



**North Carolina Conference of  
the United Methodist Church**

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## Identifying and Sustaining Effective Clergy Leadership



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## The Bishop's Taskforce on Clergy Effectiveness

The Bishop's Taskforce on Clergy Effectiveness began its work in early 2005. Composed of five members each of the Cabinet, the Conference Board of Laity, and the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, the Taskforce was charged with identifying and studying characteristics of effective — and ineffective — pastoral leadership.

The work of the Taskforce was rooted in the vision of the North Carolina Annual Conference —

*Healthy congregations and effective leaders in every place making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.*

The Taskforce consulted numerous resources in carrying out its work, including annual conferences with experience in addressing effectiveness, the NC Conference Connectional Table, and the NC Conference Leadership Academy.

The Taskforce identified and focused on three areas of need:

1. Entrance to ministry. Individuals entering ministry in the NC Annual Conference should understand and be shaped by the importance of effectiveness. The task of district committees on ordained ministry must be to embrace characteristics of effectiveness and to discern their presence in individuals coming before the committee.
2. Intervention and support. For clergy showing early signs of difficulty in ministry, resources and support must be made available.
3. Departure from ministry. Clergy unable or unwilling to perform the responsibilities of ministry should receive help in determining an appropriate leave from church leadership.

## Primary Characteristics of Effective Clergy Leader

An effective clergy leader in the North Carolina Conference is *centered in Christ* and demonstrates strengths in *pastoring, proclaiming, and leading*. Characteristics of Christ-centeredness, pastoring, proclaiming and leading are identified below.

### CENTERED IN CHRIST

- Faith in and commitment to Christ
- Practice of spiritual disciplines
- Evidence of fruit of the Spirit
- Commitment to highest ideals of living the Christian

### PASTORING

- Ministry skills
  - Responsiveness
  - Counseling
  - Confidentiality
  - Nurturing
- Teach and model spiritual disciplines
- Compassion
- Integrity
- Authenticity
- Personal humility
  - Openness
  - Approachability
- Passion for winning people to Christ
- Passion for ministry

### PROCLAIMING

- Preaching
- Teaching
- Communication
- Leading worship

### LEADING

- Vision-casting
- Commitment to excellence
- Teachable
- Responsible
- Time management skills
- Management & administrative skills
  - Group dynamics
  - Delegation
- Organization skills
- Partner with laity to make and nurture disciples of Jesus Christ
- Commitment to the denomination in the Wesleyan tradition, including itineration

## Definitions of Characteristics of Effectiveness

### CENTERED IN CHRIST

- Faith in and commitment to Christ: A clear devotion to Christ and Christ's teachings in all circumstances.
- Practice of spiritual disciplines: Regular intentional practice of the disciplines for deepening of the spiritual life.
- Evidence of fruit of the Spirit: Outward expression of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
- Commitment to highest ideals of living the Christian life.

### PASTORING

- Ministry skills
  - Responsiveness: React readily to suggestions, influences, efforts and feelings.
  - Counseling: Listen to another and provide Christian guidance.
  - Confidentiality: Hold in trust sensitive or confidential information.
  - Nurturing: Cultivate and encourage others in the Christian faith.
- Model and teach spiritual disciplines: Encourage others in the practice of the disciplines through witness and education.
- Compassion: Deep awareness of suffering of others. Desire to relieve suffering.
- Integrity: Steadfast adherence to Christian morals and ethics.
- Authenticity: Trustworthy and genuine in relationships and interactions.
- Personal humility: Emphasis on others rather than focus on self. Modesty.
  - Openness: Desire to listen, consider, and/or act.
  - Approachability: Accessible, available, and approachable.
- Passion for ministry — Focus on current place, time and people: Enthusiasm for work of the Kingdom in place appointed.
- Passion for winning people to Christ.

## Definitions, continued

### PROCLAIMING

- Preaching: Knowledgeable, articulate, and inspirational in sermon delivery.
- Teaching: Ability and desire to lead, instruct and guide parishioners.
- Communication: Listen and respond to desires and needs of congregation; speak with clarity.
- Leading worship: Comfortable and skilled in leading worship.

### LEADING

- Vision-casting: Discern and communicate the authentic call of Christ.
- Commitment to excellence: Delivery of outstanding work and materials.
- Teachable: Responsive to feedback, correctable.
- Responsible: Personally accountable for outcomes and results.
- Organization skills: Develops and maintains order and structure personally and corporately.
- Time management skills: Plan, prioritize, and accomplish tasks in timely manner.
- Management & administrative skills
  - Group dynamics: Facilitate and organize groups in discussion, planning and action.
  - Delegation: Teach and entrust others to accomplish tasks.
- Partner with laity to make and nurture disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Commitment to the denomination in the Wesleyan tradition, including itineration.

## Recognizing Ineffectiveness

It is common—and wise—for individuals to recognize the need for professional development and skill building. Clergy are encouraged to increase their effectiveness through continuing education and seminars.

A good “fit” between a pastor and the parish depends on many factors. However, ineffective clergy may exhibit one or more of the following characteristics:

- An unwillingness to focus on the work of the parish.
- Poor relationship-building skills.
- Indolence or laziness.
- The inability or unwillingness to meet the pastoral care, worship, or leadership needs of the parish.
- The lack of personal responsibility.
- A service record characterized by frequent moves, for example, consecutive appointments lasting one or two years.
- Poor evaluations from the local church Pastor/Staff-Parish Relations Committee.
- Poor reports and feedback by the district superintendent.
- A pattern of unsuccessful ministry in local churches before and after “effective” pastors.

## Policy Statement

The Bishop’s Taskforce on Clergy Effectiveness, in partnership with the Cabinet and Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, has identified the following procedure to address ineffectiveness:

Clergy deemed ineffective will begin a process of intervention and support. Areas of needed improvement will be identified, resources to address weaknesses will be recommended, and a plan for improving ministry skills will be devised.

The clergy under review will receive and acknowledge the policy on Identifying and Sustaining Effective Clergy Leadership. He or she will be advised that failure to make improvement in areas of concern may lead to administrative action.

Consultations and reviews will be scheduled with the clergy at appropriate intervals. All reviews and progress will be detailed and placed in the clergy’s file.

Rather than complete a plan for improvement, the clergy may voluntarily consider leave options as provided for in *The Book of Discipline*.

If substantial progress on the improvement plan is not made, the Cabinet will initiate appropriate action in keeping with *The Book of Discipline*.

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Mission of the NC Conference



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