

SUBJECT: Parsonage Guidelines.

## Parsonage Guidelines

A POLICY OF THE MICHIGAN CONFERENCE  
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

PROPOSED FOR THE 2017 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

### 19 **Philosophy of Parsonage Guidelines**

20 Our Flexible Housing and Parsonage Guideline Policies have been based on the foundational  
21 understanding that housing shall be provided for our pastors. All pastors serving full-time in local  
22 churches, District Superintendents and full-time Annual Conference staff performing the function of  
23 Director or Associate Director, or those Conference staff positions with contractual agreements with  
24 General Boards/Agencies of The UMC shall be provided with either a parsonage or housing allowance  
25 (See ¶1258.2g) q (16) & ¶1620 of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church – 2016*). **There**  
26 **shall be flexibility in housing options as determined by the local congregation or the designated**  
27 **Annual Conference body.** Providing either a parsonage or a housing allowance shall be determined by  
28 the local congregation, or the designated Annual Conference body, for the purpose of enabling  
29 ministry and the itinerant ministry of the Annual Conference. (See the Flexible Housing Policy for  
30 housing options.)

31 *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church – 2016* identifies the areas of responsibilities of  
32 three distinct groups – one relating primarily to housing and two relating to primarily to itinerancy  
33 and appointments.

### 34 **LOCAL CHURCH**

35 The Local Church accepts certain responsibilities for adequate pastoral support in this mutual  
36 covenant. ¶1620 of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church - 2016* states, “Assumption

1 of the obligations of the itinerancy, required to be made at the time of admission into the traveling  
2 connection, puts upon the Church the counter obligation of providing support for the itinerant  
3 ministry of the Church.”

4 Duties of the committee on pastor-parish relations are outlined in ¶1258.2 of *The Book of Discipline of*  
5 *The United Methodist Church – 2016*. The following specific matters are noted in ¶1258.2.g) 16 “To  
6 consult on matters pertaining to....housing (which may be a church-owned parsonage or housing  
7 allowance in lieu of parsonage if in compliance with the policy of the annual conference), and other  
8 practical matters affecting the work and families of the pastor and staff, and to make annual  
9 recommendations regarding such matters to the church council, reporting budget items to the  
10 committee on finance.”

#### 11 **CLERGY**

12 Clergy take vows at their ordination agreeing that they will offer themselves “without reserve to be  
13 appointed and to serve as the appointive authority may determine (¶1335.c.1 *The Book of Discipline of*  
14 *The United Methodist Church - 2016*).” The requirements and implications of the itinerancy are  
15 repeatedly emphasized in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church – 2016*. Some of  
16 those implications include certain guarantees related to an appointment, minimum compensation,  
17 benefits and provisions for housing. Some of those implications are also the forfeiture of certain  
18 restrictions by clergy in terms of where they will serve. Each pastor serves at the discretion and  
19 direction of the Bishop and Cabinet. This is a reality inherent in our polity.

#### 20 **BISHOP**

21 The third party in this covenant of obligations is the Bishop. The particular responsibilities of the  
22 Bishop are delineated in Chapter Three, “The Superintendency”, *The Book of Discipline of The United*  
23 *Methodist Church – 2016*. Section VIII contains the paragraphs that address the material related to  
24 Appointment Making:

25 ¶1425 Responsibility

26 ¶1426 Consultation and Appointment-Making

27 ¶1427 Criteria

28 ¶1428 Process of Appointment-Making

29 ¶1429 Frequency

30 These paragraphs outline a comprehensive process, the outcome of which is intended to provide  
31 continuity of leadership in local congregations and a comparable intersection of gifts required and  
32 gifts possessed between a congregation and pastor(s) appointed to serve there.

33 It is important that local church or Annual Conference-owned parsonages across the Conference  
34 meet certain standards so that differences in quality, size and equipment are kept to a minimum.  
35 These guidelines apply for local church pastors, district superintendents and Annual Conference  
36 professional staff, when a parsonage is provided.

37 The Parsonage Guidelines Policy shall be posted on the Conference web site, presented to all new  
38 pastors by each respective district superintendent, distributed annually by the district superintendent

1 to the local church Board of Trustees, pastor parish relations committee or staff parish relations  
2 committee. The Parsonage Guidelines Policy shall be reviewed annually by the Conference Board of  
3 Trustees and the Cabinet. Any changes shall be brought to the Annual Conference for its action.

4 The Annual Conference affirms that the parsonage is the private home of the pastor. Therefore, the  
5 parsonage should not by design or intention be considered as an extension of the church space for  
6 program use. The church and the pastor should maintain the home so that it can be opened to  
7 friends and parishioners alike with dignity and pride.

8 The Annual Conference recognizes that families in our culture are of varying sizes and needs. In the  
9 interest of Christian stewardship, we must seek homes that make efficient use of space, are energy  
10 efficient and are adaptable to the needs of clergy family members.”

## 11 **SECTION I - GENERAL GUIDELINES**

### 12 ***Location***

13 Locate the parsonage so as to be conducive to the best possible living conditions for the family, with  
14 special reference to accessibility to schools and stores. The family should have the opportunity to  
15 follow customary family patterns without unnecessary interruption. The parsonage should not be  
16 located where it could conceivably be a hindrance to the future expansion of the church buildings.

### 17 ***Barrier Free Concerns***

18 All parsonages purchased, built, or remodeled in the future shall conform to the needs of the  
19 handicapped. One entrance shall be wheelchair accessible.

### 20 ***Sound Construction***

21 The parsonage shall be of sound construction with sound foundations. Cracking walls and sagging  
22 floors are danger signs of structural unsoundness. Do not attempt to remodel an existing parsonage if  
23 it involves extensive structural modifications, partition moving, or cutting of exterior walls.

### 24 ***Energy Conservation***

25 It is advisable that an energy audit be considered to determine what might be done to make the  
26 parsonage more energy efficient with attention to water seals, storm windows and doors, etc. It is  
27 further recommended that any parsonage built or purchased in the future be as energy efficient as  
28 possible. (Example: zone heating, minimum of 12” of insulation in ceiling and 6” in sidewalls.)

29 Parsonages with fireplaces shall include glass doors for energy conservation.

30 Sliding storm doors can be added and should be considered for energy conservation.

### 31 ***Safety***

32 The parsonage shall contain certain safeguards for the parsonage family’s safety.

33 At least three fire extinguishers, one in the house, one in the garage and one in the basement, shall  
34 be kept in working condition and should be professionally inspected annually.

1 Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors should be provided – a minimum of one for each floor  
2 including the basement.

3 A radon test shall be performed in geographic areas where radon seepage is suspected to be  
4 problematic.

5 Motion lights should be provided in dark areas.

6 Dead bolts shall be provided on outside doors.

7 There shall be a lead-based paint disclosure.

8 There shall be safe wiring of the electrical system, adequate power to serve the house, and sufficient  
9 outlets.

## 10 **SECTION II - SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR EXISTING PARSONAGES**

11 **1. Bedrooms:** There should be a minimum of three bedrooms of standard size with ample closet  
12 space in each. It is recommended that one room on the main floor be adaptable to use as a fully  
13 accessible bedroom. Having one of the bathrooms adjoined to the main bedroom is desirable. If the  
14 house does not have central air, window air-conditioning in the bedrooms and/or the study should be  
15 provided. Window coverings shall be furnished.

16 **2. Bathrooms:** Two bathrooms are recommended. One could be with shower only. One should be on  
17 the main floor and be handicapped-accessible. Window coverings shall be furnished. Each bathroom  
18 shall have washable walls or tiles, mirror and adequate medicine chest and storage. Adequate linen  
19 storage shall be provided.

20 **3. Kitchen:** The minimum kitchen would include adequate built-in cabinets, garbage disposal and  
21 dishwasher, sink, stove with self-cleaning oven, microwave, frost-free refrigerator with frozen food  
22 storage, good light and electric outlets that meet current electrical standards. Window coverings shall  
23 be furnished. Carpeting is not recommended but there must be appropriate, safe and desirable floor  
24 covering. A breakfast area is desirable. Plumbing shut-off valves should be provided at appliances.

25 **4. Living Room:** Appropriate, safe and desirable flooring (with attention given to health issues) and  
26 window coverings shall be furnished.

27 **5. Dining Room:** A separate dining room is considered important. Appropriate, safe and desirable  
28 flooring (with attention given to health issues) and window coverings shall be furnished.

29 **6. Study:** A study is advisable and should be away from the family activities and noise. Where  
30 possible, it is preferable to have the pastor's main office in the church, but if it is in the parsonage, it  
31 should be at least 200 square feet with an outside entry if at all possible. Bookshelves, desk, chairs,  
32 private telephone line and other essential equipment shall be provided. Window coverings and

1 appropriate floor covering shall be furnished. High-speed internet access should be provided if the  
2 office in the home is the primary office.

3 **7. Family Room:** Very desirable, especially for the children of the family. It should be located away  
4 from the living room and study.

5 **8. Closets:** Adequate closet and storage space shall be provided throughout the house.

6 **9. Garage:** Two-car garage with automatic garage door opener and outside door, storage room (in  
7 the garage or in the basement) and storage for yard equipment shall be provided.

8 **10. Laundry Facility:** A fully handicapped-accessible laundry facility shall be furnished. Automatic  
9 clothes washer and dryer shall be furnished and maintained.

10 **11. Utilities:** All utilities shall be provided by the church, including water, gas, electric, and waste  
11 removal. Utilities shall be secured in the name of the church to insure uninterrupted service during a  
12 change of pastors.

13 **a. Telephone:** The church shall provide a minimum of two touch-tone telephones and outlets.  
14 The local church shall pay basic telephone charges; personal long distance costs are the  
15 pastor's responsibility.

16 **b. Water:** There shall be a safe and dependable hot and cold water system throughout the  
17 house, including water softening equipment where needed. The church shall provide the salt.  
18 Two or more outside spigots shall be provided.

19 **c. Light:** The pastor shall furnish standard light bulbs. The church shall provide specialty outdoor  
20 lamps (example: mercury vapor or halogen).

21 **d. Heating:** A central heating system with the capacity to adequately heat the entire habitable  
22 parts of the house, with a humidifier or its equivalent, and the proper automatic thermostatic  
23 controls, must be provided. The heating system shall be maintained by the church and shall be  
24 inspected annually with regard to soundness of heat exchanger, flue pipes, and chimney  
25 condition. If a wood stove or fireplace is in use, it too must be checked yearly with chimney  
26 cleaning provided by the church.

27 An instruction sheet should be posted near the furnace as to the maintenance and care of the  
28 furnace. The name of a reputable furnace company to be used should be specified.

29 For responsible stewardship of energy and finance, the house shall be fully insulated, with  
30 energy-efficient storm and screen doors and windows.

31 The pastor is responsible for the furnace filters to be changed at least twice yearly.

32 The church, if needed, shall provide a dehumidifier.

33 **e. Trash:** The church shall furnish weekly waste removal pick-up service. Recycling is desirable.

34 **f. Windows:** All moveable windows shall be in operating condition. The parsonage family shall  
35 be responsible for window cleaning of the parsonage unless professional cleaning is needed,  
36 such as in hard to access parts of the house.

1 **12. Decorations:**

2 a. At pastoral changes, redecoration of the parsonage is recommended.

3 b. **Color:** Color preferences vary greatly among clergy families. This is reflected in their  
4 furnishings and other possessions. Therefore, it is recommended that the parsonage be  
5 decorated in consultation with the parsonage family. The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee  
6 should consult the new pastoral family regarding colors.

7 **13. Cable and TV Connection:** The church shall provide basic cable or satellite service with basic  
8 internet service, if available. The pastor pays for expanded services. In the event that the parsonage is  
9 the pastor's main office, the church shall provide for high-speed internet service, if available.

10 **14. Parsonage Grounds and equipment:**

11 The parsonage shall have adequate outside lighting.

12 The grounds around the house shall be well drained and fertilized every year. The parsonage family  
13 shall care for the grounds. If the yard is unusually large, contains shrubs, or requires a great deal of  
14 time to maintain it in keeping with the surrounding neighborhood, the church shall consider assisting  
15 the pastor with additional help or service. Ordinary mowing and trimming of the lawn shall be the  
16 responsibility of the pastor. The church, if needed or desired, shall provide fertilizing and lawn  
17 treatment, tree pruning and landscaping changes.

18 Large or long driveways may also require help from the church in the winter.

19 Grounds-care equipment shall include an adequate power lawnmower and snow blower for the  
20 property. It shall also include, but not be limited to, hoses, rakes, spade, ladder, etc.

21 Landscaping and exterior care of the parsonage shall be such as to be a credit to the church in the  
22 community.

23 There shall be either a septic tank in good working condition, with adequate drainage area on the  
24 parsonage property, or sufficient access to a public sewer system.

25 A sump pump and dehumidifier shall be provided for the basement if conditions warrant.

26 **15. Insurance:** The church is responsible to secure and pay for insurance for the property. It is  
27 recommended that 100% replacement cost of the parsonage and church-related structures and  
28 church furnishings be carried. It should include home-owner type coverage maintained at a minimum  
29 of eighty percent (80%). The pastor shall be responsible for his/her own insurance on personal  
30 furnishings and belongings.

31 **SECTION III - PARSONAGE MAINTENANCE**

32 **Local Church Responsibility:**

- 1 Under the direction of the Board of Trustees, there shall be a Parsonage Committee consisting of  
2 representatives of the Board of Trustees, Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and/or additional  
3 persons (perhaps from UMW or UMM) with special skills and interests. This committee shall adhere  
4 to these minimum guidelines for all parsonages.
- 5 The District Board of Church Location and Building is required to approve plans for remodeling (if cost  
6 exceeds 25% of the value) or new construction or purchase (§2521, *The Book of Discipline of The*  
7 *UMC - 2016*).
- 8 No assets from the sale of a church-owned parsonage shall be used for current operating expenses of  
9 the charge (*The Book of Discipline of The UMC - 2016*, §2543). Proceeds from the sale of such a  
10 church-owned parsonage shall be placed in escrow by the trustees of the local church, at least  
11 equaling an amount necessary to cover the future purchase of a parsonage or an amount to cover a  
12 down payment (of not less than 20% of cost of home meeting parsonage standards in the area) plus  
13 closing casts. It is recommended that the principal account on the escrow be adjusted annually to  
14 provide equity with inflation and the real estate market. Interest received from an escrow account  
15 may be used toward the provision of a housing allowance. If a period of five (5) years has passed and  
16 there is no evident need to purchase another parsonage, then the escrow funds may be released for  
17 the purpose of church capital improvements. The evident need shall be determined by a two-thirds  
18 (2/3) vote of a called church conference. Any such sale of a church-owned parsonage must include  
19 consent of the pastor, district superintendent, board of church location and building, and the charge  
20 conference.
- 21 The local church board of trustees or elected parsonage committee shall properly maintain an  
22 adequate and comfortable home for the parsonage family. The parsonage shall be regarded as the  
23 pastor's home and the privacy of the parsonage family shall be respected at all times. No  
24 unannounced "inspections" shall be conducted. Keys to the parsonage shall be limited to the  
25 parsonage family and the church office or a person mutually designated by the parsonage family and  
26 the Board of Trustees. At the convenience of the parsonage family, the parsonage committee shall  
27 inspect the home annually to see what needs to be done, if anything, to meet these guidelines and to  
28 take the necessary steps to accomplish any improvements.
- 29 Prior to the annual inspection, the persons making the inspection should review this booklet as a  
30 reminder of the provisions and maintenance standards. They shall keep a record of their inspection  
31 so that they can take initiative in improving the parsonage and grounds. It is suggested that such  
32 inspections take place in late spring prior to annual conference, and/or in the fall prior to charge  
33 conference.
- 34 To better facilitate maintenance, a log of major appliances should be kept by the parsonage  
35 committee, including dates items were purchased, repairs, warranties, and service contracts.
- 36 A refurbishing and replacement schedule should be set up.
- 37 The church shall pay for cleaning carpets and window coverings annually.

- 1 The pastor and parsonage committee should have an understanding of what separates minor repairs  
2 (pastor's responsibility) and major repairs (church's responsibility). If the use of an extension ladder is  
3 needed, the pastor should negotiate help from the church.
- 4 The church budget should include a separate line for parsonage maintenance and improvement in  
5 the amount of 2% of the insured value of the parsonage. If the funds are not used in any given year,  
6 they are held in escrow for the time when needed.
- 7 **Pastor's Responsibility:** The pastor should care for the parsonage as a "good steward" of the  
8 property, avoiding undue wear and tear. The pastor is responsible for any damages caused by pets,  
9 guests or family members. All necessary precautions shall be taken to prevent pets from damaging  
10 the parsonage. The parsonage family must correct such damage.
- 11 **Mutual Responsibility:**
- 12 At the time of change of pastors, the parsonage committee shall take responsibility for seeing that  
13 the parsonage is in good condition for the in-coming pastor. Needed cleaning shall be the  
14 responsibility of the out-going pastor, but if this has not been cared for, the parsonage committee  
15 shall assume this responsibility. If needed cleaning is due to neglect or carelessness, the out-going  
16 pastor shall pay for the cost of said cleaning.
- 17 The parsonage committee (or trustees) must meet with the in-coming pastor, and develop a clear  
18 understanding of the procedures for maintenance: 1) which repairs and maintenance the pastor  
19 should expect to do; 2) which breakdowns should be reported for referral to get the job done (and to  
20 whom notification is to be given by the pastor); 3) what amount is in the church budget in a separate  
21 parsonage maintenance and improvement fund.
- 22 In the area of interior decorating, the parsonage committee and the parsonage family shall work  
23 together before any changes are made. If non-washable drapes are used, cleaning responsibility is  
24 with the church. Carpet repair, replacement, and periodic major cleaning are the responsibility of the  
25 local church unless damage is caused by carelessness of the parsonage family.
- 26 All sub-standard parsonages shall be considered for recommendation to conform, as nearly as  
27 possible, to the above guidelines as soon as possible.
- 28 **Records:**
- 29 Keep a record of each annual inspection and update as problems are resolved. The trustees shall be  
30 responsible for duplicate inventory lists; one shall be kept at the church, and one at the parsonage.  
31 This list should include all church-owned furnishings of the parsonage and garage, as well as yard and  
32 grounds equipment. A copy of this list should be made available to each new pastor.
- 33 The pastor and parsonage committee shall provide a record of local servicing agencies and a file of  
34 service manuals, and any other information necessary for all mechanical equipment related to the  
35 parsonage. Place and date of purchase, serial number, warranty information, and all parts lists should



1 be included. The list should be updated annually, the list given to the pastor, and reviewed with  
2 him/her when he/she leaves the charge.

3 **SECTION IV - PROCEDURES AT PASTORAL CHANGE:**

4 **Pastor leaving:** When there is a pastoral change, there shall be an inspection of the house with the  
5 pastor before the pastor leaves for his/her new appointment.

6 **Pastor Arriving:** When there is a pastoral change, the new pastor shall inspect the parsonage, making  
7 a list of needed repairs and creating a written statement of property conditions for the trustee  
8 record.

9  
10 Michigan Conference Design Team  
Glenn Wagner and Marsha Woolley, Co-Chairs

11 **ITEM #10**

12 SUBJECT: **Flexible Housing Policy.**

13 **Flexible Housing Policy**  
14 OF THE MICHIGAN CONFERENCE  
15 OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
16 PROPOSED FOR THE 2017 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

17 Our Flexible Housing and Parsonage Guideline Policies have been based on the foundational  
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19 churches, District Superintendents and full-time Annual Conference staff performing the function of  
20 Director or Associate Director, or those Conference staff positions with contractual agreements with  
21 General Boards/Agencies of The UMC shall be provided with either a parsonage or housing allowance  
22 (See ¶1258.2g) (16) & ¶1620 of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church – 2016*). **There**  
23 **shall be flexibility in housing options as determined by the local congregation or the designated**  
24 **Annual Conference body.** Providing either a parsonage or a housing allowance shall be determined  
25 by the local congregation, or the designated Annual Conference body, for the purpose of enabling  
26 ministry and the itinerant ministry of the Annual Conference. (See the Flexible Housing Policy for  
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29 three distinct groups – one relating primarily to housing and two relating primarily to itinerancy and  
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7 practical matters affecting the work and families of the pastor and staff, and to make annual  
8 recommendations regarding such matters to the church council, reporting budget items to the  
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16 benefits and provisions for housing.

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25 ¶425 Responsibility

26 ¶426 Consultation and Appointment-Making

27 ¶427 Criteria

28 ¶428 Process of Appointment-Making

29 ¶429 Frequency

30 These paragraphs outline a comprehensive process, the outcome of which is intended to provide  
31 continuity of leadership in local congregations and a comparable intersection of gifts required and  
32 gifts possessed between a congregation and pastor(s) appointed to serve there.

## 33 **THE GUIDELINES FOR PROVIDING A HOUSING ALLOWANCE ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

- 34 1. A. Negotiations to establish a housing allowance in a local church will include the pastor, the  
35 committee on pastor-parish relations, the finance committee, and the chair of the board of  
36 trustees. The district superintendent shall be informed before and as negotiations progress.  
37 The purpose of these negotiations is to develop a clear understanding by all parties as to the

- 1 arrangements mutually acceptable. Final arrangements must have approval of the  
2 church/charge conference.
- 3 B. Negotiations to establish a housing allowance for a cabinet appointment will include the  
4 district superintendent, the district superintendency committee, the district board of trustees  
5 or parsonage committee, the district board of church location and building, conference  
6 council on finance and administration, trustees of the annual conference, and the bishop.  
7 Final arrangements must be mutually agreed upon by these parties.
- 8 C. Negotiations to establish a housing allowance for a conference staff appointment will include  
9 the staff person, the personnel committee, conference council on finance and administration,  
10 the trustees of the annual conference, and the bishop. Final arrangements must be mutually  
11 agreed upon by these parties.
- 12 D. Negotiations to establish a housing allowance for a new church start pastor will include the  
13 pastor, the New Church Committee, the Director of New Church Development and the District  
14 Superintendent. Final arrangements must be mutually agreed upon by these parties.
- 15 2. A written record of the housing agreements (signed by the parties mentioned in #1 above) shall  
16 be maintained in the files of the district superintendent, the pastor, and the charge conference,  
17 and also by the bishop's office and conference trustees where applicable. The written agreement  
18 will stipulate clearly:
- 19 A. The amount to be allowed every month;
- 20 B. That the pastor's participation in the arrangement for a housing allowance in lieu of a  
21 parsonage shall not hinder his/her participation in the itinerancy for future appointments.
- 22 C. That a housing allowance in lieu of a parsonage shall not hinder the acceptance of a  
23 subsequent pastoral appointment where a parsonage is desired by the pastor. If, in  
24 subsequent appointments, a housing allowance is not desired by the incoming pastor, the  
25 local church/charge, or the designated Annual Conference body, shall seriously consider this  
26 request and shall provide housing, either through purchase or rental. As stated in the opening  
27 paragraph of this policy, either a parsonage or housing allowance shall be provided. (See  
28 ¶1258.2.g) (16) & ¶620 of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church – 2016*.)
- 29 D. The church/charge conference, or the designated Annual Conference body, shall also have the  
30 option to change to a parsonage at subsequent transition times.
- 31 3. A housing allowance shall be based on the rental value of the current parsonage or, if the  
32 church/charge, or the designated Annual Conference body, does not own a parsonage, on the  
33 rental value of an average home in the parish setting that meets the Conference Parsonage  
34 Guidelines Policy. In addition to the housing allowance, an agreed upon allowance or the actual  
35 cost for utilities shall be paid.
- 36 4. If the pastor chooses to purchase or rent a home, the down-payment and closing costs on a  
37 house, (or security deposit for a rental) and all other costs of purchase and maintenance are the  
38 responsibility of the pastor, district superintendent, or conference staff and are not included in  
39 housing arrangements.

1 5. No assets from the sale of a church-owned parsonage shall be used for current operating  
2 expenses of the charge (*The Book of Discipline of The UMC - 2016, ¶12543*). Proceeds from the sale  
3 of such a church-owned parsonage shall be placed in escrow by the trustees of the local church,  
4 at least equaling an amount necessary to cover the future purchase of a parsonage or an amount  
5 to cover a down payment (of not less than 20 percent of cost of home meeting parsonage  
6 standards in the area) plus closing costs. It is recommended that the principal account on the  
7 escrow be adjusted annually to provide equity with inflation and the real estate market. Interest  
8 received from an escrow account may be used toward the provision of a housing allowance. If a  
9 period of five (5) years has passed and there is no evident need to purchase another parsonage,  
10 then the escrow funds may be released for the purpose of church capital improvements. The  
11 evident need shall be determined by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of a called church conference. Any  
12 such sale of a church-owned parsonage must include consent of the pastor, district  
13 superintendent, board of church location and building, and the charge conference.

14 If the parsonage is not sold, but held for rental purposes, income there from may be applied  
15 toward a housing allowance for the pastor or for current expenses. Said rental parsonage shall be  
16 maintained at the conference and local community rental housing code standards and inspected  
17 annually by the local board of trustees, in readiness for possible future use as the parsonage.

18 Assets from the sale of a new church start parsonage, prior to the constituting church conference,  
19 will conform to agreements made at the time of the original purchase of the parsonage.

20 6. Once initiated, a housing allowance is expected to continue for the duration of a pastoral  
21 appointment. The amount of the housing allowance shall be subject to annual approval of the  
22 charge conference. The charge conference shall not have the authority to reduce the housing  
23 allowance without having consultation with the pastor, the committee on pastor-parish relations,  
24 and the district superintendent. Any reduction shall not be effective prior to June 30<sup>th</sup> following  
25 the church/charge conference (See ¶1624, *The Book of Discipline of The UMC - 2016*).

26 Once an appointment is in place, if a change to a housing allowance is initiated at the pastor's  
27 request and the parties noted in point #1 above have all agreed, the responsibility of the cost for  
28 moving is the pastor's. If a change to a housing allowance is initiated by the church, the parties  
29 noted in point #1 above have all agreed, the responsibility of the cost for moving is the church's.

30 7. The local church/charge shall allow the pastor who receives a housing allowance to live where  
31 he/she chooses in the communities served. If the pastor desires to live outside the communities  
32 served, he/she must receive the consent of the committee on pastor-parish relations or the staff  
33 parish relations committee.

34 8. The housing allowance may be used for purchase, rent, or lease as desired by the pastor.

35 9. The incoming pastor shall have no obligation to purchase the home of his/her predecessor.

1 10. If a church which previously provided a housing allowance will be providing a parsonage for an  
 2 incoming pastor, housing accommodations shall be provided for the pastor until the newly  
 3 acquired parsonage is ready, and any additional costs for storage or an additional move shall be  
 4 the responsibility of the local church.

5 **GUIDELINES FOR SETTING THE LEVEL OF HOUSING ALLOWANCES**

6 It is recommended that a guideline be established for determining housing allowance amounts, which  
 7 includes at least the following two components:

8 1. **Monthly** rental amount equal to the average monthly rental of a property meeting the parsonage  
 9 standards in the agreed locale, as determined by an independent realtor appraisal. (Validation of  
 10 this number would be by comparison to 1 percent of the property valuation; the housing  
 11 allowance should not exceed this figure.)

12 2. **Utilities** amount based on historical data of the past three years for the parsonage being replaced  
 13 by the housing allowance, with consideration for inflation.

14 (Encourage individuals to seek out the most competitive rates; for example, for telephone usage).

15 The reasonable housing allowance numbers would be determined through consultation of the trustee  
 16 liaison and the appropriate parsonage committee. Facts from independent realtors or appraisers  
 17 should be obtained, at least for the base year.

18  
 19 Michigan Conference Design Team  
 Glenn Wagner and Marsha Woolley, Co-Chairs

20 **ITEM #11**

21 SUBJECT: **Covenant of Clergy Sexual Ethics & Guidelines for Our Life Together.**

22 **Covenant of Clergy Sexual Ethics**

23 A POLICY OF THE MICHIGAN CONFERENCE  
 24 OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

25 **Preamble**

26 This policy states expected standards of behavior and defines inappropriate sexual conduct by clergy  
 27 so that we maintain healthy relationships of integrity and safety for the sake of our common ministry  
 28 to the people of God in the name of Jesus Christ. It also provides guidance so that when incidents of  
 29 sexual misconduct, sexual abuse, or sexual harassment are alleged, the complainant and the  
 30 respondent may experience grace, justice, and reconciliation. Grace extends unconditional love while  
 31 holding us accountable to the consequences of inappropriate behavior.

32 **Statement of Covenant**