

Annual Evaluation for Clergy

Virginia Conference, The United Methodist Church

From the 2020/2024 Book of Discipline, The United Methodist Church

¶ 350 Evaluation—*Evaluation is a continuous process for formation in servant ministry and servant leadership that must take place in a spirit of understanding and acceptance. Evaluation serves as a process for pastors to assess their effectiveness in ministry and to discern God’s call to continue in ordained ministry.*

1. *For clergy serving local churches, the district superintendent, in consultation with the pastor-parish relations committee, will evaluate annually the pastors’ effectiveness for ministry (¶334.2c, 419, 634.2o, r), using criteria, processes, and training developed by the cabinet and the Board of Ordained Ministry. **The clergy in local churches shall participate annually in an evaluation with the committee on pastor-parish relations for use in an ongoing effective ministry and for identifying continuing education needs and plans (¶258.2g[5])** [emphasis added], using criteria, processes, and training developed by the Board of Ordained Ministry and the cabinet.*

The Virginia Conference Cabinet and Board of Ordained Ministry have designed the following annual evaluation process to be used for all clergy appointed to local churches. The goals of this “formative evaluation” process are an enhanced ministry-relationship between the pastor(s) and the congregation and fostering effective pastoral ministry through celebrating pastoral strengths while developing a specific action plan for pastoral growth. Regardless of the pastor’s appointment projection for the coming year, this evaluation process is relevant to their call and effective pastoral ministry in any setting.

This evaluation should be conducted between March and May. The Evaluation and Action Report is **due to the district office by June 1, annually**. A reminder email will be sent from the district office by March 15. Information can be found on the conference website at www.vaumc.org/SPPRCResources, under Section 5: Annual Evaluation.

This evaluation process can be followed for all staff with some modification in consideration of their role and employment.

Resources to use in the annual evaluation

- *Characteristics of Effective Clergy* (www.vaumc.org/SPPRCResources)
- *Responsibilities and Duties of Elders and Licensed Pastors* (2020/2024 Book of Discipline, ¶340)
- Job Descriptions for Appointed Deacons, Associate Pastors, or lay staff employees
- Congregational Goals, Vision, and Mission
- Congregation Report from “Equipping Vital Congregations” website

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Steps for an Effective Evaluation

These steps should be performed by members of the S/PPRC and by the clergy or staff member

- Prepare by reviewing ahead of time the applicable resources listed on the previous page and evaluation materials from the conference website.
- Review and interpret your church's trends/fruitfulness by reviewing Unity data.
- Begin and end the meeting with prayer or centering worship.
- Clarify boundaries and remind participants of the need for confidentiality.
- Communicate clearly, use specific examples, and listen carefully.
- Allow adequate time for honest feedback.
- S/PPRC Chair and clergy person or staff work together to complete the Evaluation and Action Plan.

Suggested Questions for Collaborative Conversation

- Using the "Characteristics of Effective Clergy" resource, which three to five of these characteristics do you believe are strengths for this clergy person/you?
- What examples can you offer which highlight these strengths in action?
- Which three to five of these characteristics do you believe are areas where the clergy person/you could grow or develop further?
- What actions could the clergy person/you undertake which might strengthen them/you in these areas?
- Reflecting on the action plan from the third question of last year's Evaluation and Action Plan, were these actions undertaken? If not, why not and what would support the clergy person in being more successful in the coming year? If so, what was gained from the experience?

During the evaluation, review on the answers to these or similar questions. Where did answers align or diverge? At the conclusion of the evaluation, the chair and clergy person will jointly complete and sign the Evaluation and Action Plan.

The Evaluation and Action Plan, along with the *statistical history of your congregation* from the Unity website, is to be completed for each appointed clergy person and submitted to the District Superintendent by June 1, annually.

