

## **Guidelines for Pastor and Congregation Review**

### **Western District Conference Leadership Commission**

The purpose of this document is to offer updated guidance and resources to Western District Conference pastors and congregations in the process of reviewing and evaluating their ministries. We recommend use of the resources developed by Mennonite Church USA available at [www.mennoniteusa.org](http://www.mennoniteusa.org): go to Executive Leadership Ministries, and click on Congregational and Ministerial Leadership. Under “Resources” click on “Ministerial Leadership” and then click on “Pastor and Congregation Evaluation Packet.”

Western District Conference offers additional resources in the review process:

- Conference Minister guidance and counsel
- WDC consultants to assist in the review process
- Designated WDC endowed funds available to WDC congregations to assist in the review process when using a consultant

In support of its pastors and congregations, Western District Conference has a number of persons who are trained and experienced in helping congregations through a variety of situations: pastoral and congregational reviews, strengthening congregational life, processing specific issues or conflict situations. Western District Conference has an endowment fund specifically for use in consultation work. Those funds are available upon recommendation of the Conference Minister and the Leadership Commission’s approval. In turn, congregations are asked, if possible, to repay the fund at the rate of fifty percent.

The cost of a WDC consultant is as follows:

- \$100 per 8 hour day, pro-rated by the hour
  - A WDC consultant’s time will often include travel, meetings, preparation, writing, phone and email time.
- Reimbursement of travel at .345 per mile
- Reimbursement of other costs when necessary – meals, paper, supplies, etc.
- The total cost of a consultant for a pastor/congregation review - depending upon various factors such as size, which format is being used, whether both pastor and congregation are being reviewed - ranges from approximately \$400-\$800, of which the congregation is requested to pay one-half. All congregations are served regardless of the ability to pay.

Consultants are expected to keep track of their time and expenses and submit a written report to the WDC Conference Minister for payment and reimbursement. WDC will, in turn, request the fifty percent payment from the congregation. We are blessed to have these resources for our pastors and congregations.

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 processed.
- Identify the group or committee responsible for the review. Will they do the review or appoint a special committee?
- Identify the WDC Consultant who will work with the review committee. The consultant initiates contact with the review committee chairperson.
- The first meeting of the review committee includes the WDC consultant and pastor(s).
- Does the pastor affirm the review process?
- Does the congregation affirm the review process?
- Identify the goals of the review. Is this a brief annual pastor review or a major review of pastor and congregation? Are we simply gathering information for the congregation or is it important that the congregation learns and practices a community building process such as group interviews.
- Gather appropriate documents.
- Develop a timeline for the review process.
- Include everyone in the congregation or only a sampling of the congregation?
- Develop review documents (questionnaire, survey, etc.).
- Distribute surveys or initiate the interview process with clear instructions about why the review is being done, confidentiality, deadlines, who is included, and who to contact if there are questions.
- Compile survey or interview information.
- The WDC consultant prepares a report and shares the report with review committee and pastor(s) before it is made available to the congregation. The consultant reports to the congregation.
- Follow-up recommendations and actions are clarified.
- A copy of the review is given to the conference office for inclusion in the pastor's record and in the congregation's record.
- WDC reimburses consultant based on submitted expenses.
- WDC requests congregation's reimbursement to endowment fund.