastor with a list of music staff and contact information.

12. Provide a List of All Choirs and Ensembles and a Directory of Members' Names and Contact Information

In many churches, choir members are also the church leaders.

13. Provide a Folder of Worship Bulletins and Church Newsletters

showing highlights and special events in the last few years and major Sundays of the past year (Advent, Christmas Eve, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, choir programs).

14. Provide the New Pastor with a NEW *United Methodist Hymnal*, *The Faith We Sing*, *Book of Worship*, *Book of Discipline*, and Desk or Appointment Calendar.

These might even be presented as part of a welcoming liturgy during the first worship service.

15. Provide Worship Service Information

As music director or leader, you are in a position to make the pastor's transition shorter and easier than it might be. Find a way to provide information and details on the worship service(s), either in personal conversation or in a folder of printed information, but it should be done within a few days of the move. This should include:

- who prepares bulletins and when
- how is information gathered
- Sunday morning schedule of worship and classes
- details of radio or television

- tour of the sanctuary
- sound system
- musical instruments
- choir placement
- processions/recessions
- sacraments: frequency, logistics, liturgies, music, laity involvement
- ushers and greeters
- children's sermons
- are there preparation rituals? prayer with the choir?

Above all, recognize that the new pastor is not the previous pastor. Understand that the new pastor has different interests, priorities, customs, training, and expectations. The new pastor will lead differently, and perhaps in new directions. Be assured there will be changes. Prepare your choir members for that possibility and inevitability. You and the choir can be supportive and can ease the transitions. The pastor is given by *The Book of Discipline* and United Methodist tradition the responsibility for overseeing the worship life of the congregation. Remember that that responsibility does not lie with the musicians in the church. Be open to possibilities of new growth and excellence in worship and music that God may have in mind for you and your congregation.

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Sermon: "How To Care For Your New Pastor"

Theme: A potpourri of exhortations concerning Central's new pastor. (I Thes 5:12-22; Ps 93)

The New Testament lesson today is taken from the Book of 1st Thessalonians, Chapter 5, Verses 12-22. In Paul's letter to the Thessalonians, it seems that the apostle was trying as usual to give guidance to a sticky situation. Apparently one or some of those in leadership had become heavy handed or there was some kind of conflict or tension, at least in the opinion of some of the flock, things just weren't the way they ought to be. And so therefore, Paul was trying to remind the congregation of his day about the importance of pastoral leadership and spiritual leadership and authority, but he also reminds the leaders to be patient in their responsibilities and the exercise of their authority in relationships. So listen to the end or toward the end of 1st Thessalonians, Chapter 5, starting with Verse 12.

"Now we ask you brothers to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard and love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. And we urge you brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else. Be joyful always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not put out the Spirit's fire. Do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good; avoid every kind of evil."

As I wrap up my preaching and pastoral responsibilities, I thought about what would be helpful to share for the future in terms of the relationship that Central would begin and develop with its next pastor, which we believe and hope will be not too long a time. Parenthetically, it is interesting to note in this text that it says, "Respect those who labor among you." That's in the plural. In the New Testament Church, there necessarily wasn't just one pastor, there was a plurality of elders, yet today in many congregations and many situations, right or wrong, we do have certain expectations of a person who is designated the pastor. And I simply want to walk you through the handout that you will find in today's bulletin and encourage you to fill in the blanks as I give them to you, as you take notes and then later maybe discuss these with others, maybe in a small group or in your family. These are not an exposition of the text as it were. These are reflections from experience. And so I would like to share with you ten brief points on how to care for your next pastor, or for your new pastor.

#1. Let your new pastor dream his/her own dreams. And let me just say grammatically I have his or her there, but I took out her on all the other ones just for expediency sake. But expect that your pastor will have a vision for the future. And don't necessarily tie it to any vision that has been spoken in the past. It may be something completely new. Pray that God would make that vision clear, not just to the pastor but to all the leaders and that when it is made clear that there would be an effort for all to marshal the forces and move toward that vision. In this text Paul says, "Do not quench the spirit". I think it would be safe to say, it would be a quenching of the spirit if folks did not cooperate and support the vision that God had clearly given the leadership of the church.

#2. Let your pastor be himself. Expect differences from anyone and everyone who has ever been in this position before. If the person is unusually funny, great. That's good. If they are unusually serious, that's okay too. Just let them be themselves. Appreciate their uniqueness as a person, because in the 21st century, the pastoral role is very challenging. The pastor, many times, experiences a tension in their role, on one hand he is supposed to be the spiritual leader of the flock, and on another hand he is reimbursed or paid or hired, supported by the people of the church. So sometimes folks can think he is an employee, instead of a spiritual leader. And when that happens, that's the recipe for problems. So let him be himself and let him lead in ways that will keep everyone focused on Christ.

#3. Commit to stand with him through hard times. You know hard times and difficult times eventually come, conflict is inevitable in most places, because we are human beings. Did you know that the average length of time in the Southern Baptist denomination was three years? You know I am

thinking to myself this two year interim may have outlasted a lot of intentional installed pastorates for most congregations, why? Because many times there is difficulty and tension. People have different goals and instead of this employee mind-set, think of the relationship between pastor and people as a covenant. Something akin to marriage. We know in marriage, divorce is not the first solution. Divorce is the absolute last resort, if there are no other solutions. We know the stages of marriage, fantasy and then disillusionment, then acceptance and then love, deep love. And we know from a marriage relationship that we have all heard the term honeymoon stage, we know what that is like. The other can do no wrong. They just are perfect and it's really a distortion of our perceptions. And one of the problems of a successful interim time is that it seems like you never move out of the honeymoon stage. Things just seem to be so good and focused and that's not always the case, but sometimes that can happen. And so, if anybody is permanent more than passed that stage, disillusionment starts to show up. And it's then that you have to stick with the covenant of supporting one another. See your new pastor can't come in and say all this and so I am saying this. Be committed to that person for the long haul; we know that in a good marriage there is a reciprocity. Like for me, I can't just say as a husband, "Okay I just really want you to be a good wife and it's all up to you to be a good wife." You see being a good husband leads to having a good wife. Being a good wife leads to having a good husband. You see we can call one another into a being and into fullness or wholeness, or we can call one another to wither because of how we behave toward one another.

A Lutheran farmer was talking to his neighbor and he was talking about how a pastor had just come and how he wasn't quite sure about the person and that gave the neighbor a chance to start complaining about his pastor. And the first person the farmer said, "Well you know we are not quite sure about this young man, but we have been praying and if he is good, we are going to be grateful to God. But if he is not, we are going to make him even better." And that's the kind of attitude that should accompany any congregation as they welcome a new pastor. I have every reason to believe that the person that Central calls is going to be excellent, but somehow there may be differences and so help him and support him in every way.

#4. Let your new pastor lead. Let them lead. You know it's a difficult thing for any leader to come into a new situation and before anything is on the table, to sense that people just have their arms crossed and just are not going to be led, for whatever reason. And so I challenge the session members and the elders to give this person your allegiance, follow him as he follows Christ. Again the text says, "esteem pastors very highly in love because of their work" and when he gets out front and says okay we are going to go in this direction - follow. I have seen a funny thing happen in congregations. Many times they will grow and get complex and I have seen it happen and we have all heard the stories about when a congregation grows, new members will take an old member's seats, they will take their pew and how that creates all kind of tension or it gets to a certain size and people don't like it; here's the refrain - "I don't know anybody around here anymore." And so a new pastor will come into a church and it will grow and things will get more complex and ambiguous and then let's say that time ends and then after that let's say the congregation starts to shrink a little bit, and it goes back to its original size. Now I am not suggesting that any of that is going to happen here, I am just saying that what happens in the mind-set of people many times is that this is a good thing. It's like losing weight you know. People think- now I know everybody, now things don't seem so complex anymore, things are simpler. Be careful about that. Be careful about that because that's got nothing to do with Jesus' command to go out and to compel people to come in. And so as the pastor leads, as the church grows in size and becomes more complex and something different than it is right now, support and let them lead.

#5. I almost feel like I don't even have to say this, but I will say it anyway. During the search, the home stretch of the search, **don't lobby for certain candidates.** Now I know that most people around here are thinking, we will just about take any candidate that the PNC would like to offer. It's okay to suggest

people, don't get me wrong, it's okay to suggest people, but don't lobby for certain types of candidates, because that only leads to divisiveness eventually. But it goes without saying.

#6. Here's a tough one. Support your new pastor even when they can't publicly explain why certain decisions or actions have been made. You see you need to bear in mind that pastors and leaders frequently cannot defend themselves publicly in order to protect the guilty. And professional ethics sometimes demands silence over issues that are very sensitive. If a tough decision takes place, support your pastor amid the criticism that always comes on the heels of tough decisions.

#7. Release him/her from being your best buddy. If a church has above 100 people in attendance or even membership that's more than anyone alone can socially involve themselves with. You know, you hardly even know 60 or 70 people by their first name, if you are here for a long time. Let the pastor love you. They will of course, but don't try to spend large amounts of time, because if a person is stretched too thin, then they will be ineffective. And I know that when new pastors come folks have all kinds of expectations, just give those over to God and if you are able to spend time, fine. If not, let that be okay too.

#8. Let your pastor's spouse be themselves. Again, don't anticipate a certain personality type. Don't expect that they will necessarily invest themselves in ministry here. And don't expect them to be doing particular ministries or be like former pastor's spouses. Just love them in to finding their place. Don't put that expectation on them to fill in and play piano whenever it's needed. Alright?

#9. Look for opportunities to encourage and affirm your new pastor. Again, I am preaching to the choir. Just from my experience, I know from verbal comments, from written notes, you all are a loving bunch and I know that the next person is going to experience that. But you know that person will not have had the advantage of being on the staff of this church 20 years ago. I don't think. That person will not have that advantage more than likely. And I was able to hit the ground running and I knew so many people. And so, in new ways look for ways to affirm and encourage the new pastor in every way possible, in prayer especially. Because the church will reap huge benefits especially when you pray, pray for the pastor. You have all heard the line that "poor preaching is God's joke on a prayerless congregation". Have you ever heard that? That's true and as you pray for this person you are going to benefit. And remember that an installed pastor will need to work in a different way than an interim pastor works. You see, an interim pastor can come in and be obnoxious in the short term, can push and prod and even ignore certain things because of the time frame and so you have to expect that interims and installed pastors are going to work with a difference sense and the pressure may be even greater on the installed pastor over time and relationships will need to work in a different way.

#10. Stay focused on the big picture. I think about the only issue that would make me personally think about separating from a church if I were across the pew, so to speak, would be that the pastor in a Christian Church would deny the reality of Jesus Christ and therefore dilute the power of the gospel. You see when we get focused on issues, and there are many issues to get focused on, they can become idols and then they lead to divisiveness. Ask this question, will the issue that I am concerned about be important a year from now? Will it matter 5 or 10 years from now? Better yet, will it matter in eternity? Because the big picture is loving one another and that will go on for all eternity. Because love never ends, never fails. And I know that sometimes conscience will compel us to move from one place to the next, but if that ever happens, if that desire to separate happens, it should happen on the heels of a great deal of prayer, a great deal of conversation and dialogue. Be at peace with one another the scripture says, as far as it depends upon you. And better yet listen to this way of working together and sticking together. It comes through an illustration of a pastor who many many years ago joined 14 other pastors in what was called a "T" group experience. Do you remember "T" groups? These transactional groups, these learning labs of really deepening relationships. They went on a "T" group experience, these 15

clergymen for 10 days. And in this environment the gloves were able to come off, people were able to take down their masks, they were able to share who they were with one another and true sharing and caring took place. They got to know each other deeply over the course of those 10 days. Near the end of the 10 days, the trainer of this group did a rather startling thing. He said, "I want you preachers to go line yourselves up along the wall and do that in the order of importance that you are to the group. Most important on this end, least important on this end." And the one who was sharing this story said that they went to the middle, they didn't want to appear too arrogant. Then the trainer said, "and also once you are in place, if you want to move anybody you go ahead and move them." And so he got moved down to the bottom, towards the bottom of the line, very humbling experience. It was a good lesson in humility he said and then the trainer took the top half of the group, stuck them in a circle and put the bottom half of the group around them. To the people in the middle of the circle, the supposedly important people, he gave a task to come to consensus on a very controversial issue. Well these important people came into this discussion task thinking I am really important and I have to show how important I am and so I need to really save face with whatever happens. So you can imagine what happened was that they completely neutralized one another, they nullified each others efforts and they got nowhere. They were completely stuck. Then the trainer reversed the two groups. And the second group went into the conversation thinking we need each other. You know perhaps we better listen to and support each other because we are "not so important". And the very opposite thing took place. They reached the goal of what they were trying to do. He said that they made an excellent team as they worked together and as they shared the functions of leadership in the group and as they called forth the contributions of each person. You see, that's the way church ought to be.

And just let me say personally as we wrap up here that it has been an incredible privilege to be part of your team, to be a team member for two years and I just want you to give consideration to what I have shared with you today and think about it often over these next few months and my guess is that your new pastor when they are called will be here for at least 20 years give or take a decade. I really believe that it will be a long term relationship. And in it all, trust Christ, work together as that bottom half of the group did, so to speak, and support your new pastor and I guarantee you that even though there have been tremendously fruitful days, that the best days for Central Church are still in the future. Let us pray.

Lord, we thank you for your love and grace, for the ministry that we have shared together and more importantly we thank you for the ministry of your church, which is everywhere around this world. And we pray that you would enable Central Church to move forward in a very strong way as we love one another and as we continue to support and pray for one another. Be with the PNC Lord and guide them to discover who that person is, who will come to be the pastor for the next chapter of the life of this church. We pray it in Jesus name. Amen. © 2002, Rev. George Antonakos Central Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, MD 21204 410/823-6145
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