

# LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE REPORT MISSION SHAPED FUTURE MOUNTAIN SKY AREA

## The Why of Leadership Excellence

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*"To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." Ephesians 4:12*

*"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others." 2 Timothy 2:2*

### Why do we develop leaders within the Mountain Sky Conference?

We develop leaders within the Mountain Sky Conference in order to:

- Build up the body of Christ and further God's mission and ministry both inside and outside the church
- Encourage and nurture God's call in our lives
- Cultivate, strengthen, and utilize the spiritual gifts God has given us
- Make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world

### Priorities for Excellent Leadership Within the Mountain Sky Conference

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The following are priorities for excellent leadership within the Mountain Sky Conference. We believe that excellent clergy and lay leaders should strive to:

- Make new disciples and encourage lifelong discipleship growth for all people along every stage of faith
- Recognize and encourage the development of people's God-given gifts in ways that help them meaningfully share these gifts both inside and outside the church
- Equip others for ministry and offer opportunities for leadership development and leadership involvement to all people on a regular basis
- Look beyond the walls of the church to engage and partner with the community in ways that extend the transformative ministry of the church into the world
- View challenging circumstances as opportunities to engage in holy risk-taking and follow God's leading into an unknown future

### Strategies for Identifying, Cultivating and Deploying Leaders

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Identifying, cultivating and deploying lay and clergy leadership is critical to the ministry of the church. While there are formal processes by which leaders are trained and deployed, the initial process of identifying and cultivating both clergy and lay leadership begins within the local church. The following

are strategies for developing and strengthening the local church's ability to identify and cultivate new leaders:

- View leadership as an important aspect of discipleship from cradle to grave
  - Seek leaders of all ages and welcome leadership throughout each disciple's life-span
- Integrate leadership principles and a culture of call into ongoing ministries/practices
  - Use existing small groups, new member class, intentional discipleship programs, worship times, etc. to intentionally identify God's call, cultivate that call, and develop leadership skills within individuals
- Create a culture of ongoing growth and development
  - Encourage leaders to see their role as one that involves continued growth and learning, and provide regular opportunities for this
- Experiment with new ways of cultivating leadership
  - Some examples might be the creation of a leadership mentoring program, or self-nomination process for leaders, or transitioning the nominations committee into a leadership development team
- Utilize leadership programs and positions that already exist
  - Encourage leaders to take advantage of opportunities for leadership development both inside and outside the church
- Equip leaders with specific leadership tools and leadership models, such as the servant leadership model, in order to broaden their understanding of excellent leadership
  - See Appendix 1
- Follow up with those who express a call to ordained or licensed ministry and guide them through the process of following and discerning this specific call
  - See Appendix 2

## **Strategies for Supporting Leaders Within the Mountain Sky Conference**

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Creating excellent leadership within the Mountain Sky Conference will require local churches and the conference to work together to support and develop strong leaders within each local context. The following are ways in which the Mountain Sky Conference can help local churches in this work:

- Provide regular opportunities for high-quality leadership development and training that is accessible to a wide variety of people, including youth and young adults
- Learn from others who are doing cutting-edge leadership development and utilize these methods within the church
- Give support to both lay and clergy leaders, such as professional development, coaching, peer learning, circuit groups, etc. to ensure that they maintain and exceed standards for effectiveness
- Create space and opportunities for local churches to experiment and fail with new forms of ministry
- Be less focused on numerical measures of outcomes and invest more time in seeking stories of

growth and change

- Be willing to let go of administrative priorities that no longer contribute to the health of people and congregations

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## Next Steps

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As the Mountain Sky Conference continues the task of developing robust systems and supports for identifying, cultivating, and deploying excellent leaders, we have identified the following next steps:

- Develop the goals and objectives of the Mountain Sky Conference leadership development team and specific action steps to achieve
- Assess the current leadership development programs of the conference and develop a comprehensive Leadership Resource Program
- Develop the list of behaviors that represent the vision, mission, and values of the Mountain Sky Conference and competencies required for future leaders
- Create the *Culture of Call* grant in cooperation with the Board of Ordained Ministry and Board of Laity, which will be designed to provide churches, campus ministries, and United Methodist organizations in the Mountain Sky Conference with resources to fuel their imaginations in cultivating a *Culture of Call*
- Continue to be intentional about supporting the leadership development of laity, youth and young people, as well as campus and camping ministries
- Develop methods for assessment and evaluation of leaders that are adaptable to diverse contexts across the Mountain Sky Conference

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## Appendix 1

### ***Servant Leadership***

The servant leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The best test, and difficult to administer, is this: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived? (*Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*, R.K. Greenleaf, 1977/2002, p. 27)

Robert Greenleaf's (1977/2002) foundational work on servant leadership has been powerful in organizations and communities for multiple decades. As we intentionally seek a future of continued vitality and life-giving ministry within the Mountain Sky Conference, the tenets of servant leadership provide a strong foundation. Leadership excellence can be guided by meaningful practice of servant leadership. The following characteristics of servant leadership were outlined by Spears (2010) in

*Character and Servant Leadership: Ten Characteristics of Effective, Caring Leaders.* We advocate leadership based on these foundational characteristics:

**Listening**

Listening intently and compassionately. Hearing others and also being aware of one’s inner voice – listening and reflection are essential to the growth and well-being of leaders.

**Empathy**

The servant leader seeks to understand and empathize with others. The leader begins by assuming the good intentions of those with whom she or he interacts and recognizes the giftedness and unique spirit of every person.

**Healing**

Leaders who are open to the power of healing and transformation with all people and in all circumstances are life-giving.

**Awareness**

Self-awareness strengthens leadership. Awareness helps leaders view situations from a whole, integrated perspective.

**Persuasion**

A characteristic of servant leadership is persuasion and collaboration in decision-making rather than reliance on one’s positional authority. Servant leaders are effective and skilled in building consensus.

**Conceptualization**

Servant leaders are in the practice of growing their abilities to dream big. They prioritize thinking beyond day-to-day realities and imagine dynamic and vibrant future possibilities.

**Foresight**

The characteristic of foresight allows servant leaders to understand lessons from the past and present and apply them in decision-making for the future.

**Stewardship**

Stewardship is characterized by dedication to serving the needs of others. Servant leadership embodies an overarching commitment to the health and well-being of the people, organizations and communities.

**Commitment to the Growth of People**

The servant leader is committed to nurturing the growth and development of individuals within the organizations and communities they serve.

**Building Community**

Servant leaders are attentive to creating and building community in creative, life-giving ways.

***We recommend this model of leadership as a beneficial model to the work of the church***

***References***

Greenleaf, R. K. (1977/2002). *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.

Spears, L. C. (2010) *The Journal of Virtues & Leadership*. Vol. 1 issue.1, 2010, 25-30.

***Resources for Servant Leadership***

Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership

<https://www.greenleaf.org>

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Appendix 2

**Process towards Licensed or Ordained Ministry**

The process for developing excellent clergy leaders begins when a person first senses a call to servant leadership through licensed or ordained ministry. Points of access for pastoral formation, communicating Board of Ordained Ministry expectations, and discerning and assessing the authenticity of the person's call include:

- Discerning call with a clergyperson using the initial General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) materials
- Requesting District Superintendent's approval for admission to the candidacy process
- Discerning call with an assigned candidacy mentor using resources adopted by the Board of Ordained Ministry
- Seeking approval by Pastor-Staff Parish Relations Committee and by Charge (Church) Conference, or equivalent bodies
- Working through the GBHEM online candidacy process, including psychological assessment, medical examination, criminal background check and credit check
- Seeking approval by District Committee on Ministry for certification as a candidate

If the church confirms the call at each step along the way, pastoral formation for candidates includes increasing their readiness to serve and enhancing their potential for effectiveness.

For people in the Licensed Local Pastor track, moving toward excellence continues through:

- Completing Licensing School
- Completing an orientation to ministry
- Seeking annual approval by the District Committee on Ministry
- Completing Course of Study

For candidates pursuing ordination as a Deacon or Elder, moving toward excellence continues through:

- Completing a master’s degree (Master of Divinity for Elders)
- Completing an orientation to ministry
- Seeking provisional membership and commissioning
- Seeking full membership and ordination

### **Minimum Expectations for Effectiveness and Evaluation**

Excellence for clergy presumes minimum expectations for effectiveness, as expressed by the Board of Ordained Ministry. Structures for support and accountability for shaping clergy toward excellence include:

- Pastor-Staff Parish Relations Committee
- Clergy Circuit
- Order of Deacons, Order of Elders, and Fellowship of Local Pastors
- District Committee on Ministry, for people in the Licensed Local Pastor process and the Certified Lay Minister process
- Board of Ordained Ministry, for all people under assignment and appointment
- The Cabinet
- Clergy Mentors, for Licensed Local Pastors who have not completed Course of Study

For all clergy who are appointed or assigned, the annual Pastor-Staff Parish Clergy assessment process is one opportunity for evaluating effectiveness. Neither the appointment advisory process nor the pastoral compensation budgeting process is intended as an evaluation of effectiveness.

### **Eight-Year Assessment and Vocational Renewal**

A rapidly changing culture requires church leaders to be flexible, willing to adapt to changing needs of the communities in which they serve, and to continue to learn and develop new skills. This requires the church to provide support for leaders to explore – to allow space for listening and growth, and opportunities to renew their sense of call and for new callings God may place on their lives. The Eight-Year Assessment is an intentional opportunity for in-depth renewal for clergy who serve under appointment. Rather than an evaluation of effectiveness, this assessment process is designed to create “a grace-filled space” in which clergy can reflect on their ministry career over the last eight years and listen for God’s voice anew. A similar process can ideally be made available for laity who are engaged in long-term ministry leadership.