

SCR-6

Sample Leadership Board Covenant

The Rules of the Road

A Leadership Board Covenant for the Small Church

Decisions are Made by the Board Members Who Attend:

- The Leadership Board and Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development are elected by the charge conference in accordance with the *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*.
- Except for official Trustee legal business (which has a majority attendance requirement for a quorum), the *Discipline* defines a quorum as those members of a committee who are present.
- Leadership Board members are expected to attend all board meetings unless ill or out of town. If needed, members can be tied into meetings via speaker phones or video chat. If members miss more than three meetings per year, the board chair will converse with the board member to see if their seat needs to be vacated and filled by someone who can be more active.
- Teleconference or online meeting participation is okay if allowed by the group, but the United Methodist Church does not authorize voting “proxies.”
- The board will move into a confidential “executive session” whenever Pastor-Parish Relations Committee work is being done. Only official PPRC members can be present for that component of the meeting, and all the appropriate PPRC restrictions of the *Book of Discipline* apply.
- Leadership Board members will review the meeting packet prior to meetings coming fully prepared and ready to participate.
- During a duly called and advertised meeting, we don’t delay board business because someone is missing unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as foul weather.

Leadership Board Members are Disciples of Jesus and Fiduciary Officers:

- Board members carry, support, and promote the mission and vision of the church at all times.

- Leadership Board members are role models for the congregation. Therefore, members will model mature discipleship by being present in worship at least three times per month, giving proportionally, having an active prayer life, serving in mission three times per year, being active on a ministry team, being in a consistent faith development group, and openly sharing their faith with others in the secular world.
- Leadership Board members will encourage and support their pastor and fellow board members.
- Leadership Board members will hold themselves, the pastor, and other board members accountable for their leadership roles and responsibilities. This includes allowing others to hold the board members collectively and individually accountable.
- Leadership Board members shall recuse themselves from any situation that could be construed as a conflict of interest.
- Leadership Board members have no special or unique personal authority or ability to demand time or actions from the pastor or staff outside that assigned by the Leadership Board.
- Leadership Board members will act in good faith, serving out of loyalty to the mission of the church, obedience to the *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* and policies set forth by the charge conference and annual conference, and faithfulness to their duties as board members.
- Leadership Board members hold one another in daily prayer.

We Will Speak the Truth in Love (Ephesians 4:15)

- Communication will be respectful, open, and honest. As a Leadership Board, we will approach matters of disagreement with transparency and maintain our missional focus on making disciples of Jesus Christ. Board members will not participate in parking lot conversations regarding our role as a board member.
- Leadership Board members understand that conflict and disagreements are natural in any community, including the church. When approached by a person or group concerning a matter of disagreement or conflict, we will follow the path laid out by Jesus in Matthew 18 by encouraging the concerned party to go directly to the individual or by volunteering to go with the concerned party as a supportive presence. In accordance with the *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, the pastor will be present in all meetings unless the pastor is voluntarily absent. At no time will we support or participate in secret meetings that undermine the integrity or authority of the pastor or the Leadership Board.

- Leadership Board members are representatives of the Leadership Board at all times during their leadership terms. Leadership Board members have a fiduciary duty to the Leadership Board and the church to uphold the highest standards of integrity of relationships and to support the mission of the congregation, including publicly supporting other congregational leaders, staff, ministry leaders, and clergy of the congregation.
- Leadership Board members will hold each other accountable as disciples of Jesus and church leaders through our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.
- The Leadership Board (in its role of PPRC) will hold the pastor accountable in collaboration with the bishop and district superintendent.

We Will Balance Transparency and Confidentiality

- The United Methodist Church supports open meetings (*BOD* ¶ 722) at all levels of the church. Exceptions are Pastor-Parish Relations Committee work and some legal work of the Trustees, such as property negotiations.
- In its role and responsibility as the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, the Leadership Board is held to a high standard of confidentiality in personnel and clergy appointment matters.
- Board members understand that as leaders, derogatory comments or conversations about personnel (especially the pastor) are inappropriate and to be avoided. Concerns are to be processed with the collective Leadership Board and the district superintendent only.
- The Leadership Board will move into executive session for some agenda items, particularly the work as the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee. In those cases, a separate set of minutes for the session shall be kept, and those not on the board should be excused from the meeting.
- No secret meetings are allowed, and when the Leadership Board is doing the business of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, the pastor shall be present (see *BOD* ¶ 258.2 for particulars).

We are a Leadership Board with a Unified Voice

- Leadership Board members are encouraged to invest in board conversations and decisions with vigor and passion. However, once the board has come to a decision, each Leadership Board member will openly and publicly support the decision of the Leadership Board whether the individual member personally agrees with the decision. A unified voice and message from the Leadership Board are essential.
- Board members will not call out or undermine the collective decisions of the board.

SCR-7

Sample Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles are offered to you as guidelines or thought-starters. These are not intended to be a complete set of building principles. In fact, you will find that a few guiding principles contradict one another. This is intentional and is offered to remind churches of the importance of clarity around specific guiding principles. Guiding principles are intended to be a permission-giving tool. They eliminate a drawn-out approval process and any bottleneck that slows down ministry. Guiding principles provide healthy boundaries and macro, rather than micro, decision-making. Please do not cut and paste these (or other churches') guiding principles. Every church has its own unique setting, so special care and attention in this work will pay dividends for years to come.

- All references to the Church Council, Board of Trustees, Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, Endowment Committee, and Finance Committee, in all congregational policies as of _____, and in all references in the *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, shall be understood to refer to the Leadership Board beginning _____.
- Once the budget is approved, those responsible (i.e., staff and team leaders) for the various ministry areas have the authority to spend their budget to align with the objectives for their ministry area approved by the pastor. No further approval is needed to access the budget in their area of responsibility.*
- The pastor is responsible for reviewing line items within ministry areas with the appropriate staff or team leaders for accountability from the staff and to the board.
- Any member of the Building Maintenance Team has the authority to purchase supplies for building maintenance and improvement up to \$ ____ without approval. The Building Maintenance Team leader can authorize purchases for building maintenance and improvement up to \$ _____. Purchases up to \$ _____ can be approved by the pastor (executive pastor or business manager). Any purchases over \$ _____ need Leadership Board approval unless the expenditure is already approved in a capital expenditure line item in the approved budget.*
- Any expenditure over \$ ____ will require three bids. Preference will be given to hiring local companies offering competitive bids

within ___% of other bids. If the expenditure is already approved in the budget and meets the previous criteria, no further approval is needed. The ministry team leader or staff member responsible for the purchase will provide documentation of the bids to the Leadership Board for purposes of a paper trail only.

*The treasurer must be consulted concerning any single purchase or expenditure over \$_____ for purposes of cash flow. The treasurer does not approve or deny purchases but confirms large purchases will not create cash flow issues.

- The pastor has the authority to hire and release employees using the church's employee policies and procedures in the _____ *UMC Employee Handbook*. When terminating an employee, the pastor will invite a board member to sit in on the exit conversation for purposes of liability protection. The pastor is responsible for supervising, disciplining, and evaluating staff performance as outlined in the _____ *UMC Employee Handbook*.
- The authority to hire and terminate employees of the church shall be vested in the Leadership Board. The pastor shall have the authority to interview and recommend candidates to fill open staff positions. The board shall have the sole authority to determine the number of staff positions, approve job descriptions for each staff member, and set the salary paid to each staff member. The Leadership Board delegates the authority to supervise, discipline, and manage paid staff to the pastor.
- The pastor will review all paid staff annually using the approval evaluation process in the employee manual dated _____.
- The board recognizes and approves the Building Usage Policies dated _____.
- The board recognizes and approves the Building Security and Key Policies dated _____.
- The board recognizes and approves the Financial Controls Policies dated _____.
- The board recognizes and approves the _____ United Methodist Church Personnel Policies date _____.
- All meetings of the Leadership Board shall be open to the public, except for any meeting or portion of a meeting in which a personnel matter or a matter of legal negotiations is considered. In those cases, the board will transition into executive session. Minutes of executive session agenda items concerning personnel matters will be kept separately as part of the "S/PPRC" files.

- Leadership Board members are nominated by a separate and independent Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development, chaired by the pastor, and elected by the charge conference as described in the *Book of Discipline*. The Nominations Committee will be responsible for developing new leaders and equipping them for future Leadership Board positions.
- Due to the Leadership Board's serving as the congregation's Staff-Parish Relations Committee, no immediate family member of the pastor or other paid staff person may serve as a board member. Due to serving as the congregation's Board of Trustees, only Leadership Board members over the age of eighteen will have voting privileges in matters of property, incorporation, legal matters, contracts, insurance, investments, or other matters described in the *BOD* ¶s 2525-2551.
- The lead pastor is the Leadership Board's only link to church ministry and programming. The lead pastor has complete authority and accountability for all staffing, including hiring, evaluating, firing, and consideration of raises. The Council will never give instructions to persons who report directly or indirectly to the lead pastor. The Council will view the lead pastor's performance as identical to church performance so that organizational goals will be viewed as the lead pastor's performance.
- Compensation for the lead pastor and all appointed clergy will be determined by a charge/church conference. Recommendations for the lead pastor's compensation will be made by the Leadership Board (as part of their SPRC duties) to the entire Church Council for consideration before the charge/church conference. Recommendations for other appointed clergy compensation will be made by the lead pastor in consultation with the Leadership Board to the entire Church Council for consideration before the charge/church conference. Decisions about increases in the lead pastor's compensation will be based primarily on the following three criteria:
 1. Council's review of the lead pastor's effectiveness in reaching established goals.
 2. Needs of the church for a lead pastor with the skill sets necessary for reaching established goals. This will be determined in relation to the compensation packages of churches of similar or larger size in the annual conference.
 3. Possible cost of living increases. However, it is understood that the primary criteria for compensation will always be (a) the Leadership Board's review of the lead pastor's performance.

- The lead pastor shall not cause or allow any activity, decision, or organizational circumstance that is unlawful or in violation of commonly accepted business practices and professional ethics. Furthermore, the lead pastor shall not cause or allow any activity, decision, or organizational circumstance that is a violation of the current *Book of Discipline*, the standing rules of the annual conference, or the express direction of the resident bishop and/or district superintendent of the annual conference.

SCR-8

Sample Agenda for the Small Church

First United Methodist Church Leadership Board Meeting

Date _____

Our Mission: To make new disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Our Vision: Each of us at _____ UMC is on a journey to grow closer to God, to be more like Jesus, and to be filled with the Holy Spirit. No matter where you are in your walk with Christ, you are invited to journey and grow with us through the power of the Holy Spirit so that we can fulfill God's commission.

Core Values:

- Encouragement - Giving hope to people who need some hope
- Excellence - Maintaining the highest of ministry standards that bring glory to God
- Fellowship - Relating to and enjoying one another
- Aspiring Core Value is Evangelism - Telling others the good news about Christ

Opening Prayer

Spiritual Formation

Leadership Development

Consent Calendar Items

Fiduciary Work

Missional Accountability Work

Strategic and Planning Work

Pressing Issues/Problem-Solving

Executive Session (PPRC)

Communication

Closing Prayer

SCR-9

Simple Planning for the Small Church

- **We, Not They** – “All Hands on Deck” is the rule, not the exception, so plan with all active attendees of all ages being involved in implementing the ministry.
- **Get Face-to-Face** – Focus on building relationships, not complex systems.
- **Evangelism is not an Extra** – Embed evangelism (reaching new people for Jesus) into every ministry, every event, and every opportunity.
- **Dream Up a Team Up** – Partner with local institutions and nonprofits, especially for organizing the infrastructure for community ministry, leaning on their expertise and organization.
- **Deep, Not Wide** – Who is God calling you to build relationships with? Choose one niche and go deep relationally and with ministries for this one group. You’ll reach more people using fewer resources without burning your volunteers out.
- **When in Doubt, Experiment** – Allow yourselves to try ministry experiments. In a season when many of our inherited ways of doing ministry are no longer effective, try something new every season or at least twice a year.
- **Simple with a Signature** – Instead of having multiple low-impact ministries, take a simple approach by discerning and focusing on one or two signature ministries.
- **Keep Accountable** – Be good stewards of God’s people and resources by pruning ministries regularly and using the “Accountable Leadership Cycle” to keep the church on track and always learning.