

WHAT SHOULD CLERGY DO WHEN A LAWSUIT IS FILED?

Mary K. Logan, (former) General Counsel for the UMC, offers this advice:

- 1) When papers arrive, don't sign anything other than a messenger's receipt.
- 2) Keep the envelope or wrappers.
- 3) Note the date and time of the delivery.
- 4) Call your insurance broker or agent and send him/her copies of the material with dated cover letter to ask if your liability insurance will cover this situation and, if so, how soon an attorney will be appointed.
- 5) Determine if your church has a policy for handling suits.
- 6) Deliver copies to appropriate church leaders such as the PPRC chair, administrative board/council chair, and treasurer.
- 7) Inform the superintendent, bishop, and/or conference chancellor as appropriate.
- 8) Call Jim Allen, at 847-425-6531, if the UMC is named.
- 9) Meet with an attorney.
- 10) Prepare for media interest.
- 11) Name an "up front" person to handle inquiries and to assist counsel.
- 12) Maintain a file of all documents.
- 13) Ask your attorney about what to tell your congregation.
- 14) Don't contact the plaintiff, his/her attorney, or the judge for any reason.

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