

## Chapter 4

### PASTORS

#### A. Function

**675.** A pastor is an ordained, commissioned or licensed minister, who is called of God and appointed by the Church to serve as the spiritual shepherd, teacher and administrative overseer of the local church, preaching the Word, directing the worship, administering the sacraments and ordinances of the Church, taking the comforts of the gospel to the sin-burdened, the sick and the distressed, discipling converts, nurturing and instructing believers, equipping and enabling them for their part in ministry, and serving as chief executive officer in the government of the local church.

**678.** A minister who serves as the sole pastor of a church shall be referred to simply as “the pastor.” The term “senior pastor” shall be applied to the presiding minister of a multiple pastoral staff. The pastor shall be expected to carry out the full pastoral function as set forth in 675, and ultimate responsibility for the same shall rest upon the senior pastor. An associate pastor is a helping member of a multiple staff who normally shares a broad range of the shepherding and teaching responsibilities and such administrative responsibilities as are delegated (cf. 738). An assistant pastor is a helping member of a multiple staff who normally is assigned more limited and specific aspects of the pastoral function (cf. 741).

#### B. Manner of Pastoral Voting

##### 1. Jurisdiction in Pastoral Voting

**690.** All matters related to voting on securing or retaining a pastor are the concern of a pastoral charge (503), whether it consists of a single church or a circuit. In most instances, a pastoral charge will consist of one local church, and the following paragraphs are so written. If a circuit is involved, the vice-chair of the circuit advisory council (530) assumes leadership in all negotiations, the circuit advisory council fills the role of the local board of administration, and the circuit conference rather than the local church conference is the voting body.

## 2. Regulations for All Pastoral Voting

**691. Procedures of Candidating.** In all matters related to pastoral candidating the following regulations shall be observed:

(1) Only one pastoral candidate at a time shall be presented to the congregation for a message. A decision by the local board of administration to recommend a pastor for a congregational vote, and the vote, if recommended, must take place before another candidate is considered.

(2) The support including salary, expense allowances, housing, fringe benefits, moving expenses and related matters which the church proposes to maintain must be provided for the candidate prior to a pastoral vote.

(3) A minister who has agreed to give a candidating message and to submit to a pastoral vote at one church, cannot do the same with another church until the first candidating situation is resolved. If the local board of administration does not recommend the candidating pastor for a congregational vote within seven days the waiting restriction no longer applies.

**692. Procedure of Pastoral Voting.** In all matters related to voting on securing or retaining a pastor, the following regulations shall be observed:

(1) All pastoral votes shall be taken at a duly announced session of the local church conference (630-633).

(2) The district superintendent, or a representative appointed by the district superintendent, shall preside over the local church conference for the taking of the pastoral vote. If neither can be present, the vice-chair of the local board of administration shall preside.

(3) All pastoral votes shall be taken by secret ballot by covenant members with special provision for absentee ballots (695).

(4) A favorable vote by a majority of covenant members voting shall be required (705; 718; 720; 722).

(5) The minister shall be notified by the local board of administration of the results of the vote,

(6) If the vote is favorable, the minister shall notify the local board of administration and the district superintendent by phone and in writing of a decision within seven days following the official notification of such call by the local church.

**695. Absentee Ballots.** A covenant member who cannot attend a pastoral vote session of the local church conference because of confining illness, required employment or necessary out-of-town travel or seasonal residency, may cast an absentee ballot subject to the following conditions:

(1) The member shall secure a standard ballot from the local church secretary, identical to the ballots to be used at the session, and submit the marked ballot prior to the session in a sealed envelope identified with the name of the absent member.

(2) The local church secretary must certify the envelope as being submitted by a member to whom the secretary has supplied a ballot, and who is eligible to cast an absentee ballot. In the event that the local church secretary is unable to certify the eligibility of the person casting an absentee ballot, the secretary may consult the vice-chair of the local board of administration to determine eligibility.

(3) Envelopes containing such absentee ballots shall be opened at the session in which the vote is taken, by the secretary in the presence of the chair, prior to the tallying of the vote, and these ballots placed without inspection with the others for counting by the tellers.

**697. District Approval of Pastoral Agreement.** A pastoral agreement, whether for an initial call or a renewal of call, must be reviewed and recommended by the district board of administration, and becomes final upon the approval of the district conference. Each year the district board of administration shall review those pastoral agreements which are continuing before making its report to the district conference (1180:26; 1233:9).

**700. Time of Pastoral Changes.** Except for such emergencies as resignations, removals or deaths, pastoral changes shall take place on the Monday following the second Sunday of July.

### 3. Regulations for Initial Call of Pastor

**705. Procedure of Initial Call of Pastor.** Whenever it is necessary for a pastoral charge to secure a new pastor, the following regulations shall be observed:

(1) The vote shall be for a two-year call, subject to such adjustment as the district superintendent shall approve, so that the term shall expire at the uniform time set by the General Conference (700).

(2) The initial call may be for four years or an extended call if such is recommended by the local board of administration and approved by the district superintendent. In case of an extended call the rules governing an extended call shall apply (720).

(3) The local board of administration, under the leadership of its vice-chair, shall counsel with the district superintendent concerning possible candidates. If the church desires to call a minister from another district or from outside the denomination, the local board of administration shall first

secure from its own district superintendent assurance that the transfer of the minister would be approved (cf. 313:6).

(4) When a candidate has been approved by a majority vote of the local board of administration (cf. 782:13), the candidate's name shall be presented as a nomination to the local church conference, and the vote shall be taken in keeping with the regulations governing all pastoral voting (692).

**708. Waiver of Local Church Rights.** If a pastoral charge has been unable to secure a pastor prior to thirty days before the annual session of the district conference, the local church conference may, at any time thereafter, by majority vote delegate full authority for the employment of a pastor to the local board of administration, or it may waive its rights and leave the selection of a pastor to the nomination of the district board of administration and appointment by the district conference. If a pastoral charge waives its rights, or if neither local church conference nor local board of administration shall have secured a pastor by the time the annual session of the district conference convenes, the district board of administration shall nominate a pastor for appointment by the district conference. A pastor so appointed shall be received and supported by the pastoral charge the same as if the pastor had been employed in the usual manner.

**710. Initial Call Resignation.** If a pastor resigns during the initial call term of service to a church, the pastor must notify the local board of administration and the district superintendent sixty days in advance. If the district superintendent and the local board of administration deem it wise, the pastor may be released sooner.

**712. Initial Call Removal.** During the initial call term of a pastor's service, the district board of administration may remove the pastor by a two-thirds majority vote of all members, provided such has been requested by the local board of administration by a two-thirds majority vote in a meeting presided over by the district superintendent, or such has been recommended by the district superintendent (cf. 1233:38).

**715. Ad Interim Procedures.** If a pastoral charge is left without a pastor between sessions of the district conference due to death, resignation or removal, the local board of administration and the local church conference shall follow the regular procedures for securing a new pastor with all arrangements subject to the approval of the district board of administration (cf. 1233:38).

#### 4. Regulations for Renewal of Call

**718. Procedure for Renewal of Call.** Whenever a pastor's term of service is expiring, unless the pastor shall give notice otherwise to the vice-chair of the

local board of administration (773) and the district superintendent, in writing and at least sixty days prior to the convening of the district conference, the pastor shall be considered as available, and a vote on the renewal of the pastoral call shall be taken in keeping with the regulations governing all pastoral voting (692).

(1) One of the following alternative procedures shall be followed:

(a) A vote for a four-year renewal of the call shall be taken. If the vote on a four-year renewal of the call is favorable, the local board of administration, after consulting with the pastor, may then recommend that a ballot vote be taken to renew the call for an extended period (720).

(b) Or, prior to the vote on renewing the call, the local board of administration, after consultation with the pastor, shall recommend to the local church conference a specific call for four years, or an extended call.

(2) A vote for a one or two-year renewal of the call may be authorized by the district superintendent upon the joint request of the pastor and the local board of administration when such is due to extenuating circumstances.

#### **720. Special Regulations for Extended Call.**

(1) When a pastor is serving for an extended period, the pastor may, when deemed advisable and when approval has been granted by the district superintendent, ask the local board of administration to conduct a vote by the local church conference on renewing the extended call. Such a vote shall be conducted in keeping with 692.

(2) When a pastor is serving for an extended period, the district superintendent shall review the pastoral agreement with the local board of administration at least quadrennially. The local board of administration by a majority vote shall either reaffirm the call or ask the local church conference to vote on renewing the call. Such a vote shall be conducted in keeping with 692.

**722. Termination of Renewed Call.** The service of a pastor whose call has been renewed may be terminated prior to the expiration of the term or in the interim of quadrennial reviews of an extended call (720:2) in one of three ways:

(1) The pastor may resign, provided that the termination of service is first approved by the district superintendent. Except as otherwise mutually agreed upon by the local board of administration and the district board of administration, notification of the pastor's resignation shall be given at least sixty days in advance and the resignation shall become effective in sixty days or at the time set by the district for pastoral changes (700).

(2) If one-third of the members of the local board of administration so

request the district superintendent in writing, the district superintendent or a representative appointed by the district superintendent shall call and preside over a special session of the local board of administration for the purpose of deciding on whether to call for a pastoral vote by the local church conference. If the local board of administration by majority vote calls for the taking of such a vote, and the district superintendent approves the taking of the same, it shall be taken in keeping with 692. If there is a majority vote of the local church conference in favor of retaining the pastor, and the pastor agrees to remain, the pastor shall be free to continue as if the vote had not been taken. If less than a majority are favorable to retaining the pastor, pastoral service shall terminate at the time set by the district for pastoral changes (700), or at a time mutually agreed upon by the pastor, the local board of administration and the district superintendent.

(3) The district board of administration may, by a majority vote, order the district superintendent to conduct a pastoral vote in keeping with 692. Or the district board of administration, upon the recommendation of the district superintendent (1310:19), and for the sake of the pastoral charge involved, may remove the pastor by a two-thirds majority vote of all members (1233:38), with the services of the pastor terminating in sixty days unless ordered otherwise by the district board of administration. If at any time the district board of administration shall deem it in the interests of the district as a whole that the pastor be free to serve elsewhere, it may by majority vote request the pastor to resign.

### C. Pastoral Support and Sabbatical

**723. Annual Review of Pastoral Support.** The pastor's cash salary and other benefits, including health insurance and employer contributions for the Wesleyan Pension Fund (WPF) shall be reviewed annually by the local board of administration prior to the annual session of the local church conference, whether or not a vote is being taken on the securing or retaining of a pastor. Proper health insurance coverage should be provided by the local church for pastor and family except in cases in which they have adequate coverage through other employment of pastor and/or spouse, or in the case of pastors serving in Canada, through the national health program. Full participation in the Wesleyan Pension Fund by the local church on behalf of all pastors is expected in the plan of support of all pastors. The obligation, responsibility and liability for both health insurance premiums and employer contributions to WPF belong solely to the local church. The district and general Church

have no obligation, responsibility, nor liability for these matters, either expressed or implied. A report of the final action on the pastor's support, whether by the local board of administration or by the local church conference, shall be sent by the local board of administration in writing to both the pastor (or pastor-elect, cf. 692:5) and the district superintendent (cf. 746).

**724. Sabbatical for Pastors.** Every Wesleyan church is encouraged to provide a sabbatical leave for its pastor(s) at least every seven years of service. A sabbatical shall be for a minimum of four weeks in excess of vacation time with financial provisions as approved by the local board of administration. (Cf. 723, 746.)

#### **D. Duties and Powers**

**725.** The pastor shall administer the spiritual and temporal affairs of the work in keeping with *The Discipline* and other general and district regulations and shall be responsible:

##### **General**

- (1) To diligently study the Scriptures, pray and do the work assigned.
- (2) To seek, by all means, the conversion of sinners, the sanctification of believers, and the upbuilding of God's people in the most holy faith.
- (3) To pray to God for and with the flock.
- (4) To feed the flock by reading, expounding, teaching and preaching the Word.
- (5) To have the general guidance, under the Holy Spirit, of the religious services, including the midweek service, appointing musicians (cf. 870) and cultivating the practice of corporate worship.
- (6) To administer, if an ordained (313:1), commissioned (3059:2a) or licensed minister (3044:1), the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Each pastor shall provide for the observance of the Lord's Supper at least once every three months. A supply pastor shall secure the services of an ordained (313:1), commissioned (3059:2) or licensed minister (3044:1) who is a pastor, for such observance (3260:2), except when authorization has been granted by a district superintendent as provided in 3260:2.
- (7) To solemnize, if an ordained (313:1), commissioned (3059:2a) or licensed minister (3044:1), the rite of matrimony, in keeping with the Scriptures and *The Discipline* (265:5; 3111); to counsel with those being

married and those already married, emphasizing the spiritual values in all phases of marital and parental life, seeking to develop the spiritual ideals and resources necessary to build permanent unions and godly homes (cf. 410:6).

(8) To comfort the bereaved and to bury the dead.

(9) To provide pastoral guidance and oversight through visitation and counsel to the members of the church and to others in need of a pastor's help. The minister, as counselor, has the right to protect the conversation with a counselee as privileged communication.

(10) To keep all members fully conversant with the Christian life-style set forth in the Covenant Membership Commitments and the biblical basis for the same, and to maintain with diligence and love adherence to these membership requirements (cf. 260-268).

(11) To be responsible for the instruction of all prospective members in the Articles of Religion, Covenant Membership Commitments and polity of The Wesleyan Church, and in the meaning and purpose of church membership, holding or arranging for membership classes for community members that they might be adequately prepared for covenant membership (cf. 568-570; 782:7; 880:11).

(12) To administer the ritual of membership and to give the right hand of fellowship on behalf of the church to new members (553:4; 5550-5595).

(13) To report the names and addresses of members who have moved away to the General Secretary of The Wesleyan Church (598).

(14) To grant, in conjunction with the local church secretary, letters of transfer, recommendation or withdrawal (575; 590; 592; 6000-6040).

(15) To receive any complaint or accusation against any member of a church under personal care, and to give such prompt and careful attention as required under the Judiciary (5022; 5105:1,4), and to refer any matter requiring official investigation or judicial proceedings to the local board of administration for disposition (782:11).

### **Administrative**

(16) To preside as chair of the local church conference and the local board of administration except as otherwise provided (635; 770-773), and to oversee and direct all departments and local church organizations as the chief executive officer.

(17) To serve as a voting member of boards and committees established by the local board of administration, and to meet with boards and committees as time will permit.

(18) To meet with Wesleyan Men, Wesleyan Women, Wesleyan Youth

and Young Adults International and any of their committees as deemed best and to call a special meeting of an auxiliary or any of its committees; to serve as an *ex officio* member of the executive committees of the auxiliaries (7125:1; 7325:1; 7530:3f; 7730:1), and as chair, or to appoint a representative as chair, of the nominating committees of the auxiliaries (7125:5; 7325:5; 7730:5).

(19) To give leadership to the missionary, evangelistic, educational and devotional programs of the local church in harmony with objectives and programs of the district and the General Church; to request the approval of the district superintendent for the use of an evangelist or worker who is not a member of The Wesleyan Church for a revival or any other event (cf. 1310:21).

(20) To promote all the interests of the General Church and the district in the local church, in the manner and to the extent authorized by the General Conference, the General Board and the district conference.

(21) To instruct the people concerning the financial plans of the General Church and of the district, and to see, together with the local board of administration, that the United Stewardship Fund and all other obligations are met in full; and to protect the church from solicitations not authorized by the General Church or the district.

(22) To promote stewardship, emphasizing tithing and the storehouse plan as a part of the Christian's total stewardship (cf. 460-475), and to see that tithes and freewill offerings are collected regularly.

(23) To see that trustees are elected and all church property properly secured according to *The Discipline* and the local laws, with all legal papers submitted to the district superintendent for approval.

(24) To see that no steps are taken involving the church in financial liability without proper authorization from the local board of administration and local church conference, or without the approval of the district board of administration when such financial liability involves the mortgaging or other encumbering of the church property (655:12-13; 782:30-31; 1233:32).

(25) To see that all property and building transactions are carried out as set forth in 4700-4720.

(26) To circulate holiness literature, promoting all subscription campaigns for the official church publication and other official General Church or district periodicals, setting a proper example with personal subscriptions; and to use in all educational departments and agencies curriculum materials provided by The Wesleyan Church.

(27) To have general supervision of the educational program of the local church, organizing classes for the instruction of adults, youth and children in the Word of God and for Christian living, attending all sessions possible,

promoting the faithful attendance of members, and providing for the instruction and inspiration of the leaders in educational work.

(28) To enlist youth for the gospel ministry, and for missionary and other special work, encouraging and helping them to prepare for their God-appointed task at educational institutions provided by The Wesleyan Church; to sign, in conjunction with the local church secretary (830:3), licenses for lay ministers granted by the local church conference (655:7; 782:19); and to have the oversight over all lay ministers employing their services as constantly and effectively as possible.

(29) To recommend to the local board of administration a potential associate pastor (738); to nominate to the local board of administration an assistant pastor (741) or a lay assistant to the pastor (744); to nominate to the local board of administration all members of the employed staff, except the custodians (cf. 782:16; 856:5); and to supervise, with the assistance of the local board of administration, the services of all employed staff members, including the custodians (cf. 782:16).

(30) To see that up-to-date files are kept on church constituency, membership, Sunday school enrollment, the membership of subsidiary organizations, and subscriptions to the various General Church and district publications, and to be ready to turn over such lists to the successor in office (cf. 610; 830:2, 5; 895; 928; 7130:4; 7330:5; 7530:3c; 7740:3).

(31) To see that adequate historical records and financial records are maintained for the church (cf. 610; 842:2, 6; 898; 7130:5; 7330:6; 7530:3c; 7740:3).

(32) To see that all necessary data are collected for the various statistical and financial reports, and to present reports to the local board of administration monthly, to the local church conference at its regular sessions, to the district superintendent as requested, to the district conference annually on forms approved by the Board of General Superintendents, and to various General Church or district departmental officers as required.

(33) To attend district conference sessions, institutes and conventions planned for edification by the General Church or the district, and to participate in the life and work of the district and the General Church as opportunity affords.

### E. Pastoral Staff

**735. Pastor/Senior Pastor.** An ordained, commissioned or licensed minister who is called of God and appointed by the Church to serve as sole pastor of a church shall be referred to simply as “the pastor.” The term “senior

pastor” is applied to the presiding minister in a multiple pastoral staff who bears ultimate responsibility for carrying out the function set forth in 675.

**738. Associate Pastor.** An associate pastor is an ordained minister or a commissioned or licensed minister, who is called of God and appointed by the Church to serve along with the senior pastor and under the direction of the senior pastor as assigned by the senior pastor and approved by the local board of administration; this assignment normally includes a broad range of the shepherding and teaching responsibilities and such administrative responsibilities as are delegated, but may be concentrated on one or more specific aspects of ministry (cf. 675). The calling and assignment of the associate pastor shall be subject to the following guidelines:

(1) The associate pastor shall have training, experience and ministerial standing compatible with those of the senior pastor.

(2) The associate pastor is recommended to the local board of administration by the senior pastor. The associate pastor cannot be employed initially without the express recommendation of the senior pastor and the written approval of the district superintendent. The call cannot be renewed without the express recommendation of the senior pastor. Otherwise, the call is made and renewed by the local church conference in the same manner as that of the senior pastor, except that the termination point for the call can never be later than that of the senior pastor.

(3) The associate pastor’s appointment may be terminated in the same manner as that for a pastor, with the additional provision that the term of service will end whenever there is a change in senior pastor in the local church where service is rendered. Whenever a senior pastor terminates service at a time other than the uniform time of pastoral change (700), the associate pastor’s term shall expire at the succeeding uniform time for such change. The newly called senior pastor may recommend renewal of the call for the associate pastor to the local board of administration.

(4) If a clergy couple is appointed to the pastoral staff, only one shall be designated as senior pastor, unless the local church conference should vote to call the persons as co-pastors. In such case, the district shall appoint them as co-pastors and they shall be listed as such in the district journal (1332:8). (Cf. 752.)

**741. Assistant Pastor.** An assistant pastor is an ordained minister or a commissioned or licensed minister, who is called of God and appointed by the Church to serve under the direction of the senior pastor as assigned by the senior pastor and approved by the local board of administration; this assignment normally includes more limited and specific aspects of the pastoral

ministry (cf. 678). The calling and assignment of the assistant pastor shall be subject to the following guidelines:

(1) The assistant pastor shall have the training, experience, and ministerial standing which are suitable for this assignment.

(2) The assistant pastor is recommended to the local board of administration by the senior pastor. The assistant pastor cannot be employed initially without the express recommendation of the senior pastor and the written approval of the district superintendent. The call cannot be renewed without the express recommendation of the senior pastor. While the local church conference creates the position, the local board of administration employs the person subject to the recommendation of the pastor and approval of the district conference. Employment shall be for one year at a time except that its termination point can never be later than that of the senior pastor.

(3) The assistant pastor's appointment may be terminated at any time at the pastor's recommendation and the vote of the local board of administration. The term of service will end whenever there is a change in senior pastor in the local church where service is rendered. Whenever a senior pastor terminates service at a time other than the uniform time of pastoral change (700), the assistant pastor's term shall expire at the succeeding uniform time for such change. The newly called senior pastor may recommend the reemployment of the assistant pastor to the local board of administration.

(4) The office of assistant pastor is an employed position, subject to final approval by the district conference. It is to be assigned to no one as an honor or to provide special status.

**744. Lay Assistant to the Pastor.** Lay members may also serve as paid assistants. While the local church conference creates the position, the local board of administration employs the person subject to the recommendation of the pastor.

(1) The lay assistant must be a member of the local church where employed.

(2) Employment shall be for one year at a time.

(3) Employment of a licensed or commissioned special worker shall be subject to review by the district board of administration and appointment by the district conference.

**746. Annual Review of Staff Support.** The salaries and benefits of the pastoral staff and other employees of the church, including health insurance and employee contributions for the Wesleyan Pension Fund, shall be reviewed annually by the local board of administration in a manner parallel to that provided for the pastor in 702. Reports on the provisions for staff and employees shall be sent to the district superintendent only for those under district appointment. (Cf. 724.)