

Guidelines for Pastor and Congregation Review Western District Conference

Western District Conference encourages congregations and pastors to engage in pastor and congregation reviews in order to nurture the pastor's ministry, strengthen the vitality of the congregation, and foster a healthy relationship between the pastor and the congregation.

One set of resources on congregational structures of leadership and accountability is provided by Mennonite Church USA at <http://mennoniteusa.org/resource/pastor-congregation-evaluation/>

For other review tools and surveys, please contact Western District Conference at wdc@mennowdc.org.

Western District Conference offers additional resources in the review process:

- Conference Minister guidance and counsel.
- WDC consultants to assist in the review process.
- A Congregational Development fund administered by the Ministerial Leadership Commission, to assist WDC congregations with consultant expenses.

The cost of engaging a WDC consultant is as follows:

- \$20 per hour. A WDC consultant's time will often include travel, meetings, preparation, writing and correspondence.
- Reimbursement of travel at current IRS rate.
- Reimbursement of other expenses – meals, paper, supplies, etc.
- The total cost of a consultant for a pastor/congregation review depends upon various factors such as size of congregation, review format, whether both pastor and congregation are being reviewed, and the scope of engagement by the consultant.

Consultants keep track of their time and expenses and submit a written report to the WDC Conference Minister for payment. WDC in turn requests congregations to reimburse WDC for half the cost if possible, but all congregations are served regardless of ability to pay.

The following checklist may be helpful for the pastor/congregation review process.

Checklist

- Contact the Conference Minister for helpful perspective, support and resources.
- Is there a conflict situation that will influence this review? If the answer is "yes, then the review should be postponed and the conflict should be addressed.
- Identify the governance body responsible for the review. Will they do the review or appoint a special Review Committee? A committee of three to five persons is appropriate.

- Work with the Conference Minister to identify the WDC consultant who will work with the Review Committee. The WDC Consultant initiates contact with the Review Committee chairperson.
- The first meeting of the Review Committee includes the WDC Consultant and the pastor. The WDC Consultant meets with Review Committee and Pastor for orientation on the process.
- Identify the goals of the review. Is this a term review of the pastor or a major review of pastor *and* congregation? Is it to simply gather information from the congregation or is it important that the congregation learns and practices a community-building process such as appreciative inquiry? Will the review include everyone in the congregation or only a sampling of the congregation?
- Develop a timeline for the review process.
- Develop review tools (questionnaire, survey, etc.). The WDC Consultant, pastor and the Review Committee mutually agree to the review tools and the review process.
- Initiate the interview process with clear instructions to the congregation about why the review is being done, what tools and process are being used, confidentiality, timeline, who is invited to participate, and who to contact if there are questions.
- The pastor completes a written self-review utilizing the pattern of the survey or process.
- The WDC Consultant compiles the survey or interview information, and reports these results to the pastor and to the Review Committee. Any follow-up actions and recommendations are clarified.
- The WDC consultant reports the results to the congregation, as determined in consultation with Review Committee and pastor.
- The WDC Consultant sends the Conference Minister a copy of the review report, which is placed in the pastor's ministerial file and the congregational file at the WDC office.
- The WDC Consultant sends the Conference Minister an expense report, and WDC reimburses the consultant based on submitted expenses.
- WDC requests the congregation's reimbursement of half of the expenses if possible.