

ANNUAL CONFERENCE
PETITION TO THE 2006 ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE

TITLE: MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CLERGY PARSONAGES / HOUSING

ACTION TO BE VOTED ON:

1 Adoption of the following Minimum Standards for Clergy Parsonages/Housing, and the printing
2 of these standards in the 2006 Conference Journal and at appropriate quadrennial intervals.

3

4 **I. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CLERGY PARSONAGES/HOUSING**

5 A very important part of the clergy compensation package is that of housing. The Commission on
6 Equitable Compensation recommends that every charge provide either a parsonage that meets the
7 following minimum requirements, or a housing allowance that will enable the rental or purchase
8 of a suitable equivalent, for full-time and part-time clergy staff, unless a special exception is
9 negotiated with the local church and conference by the District Superintendent.

10 A. Responsibility for clergy housing

11 1. Ultimate responsibility for clergy housing lies with the Church Council. (See
12 paragraphs 252.4.e, 2004 Discipline.)

13 2. The church council may delegate administrative responsibility for clergy housing
14 to the committee on pastor-parish relations (staff-parish relations) or a pastoral
15 advisory committee. (See paragraph 259.2.16, 2004 Discipline.)

16 3. If a housing allowance is provided, it should be reviewed annually by the
17 Pastor-Parish Committee and provision made for an adequate allowance equal to a
18 fair rental value for providing suitable housing and utilities in a specific
19 geographical area.

20 4. If a Parsonage Committee is established, membership may be appointed by the
21 church council or be nominated by the Committee on Lay Leadership and elected
22 by the charge conference. Rotation of members is advised.

23 5. If a Parsonage Committee is established, it is recommended that its membership
24 be:

- 25 • one trustee (selected by the Board of Trustees)
- 26 • one member from the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee
- 27 • three members at large
- 28 • the pastor's spouse
- 29 • the Pastor

30 Where there is more than one church on a charge, then the members at
31 large and the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and Trustees
32 representation should reflect members from each of the churches.

33 6. The Parsonage Committee should meet at least twice a year and shall report to the
34 charge conference on the forms provided by the annual conference.

- 35 7. Responsibilities of the Parsonage Committee shall include:
36 a. Cooperate with the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee in sensitizing the
37 congregation to the fact that the parsonage is a part of the clergy
38 compensation and should be considered as the private home of the
39 parsonage family.
40 b. Follow the Parsonage Maintenance guidelines for a yearly checklist. (See
41 II A)
42 c. Follow the Parsonage Maintenance guidelines “When There Is A Change
43 in Pastors” (See II B)
44 d. Assure that all budget requests pertaining to the parsonage are submitted
45 to the Finance Committee for recommendation to the church council.
46 In the absence of a Parsonage Committee, the duties and functions
47 described in the “Clergy Housing Policies and Standards” guidelines shall
48 belong to the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee.

49 B. Minimum Parsonage/Housing Standards

50 If a parsonage is provided, it should be an adequate, comfortable and structurally sound
51 home for the pastor and family built according to local building codes.

- 52 1. Recommendations Relating to Parsonage Planning/Size of Rooms/Furnishings
53 a. Location-Item to be considered:
54 1) Is, or will the location be conducive to good living on the
55 part of the parsonage family and equivalent to the average family
56 home of the area?
57 2) Is, or will the location be in convenient relationship to shopping
58 areas, schools, recreation and in an area conducive to property
59 value appreciation?
60 3) Location should not be such as to conceivably be a hindrance to
61 future growth of the church plant and should be convenient to the
62 ministry community which the church serves.
63 4) While some parsonages are located next door to the church, the
64 goal of the church should be to insure the privacy of the parsonage
65 family. If there is to be a change in the parsonage location, it ought
66 not be next to the church.
67 b. The Office of Architecture of the Board of Global Ministries, 475
68 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115 has recommended parsonage
69 planning guides.
70 c. House/Parsonage Arrangement
71 1) Bedrooms:
72 There should be a minimum of three bedrooms each of adequate
73 size and allowing for privacy.
74 2) Closets:
75 Adequate closet space should be provided.

PETITION AC 25
PAGE 3 OF 9

- 76 3) Bathrooms:
77 One and three fourths bathrooms are considered essential.
78 4) Study:
79 a) A pastor’s study, (in addition to the three bedrooms) is
80 desirable. The pastor’s study in the parsonage is not to be
81 utilized for counseling, nor is it to take the place of an
82 office in the church or in some other facility outside the
83 parsonage.
84 b) It is desirable that the study be located so that it can be
85 protected from family and kitchen noises.
86 5) Kitchen and laundry space:
87 a) There should be adequate kitchen and laundry space.
88 b) There should be adequate electrical outlets.
89 6) Living area:
90 a) The parsonage is to be considered as home for the pastor
91 and his or her family. A living room should be large enough
92 so that entertaining or dining is possible.
93 b) Where possible, there should be an area where the family
94 can “be at ease” whether it is a kitchen-family room, a den,
95 or a recreation room.
96 7) Closets and storage: Considering the fact that pastors acquire
97 equipment and personal possessions not always usable in the
98 present appointment and the possession of equipment not normally
99 found in the average home, the need of average or more than
100 average closet and storage space is recommended.
101 8) Heating and cooling: Adequate provision for these should be made
102 in relationship to the area and the climate. Adequate insulation and
103 storm windows should be installed where required for energy
104 conservation.
105 9) Home grounds:
106 a) All permanent planting should be the responsibility of the
107 church and planned by a landscape architect whenever
108 possible.
109 b) Landscaping and exterior care of the parsonage should be
110 such as to be a credit to the church in the community
111 (Section II A #8 & 9)
112 c) An outdoor patio area and recreational space are useful
113 additions.
114 10) Miscellaneous:
115 a) Adequate shelter sufficient to house two cars should be
116 provided. Minimum requirement is a garage suitable to
117 house one car.

160 reasonable cleanliness and repair avoiding the necessity of extensive cleaning or
161 repair upon the change of pastors.
162

- 163 2. When a pastor moves out of a parsonage, the Board of Trustees, upon
164 recommendation of the chairperson of the S/PPR, may elect to withhold the
165 pastor's final check, for a period not to exceed 10 days, and deduct from that
166 paycheck (1) the cost of necessary repairs and replacement for any breakage or
167 damage which exceeds normal wear and tear or (2) the cost of cleaning, if the
168 parsonage is not left "broom clean" and ready for the next occupant. The amount
169 of the paycheck exceeding those costs shall be sent to the pastor within 10 days of
170 his/her last day of appointment to the church. At the same time, the church shall
171 provide to the pastor and the pastor's district superintendent, a detailed accounting
172 of the use of the funds. In the event there is a dispute between the pastor and the
173 church concerning the amount needed for repairs, breakage, or cleaning, the
174 district superintendent or a third party, agreed upon by both the church and the
175 pastor, shall mediate the dispute. The decision of the district superintendent or the
176 mediator shall be final.

177 D. Options:

178 While we advocate these parsonage guidelines as outlined above, we recognize
179 the need for options in specific situations as mutually agreed upon by the pastor
180 and the Parsonage Committee, in consultation with the district superintendent.
181

182 **II. PARSONAGE MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES**

183 A. Yearly Check-List for the Parsonage Committee

- 184 1. Cooperate with the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee in the annual review of the
185 parsonage: "The chairperson of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, the
186 chairperson of trustees, and pastor shall make an annual review of the
187 church-owned parsonage to assure proper maintenance." 2004 Discipline,
188 paragraph 2532.4.
189
- 190 2. The parsonage committee should indicate replacing furniture, appliances, curtains,
191 carpets, etc., when they can see it is needed rather than the family having to ask.
192 However, the family should ask if this is not done. When things are to be
193 replaced, the parsonage family should make selections in consultation with the
194 Parsonage Committee. Furnishings should have a budget line. An inventory of the
195 parsonage with annotated condition of things should be done yearly.
- 196 3. An inventory of furniture and appliances with original cost and expected life-span
197 should be maintained. An item in the church budget should provide funds each
198 year on an accumulating basis to replace items as they are worn out.
- 199 4. Emergency maintenance and repairs: An emergency fund (suggested minimum of
200 \$100) should be available as an amount that could be spent without consultation
201 with the committee in order to allow the parsonage family to deal with emergency

- 202 repairs.
- 203 5. The exterior of the house should be inspected to see that it is properly maintained
- 204 (paint, roof, etc.) in order to avoid costly repairs. Exterior painting, repairs, and
- 205 roof maintenance should be the responsibility of the church.
- 206 6. The parsonage should have a periodic termite and pest control inspection.
- 207 Corrective measures should then be taken.
- 208 7. The church should have the heating and cooling systems checked seasonally.
- 209 8. Major renovation, repair, and replacements should be done by the church as they
- 210 are needed, taking into consideration the church's financial ability to do these
- 211 things. (The pastor, not the church, shall be responsible for correcting extreme or
- 212 unusual damage. beyond normal wear and tear to the parsonage and furnishings.)
- 213 Changes in interior decoration should be done with the mutual consent of the
- 214 church and the family.
- 215 9. It is recommended either that basic lawn maintenance (including mowing, edging,
- 216 fertilizing, and sprinkler system) be taken care of or paid by the church or that the
- 217 church provide, maintain, and repair a power lawn mower and other tools required
- 218 to maintain the grounds with ease.
- 219 10. For the safety of the parsonage, property and the parsonage family, the church
- 220 should carefully evaluate the overall security of the building and grounds.
- 221 Attention should be given to screens, window and door locks, gates, and alarm
- 222 systems. This should also include fire prevention measures such as smoke alarms,
- 223 fire extinguishers, escape ladders and a fire escape plan. When possible, an annual
- 224 inspection should be made by the fire department and utility companies.
- 225 B. When There Is a Change in Pastor
- 226 1. The parsonage should be thoroughly cleaned when there is a change in pastor. The
- 227 exterior of the parsonage and the grounds should be clean and present a good
- 228 appearance. Walls, carpets, draperies, and floors should be clean and in good
- 229 repair. Refrigerator, cook-top, oven, disposal, dishwasher, washer, dryer, air
- 230 conditioner, heater, water heater (50 gallon minimum), smoke alarms, fire
- 231 extinguishers, TV antenna or cable, garden hoses, ladder, and trash cans where
- 232 needed (minimum of four 30 gallon cans with covers) should all be in proper
- 233 order. A thorough inspection of plumbing and electrical placements is also
- 234 recommended. If requested by the new pastor, locks should be changed and new
- 235 keys issued. A termite and pest control inspection is recommended, as well as
- 236 necessary corrective treatment. The church has final responsibility to see that
- 237 these things are adequately accomplished.
- 238 2. The following suggestions are for creating a "Guide" to be completed by the
- 239 Parsonage Committee and given to the parsonage family when it moves into its
- 240 new home.

PETITION AC 25
PAGE 7 OF 9

- 241 a. An up-to-date inventory of all parsonage furnishings including, if possible,
242 the date purchased, cost, present condition, and a projected replacement
243 time. See II A 3.
- 244 b. For each appliance:
- 245 1) Operating instructions or manuals, etc.
- 246 2) Repair instructions
- 247 • service personnel to call
- 248 • which, if any, parsonage committee member to call
- 249 • service calls and repairs of major appliances owned by the
250 church should be paid for by the church
- 251 c. Where to find:
- 252 1) Turn-off valve for gas
- 253 2) Turn-off valves for outside and inside water
- 254 3) Meters
- 255 4) Fuse or switch boxes, circuit-breakers, and main-switch - all
256 properly labeled
- 257 5) Size and change intervals for heating and cooling filters
- 258 Various permanent plants which are seasonal
- 259 Any unusual appliances, equipment, or household peculiarities
260 (such as hidden attic door)
- 261 6) Sprinkler systems
- 262 7) Sewer clean outs
- 263 d. Numbers to call in emergencies: Police, Fire, Ambulance, Insurance
264 Company, etc.
- 265 e. Basic information for cleaning carpets and draperies. The local church is
266 to establish the desired policy. For example: The church is responsible for
267 a once-a-year cleaning to be determined by committee upon
268 recommendation from the parsonage family. It may be simpler for a policy
269 to be established that carpets and drapes be cleaned annually without the
270 recommendation of the family but with the committee selecting the
271 cleaning company and the church paying the bill.
- 272 f. It may be helpful, upon the arrival of a new parsonage family, for a
273 member of the committee to conduct a tour of the parsonage, and point out
274 that the committee is aware of certain needs (furniture that is wearing out,
275 painting that is needed, etc.) and also point out the good maintenance that
276 has been done in the past. This conveys to the parsonage family that the
277 church is proud of their home and wants them comfortable, but might also
278 convey that the church expects something from the parsonage family in

279 maintaining the parsonage. The parsonage family should also be reminded
280 to treat the parsonage as if it were their own home.
281 g. When it is possible, the parsonage should be open for visitation by the
282 newly appointed clergy family prior to the effective date of appointment. If
283 this is not possible, pictures of the parsonage (outside and inside) could be
284 taken when a change is expected, and those pictures might be taken or sent
285 to the new family ahead of moving time, providing added rapport between
286 the church and the new parsonage family

287 C.. Energy conservation

- 288 1. The church and parsonage family should make every effort possible to conserve
289 energy. This should include:
- 290 a. Inviting utility companies (gas, electric, and water) to inspect, provide an
291 energy audit, and make recommendations
 - 292 b. More efficient lighting
 - 293 c. Insulation in attic and walls
 - 294 d. Weather-stripping
 - 295 e. Investigating possible use of solar energy or other energy-saving devices.
 - 296 f. Water-saving devices.
- 297

298 **III. PARSONAGE UTILITIES**

- 299 A. The local church shall provide utilities: water, electricity, gas and basic telephone (not
300 including personal toll calls), sewage fee, trash and garbage collection, internet and cable
301 and/or antenna where required for TV reception.
- 302 B. Those congregations with church-owned rented homes should take into account the actual
303 cost of the above-mentioned utilities when providing a housing allowance.
- 304 C. Parsonage families should be conscious of the high cost of utilities, and should practice
305 cost and energy-saving measures at all times. This should include regular self monitoring,
306 analysis, and comparing against previous usage.
- 307

308 **IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARSONAGE INSURANCE**

- 309 A. Insurance on real and personal property is the responsibility of the owner of that property
310 and should be provided with adequate liability coverage.
- 311 B. Insurance should be reviewed annually and when there is a change of pastor(s).
- 312 C. It is recommended that a renter's Insurance Policy be obtained by the parsonage family
313 residing in the parsonage to insure the parsonage family's personal property, including
314 clergy library.
- 315

316 **V. REVIEW OR REVISION OF STANDARDS**

317 These standards are to be reviewed and/or revised by the Equitable Compensation
318 Commission on a quadrennial basis after publication of the most recent Book of
319 Discipline.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2006

TERMINATION DATE: July 1, 2009

ORIGINATOR OF THE PETITION:

Commission on Equitable Compensation

PERSON TO PRESENT PETITION TO CONFERENCE:

Name: Tom Barlow

Address: Good Shepherd UMC, 1201 Leta Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80911-1195

Phone Number: (719) 392-5782

Fax Number: (719) 391-7512

E-Mail: tom@tombarlow.com

RATIONALE: Not debatable

320 This petition consists of the previous Minimum Standards for Clergy Parsonages/Housing with
321 the Discipline paragraphs numbers updated to the 2004 Discipline. The information concerning
322 the Office of Architecture of the General Board of Global Ministries (lines 67-69) was also
323 updated.