

A Modern Re-formation

# Wichita United Church of Christ

The Ministry of the Pastoral Relations Team (PRT)

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*Updated November 4, 2019*

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## A Brief Introduction to the Pastoral Relations Team

*“With upright heart [they] shepherded them and guided them with [their] skillful hand.”  
(Psalm 78:72)*

The Pastoral Relations Team, as outlined by the Constitution & Bylaws, is the vehicle through which the Pastor and congregation can communicate when disagreements arise. Their role is to listen deeply to concerns expressed by both the Pastor and congregation, and to find ways to resolve any disagreements in keeping with our Behavioral Covenant.

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### **Constitution & Bylaws**



On Sunday, September 1, 2019, the congregations adopted a new, shared, Constitution & Bylaws document to outline our organizational structure and provide a pathway for healthy, meaningful ministry at this time.

The Constitution & Bylaws can be found under separate cover, along with our Behavioral Covenant and other helpful documents, in your leadership binder.

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## **Confidential Conversations**

The Pastoral Relations Team holds meetings every four months, or as necessary, throughout a given year. These meetings are “closed,” which means only members of the Team can be in attendance - unless an invitation is made by the Team to another party - and the notes of these meetings are sealed. This allows the Team to maintain confidentiality. The topics discussed during a meeting are held in confidence and not to be shared with anyone outside the Pastoral Relations Team under any circumstances.

## **Holding One Another in Love**

One of the primary roles of the Pastoral Relations Team is the practice of active listening. Our goal in this practice is to truly hear one another - to be able to share openly and honestly and to receive what we hear without judgment or personal opinion. This allows us to gather knowledge from the shared experience of members of the congregation, as well as the Pastor, in order to facilitate a relationship that is “win-win,” where everyone involved benefits and is blessed by the shared experience.

Our role is not to dictate terms or be the keepers of particular ways of “being church,” but to be leaders in adaptive change by listening to all sides of an issue and offering recommendations to the Pastor, and when necessary the Church Board, on ways we can move the church forward in a healthy manner.

To help us thrive, we must be open and honest with one another. We must truly listen to what the other is saying, and seek ways to communicate that are non-judgmental and honor the voices who share. And we must hold one another in love, desiring the best outcomes for the individual and the church above our own personal interests or opinions.

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## When We Gather Together

There is no predetermined structure for a Pastoral Relations Team meeting. We will pray together. We will share with one another whatever is brought forward to us by the congregation or Pastor at the time of the meeting. We will make recommendations to the Board when necessary as a result of our gathering and prayerful discussion.

## Keeping the Behavioral Covenant

The Pastoral Relations Team is also charged with keeping the Behavioral Covenant. When issues arise in the life of the congregation where the Behavioral Covenant can serve as a means of working them out, the PRT may be invited to help work through such conflict.

The Behavioral Covenant is as follows:

*As followers of Jesus Christ, we promise to respect each other at all times in the following ways:*

- *We will approach all things in prayer.*
- *We will speak from personal experience, from "I," not "We," or "They."*
- *We accept disagreement as normal and natural to community processes.*
  - *We will speak face-to-face, honestly and without rancor, avoiding triangulation and hearsay.*
  - *We will listen with an open and non-judgmental mind, and try as hard to understand as to be understood.*
  - *We are committed to being inconvenienced for the Gospel.*
  - *If we are unable to effectively communicate with each other, we will ask a third-party to be present to assist us.*
- *We will support the final outcome of the decision-making process.*
  - *As forgiven people, we will choose to forgive one another.*

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## How Pastoral Compensation Works

It is the responsibility of the Pastoral Relations Team, each year, to make a recommendation to the Board regarding Pastoral compensation. The Pastor, when called, entered into a call agreement with the congregations. Each year this should be reviewed and revised, based on performance and other factors. The Pastoral compensation package is broken down as follows:

- A total compensation figure includes the following categories:
  - Housing Allowance
  - Salary
  - Social Security Offset
  - Accountable Reimbursement
- From the Salary, the following items are deducted to arrive at net pay:
  - Health Insurance (including dental)
  - Life Insurance
  - Vision Insurance
  - Pension contributions<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> All of the deductions are administered by the *Pension Boards of the United Church of Christ*. The church is billed monthly for these amounts, which are deducted from pastoral compensation and paid by the church from the total compensation funds on behalf of the Pastor.

Here are the compensation records under the current call agreement, along with updated cost projections for the new year:

|                           | <b>2017-2018</b> | <b>2018-2019</b> | <b>2019-2020</b> |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Housing Allowance         | 36,000           | 27,000           | 27,000           |
| Pastoral Salary           | 19,950           | 30,111           | 34,192           |
| Accountable Reimbursement | 3,000            | 3,000            | 3,000            |
| Social Security Offset    | 4,883            | 4,883            | 4,883            |
| Cell Phone Allowance      | -                | -                | 750              |
| Dental Insurance          | 1,122            | 1,122            | 1,122            |
| Health Insurance          | 12,882           | 13,203           | 13,692           |
| Vision Insurance          | 249              | 249              | 249              |
| Life Insurance            | 912              | 912              | 912              |
| Pension                   | <u>5,002</u>     | <u>5,200</u>     | <u>5,200</u>     |
| <b>Total Compensation</b> | <b>84,000</b>    | <b>85,680</b>    | <b>91,000</b>    |

The Pastoral Relations Team will submit a recommendation to the Church Board in the fall of each year, to coincide with the formulation of the new year's budget.

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## **A Prayer for Discernment in Leadership**

Leadership is challenging, but the reward of faithful service through spiritual growth is unparalleled. In this time of shared leadership, we will learn together. We will make mistakes. We will sometimes disagree. But we will seek always to live into the motto of the United Church of Christ, *“that they may all be one.”*

As we contemplate the responsibilities of serving on the Pastoral Relations Team, may we covenant together to rely on the following prayer with regularity in our individual and corporate devotional practice:

**“I am no longer my own, but thine.**

**Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.**

**Put me to doing, put me to suffering.**

**Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,  
exalted for thee or brought low for thee.**

**Let me be full, let me be empty.**

**Let me have all things, let me have nothing.**

**I freely and heartily yield all things  
to thy pleasure and disposal.**

**And now, O glorious and blessed God,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,**

**thou art mine and I am thine. So be it.**

**And the covenant which I have made on earth,  
let it be ratified in heaven. AMEN.”**

*- The Covenant Prayer of John Wesley*