



First Congregational United Church of Christ

PASTOR-PARISH RELATIONS TEAM

August 2024

Vision

A Pastor-Parish Relations Team (PPRT) supports and maintains an open relationship between the pastor and members of the congregation. It helps the pastor and church members share ideas, hopes, dreams, and interpretations of mission. It monitors the quality of the relationship between the pastor and the congregation. It lets the pastor know what the church community may be thinking or feeling collectively. It gives a framework to deal creatively with conflict.

How the PPRT Can Best Do Its Work

- Meet regularly, perhaps quarterly, always with the pastor present. Be ready to meet “on-call” when the pastor feels a need to talk, or when the team feels there are urgent concerns to be discussed.
- **Always act within an atmosphere of confidentiality.**
- Provide the opportunity for the pastor to reflect in confidence about personal concerns, hopes, ambitions, and frustrations. Be alert to the pastor’s concerns between meetings.
- **Be clear that this team is not a personnel committee.** The personnel committee and the PPRT should not have members in common, for their tasks are different. A personnel committee oversees and evaluates the effectiveness of the pastor’s work and determines the pastor’s financial compensation.
- Remind the congregation regularly of the team’s existence and function.

Tasks / Responsibilities

1. Seek to understand the pastor's perspective, hopes, and needs.
 - a. Demonstrate concern and support for the pastor's family life, personal life, spiritual life, health, financial condition, and general well-being.
 - b. Support the pastor's ministry beyond the local church, in the community and denomination.
 - c. Encourage the pastor to develop and participate in programs of continuing education that will enhance the pastor's ministry.
 - d. Encourage the pastor in developing sabbatical plans.
 - e. Advocate, as necessary, for changes in the pastor's compensation package.
 - f. Plan celebrations of personal and professional milestones.
2. Convey to the pastor their understanding of the congregation's life.
 - a. Work for improved communication, interpretation, and understanding between the congregation and the pastor.
 - b. Identify areas of potential conflict between the pastor's ministry and that of the congregation. Assist in developing alternative solutions and pathways to avoid conflict.
 - c. Encourage any member of the congregation who shares a concern to communicate openly and honestly with the pastor. If the member indicates reluctance to do so, offer to accompany the person. Agreeing to be a "go-between" is not a desirable first response. Issues are best resolved by direct, compassionate, supportive communication.
3. Assist the pastor and the congregation in a periodic review of their mutual ministry.
 - a. Help the congregation understand and value its own tasks.
 - b. Clarify the pastor's position description, mutual expectations of pastor and congregation, and what has priority in the ministry.

How members of this team should be chosen:

People with the following characteristics would be good on the team:

Attuned to the congregation, available to listen, ready to hear

Visible in the life of the church

Supportive of the pastor

Mature in their faith

Able to see many sides of an issue

Not afraid of conflict

Not conflict-makers

Trustworthy

Able to maintain confidentiality

It is customary for members of the Search Team that called the pastor to serve as the PPRT for the first year or so, with two members being replaced annually thereafter. A team of 5-7 members is a workable size, or smaller as appropriate to the specific church.

This team should not include members who are hostile to the pastor. Therefore, it is important that the Church bylaws not include provisions stipulating that particular officers or roles serve on the team. The pastor and the FCUCC Board shall select members of the PPRT, in consultation with a trusted advisor or advisors.