

REPORT OF PARSONAGE STANDARDS TASK FORCE

As found in the 2005 Conference Journal

For the task force, Eddie Allsup

At the 2004 Annual Conference session a resolution was approved mandating a committee composed of representatives of the Conference Trustees and Board of Ordained Ministry to “study and update parsonage standards for our Annual Conference and recommend new parsonage standards at Annual Conference 2005.”

Members of this task force include Eddie Allsup, Matt Wolfington, Linda Matsler and Horace Abbott representing the Conference Trustees; and Tom Long, Teresa Hollums, Beth Harrington and Ava Berry representing the Board of Ordained Ministry.

The task force recommends the Parsonage Standards for adoption as printed below. We further request that these standards be printed in the conference journal once each quadrenium.

The task force also recommended to the cabinet that a uniform check list for moving pastors be adopted and used in each of the districts.

The task force also requested the Committee on Bylaws, Resolutions and Rules to increase the allowance for moving expenses from \$1,000 to \$1,250. This would become effective January 1, 2006.

PARSONAGE STANDARDS

Housing

1. We reaffirm our historic policy as the norm for church provided housing namely, that each local church or charge has a responsibility to provide a furnished parsonage, and to provide all utilities, including basic cable and basic telephone service, for the Pastor as a part of his or her total support. The personal privacy of the Pastor and family should be respected
2. In the spirit of flexibility and creative openness, we do authorize discussion between a Pastor and his/her Pastor-Parish Relationship Committee and with the bishop and cabinet, which would permit the payment of a housing allowance in lieu of a parsonage, under the following guidelines:
 - a) It must be mutually agreeable to (1) the Pastor, (2) the church, and (3) the bishop and cabinet.
 - b) That it be understood by the Pastor, the church, and the cabinet that this agreement will not be a primary factor for consideration for future appointments for Pastor or church.
 - c) The local church/charge must either retain a parsonage or the capability of re-entering the housing market so that if the succeeding Pastor desires or needs a provided parsonage, the church will be in a position to provide it.
 - d) Where a housing allowance is provided, it must be sufficient to provide in that community an adequate rental house for the parsonage family that would meet average parsonage standards across the conference, and also

3. Standards

- a) **Structure:** No less than the following will be required:
 - (1) Three (3) bedrooms
 - (2) One and three-quarters (1-3/4) baths
 - (3) Living area
 - (4) Dining Area
 - (5) Kitchen to include: stove, oven, refrigerator with freezer, and dishwasher
 - (6) Closet-storage space throughout the house
 - (7) Laundry area with washer and dryer
 - (8) Garage or carport space
 - (9) Interior window coverings for privacy
 - (10) Air-conditioning: Refrigerated air is required & central heat and air preferred
 - (11) Study space

* Personal internet service at the parsonage is the responsibility of the Pastor.
- b) **Exterior** - no less than the following will be required:
 - (1) Storage space for large items
 - (2) Lawn maintenance equipment consistent with the needs of parsonage.
 - (3) Fenced yard
- c) **Safety** – The parsonage shall be equipped with the following safety features:
 - (1) Water and sewer service to meet state and local standards
 - (2) Wiring and plumbing that meet state and local standards/codes
 - (3) Carbon monoxide detector and smoke detectors appropriately placed, and a fire extinguisher in kitchen and/or utility room.
 - (4) Sufficient exterior and interior lighting
 - (5) Separate phone number for parsonage and church

- d) Accessibility – We fully affirm Paragraphs 2543.3b and 4c of the *2000 Book of Discipline*, which state:
“. . . in all plans for new church buildings and parsonages and in all major remodeling plans, adequate provisions shall be made to facilitate parking, entrance, seating, restroom facilities, and otherwise make facilities reasonable accessible for persons with handicapping conditions.” (4c)
- “Newly constructed or newly purchased parsonages shall include on the ground floor level one (1) room which could be used as a bedroom by a person with a handicapping condition, a fully accessible bathroom and laundry facilities.” (3b)
- (e) Maintenance – Upkeep and repair is the Church’s responsibility:
- (1) Utilities – Utilities should be kept in the name of the church to ease Pastoral transition.
 - (2) The church should annually include in the budget an amount for parsonage repairs. The budget item will enable the Trustees and Committee for Parsonage Standards to have a consistent program of maintenance and improvement.
 - (3) Interior and exterior painting when deemed appropriate
 - (4) All appliances and equipment should be checked and adjusted regularly
 - (5) Parsonage families are responsible for repairs or replacement as needed for damages done by a member of the parsonage family or pets
 - (6) Decoration – The church should keep both the interior and exterior of the parsonage in such a state of décor as to preserve its physical condition and aesthetic value. Avoid faddish styles and extreme approaches in decorating the parsonages. We suggest that congregations stay with neutral colors and allow residents to personalize with their own touches.
- (f) Insurance
- (1) The Trustees should be certain that the church-owned house and contents are adequately and properly insured. Public liability insurance should be carried on parsonage property.
 - (2) IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PASTOR TO INSURE PERSONAL PROPERTY BELONGING TO THE PASTOR OR FAMILY.
- (g) Parsonage Review – The Chairperson of the Pastor Parish Committee, the Pastor, and the Chairperson of the Trustees or Parsonage Committee should inspect the parsonage at least once a year as specified in the most recent *Book of Discipline*, to discover needed repairs, improvements, and decorations. The Committee or Trustees should assume the initiative since it is their responsibility to maintain the parsonage in good condition. An evaluation and inventory form will be provided by the District Superintendents and shall be included in the Charge Conference Packet. It needs to be remembered that the parsonage is the Pastor’s home and inspections should be scheduled in plenty of time to meet the convenience of the parsonage family. The evaluation and inventory form will be signed by Pastor, and representatives of the PPRC and Trustees.
- (h) Change of Pastors
- (1) Before the Pastor may consider the parsonage from which he or she is moving as properly vacated, and inspection must be made by Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, Pastor Parish Relations Committee, the Pastor and where applicable, the Chairperson of the Parsonage Committee. Failure of a Pastor to comply with this procedure will result in a complaint filed by the local church with the District Superintendent and the Bishop. In the event the Pastor is transferring to another Annual Conference, this complaint can be sent to the receiving Bishop and D. S.
 - (2) In the event the parsonage is not adequately cleaned and the local church must incur expense to prepare the parsonage for the newly appointed Pastor, the moving Pastor can be billed for the expense incurred. This bill will be sent to the DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT for action and the Pastor will be expected to pay within 60 days.
 - (3) A report of any major damage beyond the normal wear and tear will be filed by the local church with the DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT. Financial responsibility not to exceed the repair or replacement cost can be assessed to the Pastor who has been residing in the parsonage.
 - (4) The Pastor may seek a review of the damage claims through the DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT involved in the action. The request must include copies of the Annual Review for the preceding three years or the time the Pastor has resided in the parsonage if less than three years.
 - (5) In the event the local church has not maintained the property properly and has not met the needs listed in the Annual Report, the local church is responsible for any repairs or replacement.
 - (6) The church is responsible for the unused furniture storage or the disposition of unused furniture.
 - (7) If there is a question of which furniture should be stored preference should be given to incoming Pastor.
 - (8) Any unusual circumstances or questions will be addressed by the local District Superintendent.