

2021 SPRC GOAL SETTING AND MINISTERIAL REVIEW

How on earth is anyone supposed to take stock of this past year?! And why would we want to? Better to just let it go, right? Not at all. Tough times are tempering times (Romans 5:3-5), and it behooves us to learn all we can from this year—about ourselves, our churches, our mission—while accepting the gift of grace in the process.

The Mountain Sky Conference is still revisiting the annual review process, with the goal of adopting a helpful and holistic assessment tool. This is, though, clearly not the year to introduce something new. For now, utilize this tool (revised from last year) to review the year in ministry with your pastor, and glean wisdom from the journey you've been on together. It is expected that you will take this review seriously, but don't lose sleep over it. Let it be a framework for constructive reflection.

This review intends for you to take the extraordinary nature of the past twelve months into account. In addition, your setting and appointed spiritual leader are unique to you and should be incorporated in your review: Elder, Deacon, LLP, or Lay Supply; senior or associate; large or small; urban or rural; single or multiple point; full or part time. The categories also tilt heavily toward pastoral ministry in a local church setting. If you are in a different setting, it is expected that you will interpret these categories as best fits your context. This instrument provides a guide. You know your situation and how you have managed the last twelve months.

There is space for both quantitative (1 to 5) and qualitative (written) feedback concerning the ministry of the church. Reflect on each of the nine categories for the pastor. Detailed descriptions are available in the appendix following this instrument if you would like further explanation or suggestions as to what a particular category is looking for. The SPRC's role involves more than critiquing the pastor, however. It is also vital to assess the congregation as a whole in its collaborative relationship with the pastor. You are asked to rate your congregation on five factors, paralleling the clergy factors somewhat, using the same scale. You're all in this together, after all.

S.M.A.R.T. goals allow us to highlight particular areas of attention for the coming year, then later to reflect on our effectiveness in achieving those goals. Basic instructions may be found in the appendix. If you are unfamiliar with this form of goalsetting, there are resources available to help you write them (contact your district office). Your pastor will set goals for themselves, and your SPRC will set goals for your team in light of the congregation's mission and ministry and your context. We set these goals based on the world we can see. As unsettled as that world is, it is still important to name some achievable targets, fully expecting to adapt as those targets may well move.

Please share this completed form with your pastor after they have completed their self-review. This is an opportunity for open discussion of how you, the congregation, and the pastor—together—are making disciples and transforming the world. Be sure and discuss your reviews of both the pastor and congregation. Together you can develop a plan of action to address areas of strength and growth as you emerge from the pandemic. May God bless this important work.

NOTE: It is suggested that the SPRC Chair and Pastor review progress toward both the pastor's and the SPRC team's goals at least quarterly.

Completed forms should be signed and turned in to the district office by June 4th, 2021.

Mile High Metro:	metro@mtnskyumc.org	Trinity:	trinity@mtnskyumc.org
Montana East:	montana@mtnskyumc.org	Utah/Western CO:	utahwco@mtnskyumc.org
Montana West:	montana@mtnskyumc.org	Wyoming:	wyoing@mtnskyumc.org
Peaks/Pikes Peak:	peaks@mtnskyumc.org		

Clergyperson's Signature _____ Date _____

SPRC Chairperson Signature _____ Date _____

I. MINISTERIAL RATING

Comment as appropriate and rate your pastor's ministry 1 to 5 or NA according to the following rating system. As you look at the scale, feel free to add "...given a worldwide pandemic, toxic political climate, and societal racial reckoning" (not to minimize any of these...but, wow, what a year!) to the description of each number:

- 5 Exceptional Performance, extremely effective and fruitful
- 4 Consistently Exceeds Expectations
- 3 Fully and Consistently Meets Expectations and goals
- 2 Improvement needed in some areas
- 1 Underperforming, well below Expectations
- NA Not applicable/Not known/Insufficient information to score *[If your pastor does not engage in a certain task because it falls under the responsibility of another person (for example, in a church with multiple pastors or staff or active laity), or if your pastor is part-time and not responsible for all these tasks, please write NA (Not Applicable) in the box by that task area.]*

Please use as much space as necessary to complete the comment sections.

1. Spiritual Formation & Personal Care

Rating []

Comments:

2. Preaching & Teaching

Rating []

Comments:

3. Leading the Congregation in Passionate Worship

Rating []

Comments:

4. Equipping Laity for and Participating in Missional Engagement

Rating []

Comments:

5. Equipping Laity for and Engaging in Radical Hospitality

Rating []

Comments:

6. Leading Laity in Intentional Discipleship and Extravagant Generosity

Rating []

Comments:

7. Leading the Congregation, Staff & Lay Leadership
Comments:

Rating []

8. Interpersonal Skills
Comments:

Rating []

9. Connectional Matters
Comments:

Rating []

II. CONGREGATIONAL RATING

1. Compassionate and Consistent Support and Advocacy for Pastor's Wellbeing
Comments:

Rating []

2. Collaboration with Pastor in Providing Opportunities for Passionate Worship
Comments:

Rating []

3. Participation in and Support of Ministry and Outreach Beyond the Church Walls
Comments:

Rating []

4. Extending Welcome and Hospitality Beyond the Church Doors
Comments:

Rating []

5. Intentional Deepening of Our Faith Journeys and Generosity in Financial Giving
Comments:

Rating []

III. COMPARE, CONTRAST, and COLLABORATE:

As you look to discuss this review with your pastor, where do you find their strengths and areas of growth to fit, or not, the congregation's strengths, needs, and desires?

How can your SPRC team and the leadership of the church work together to ensure fruitful collaboration and distribution of accountability between the congregation and pastor in carrying out your joint mission and ministry?

IV. S.M.A.R.T. GOAL SETTING

List at least three S.M.A.R.T.—specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely (tied to a deadline)—goals your SPRC team would like to achieve, with the help and/or support of your pastor, in the months and/or year ahead:

1.

2.

3.

APPENDIX

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT AS YOU PREPARE FOR THIS REVIEW...

Pastors and congregations can sometimes be good at judging one another; blaming each other for shortcomings. An annual review tends to surface our critical side, rather than our aspirational side. What if we were to go into this review assuming the best of one another? What if we assume everyone, clergy and laity alike, has done the best we could with what we had to work with? This review should be an invitation to assess the whole of ministry—in a particular place, over a particular time, by a particular faith community, in collaboration with a particular spiritual leader—with an emphasis on the growth and next steps of all involved.

There is an acronym you and your SPRC may want to consider as you engage with the review process: **C.O.A.L.** Coined by Dr. Daniel Siegel in his work on mindfulness, it might be a useful tool for you and your SPRC team. Especially in a year like we've just come through, mindfulness may help us to foster resilience, as well as compassion with and for one another. This tool works for both personal and interpersonal reflection.

Curious—Enter this process with a seeking, rather than judgmental, spirit. As you look at the nine categories, draw on the Five Ws—Who? What? When? Where? Why? as well as How?. Examples of questions you might ask: Who sticks out, and for what reasons? What significant events occurred, and in what contexts? When was God particularly present, or seemingly absent? Where was grace practiced, or rejected, or forgotten? Why did we do this particular thing, or not do this other thing? How might we have approached this particular situation more faithfully? The point is to ask the right questions before rushing to answers.

Open—It is easy to approach this review with an agenda, or laundry lists of affirmations and complaints. How would it look if we were more receptive to the experiences of others and not just our own? We often speak of walking a mile in another's shoes, then fail to imagine what it might truly be like. There are countless emotions experienced by pastors, church members, and others in our communities that impact ministry and help explain why we do what we do. This review is an opportunity to open our hearts and minds to see beyond first impressions, free from the need to immediately judge.

Accepting—The phrase “it is what it is” has fallen out of favor lately, but there is often some truth to it. Getting bogged down in arguments about the reasons things didn't work can distract from the simple fact that they didn't. Dwelling on what might have been is a sure fire way to get stuck. Acknowledging reality and the necessity to be right where we are allows us to put yesterday to bed and look forward to tomorrow. Awareness of how we feel about a particular situation allows us to identify the values behind those feelings. Those values, rather than the emotions themselves, can point the way forward.

Loving—It would be nice if this went without saying, but kindness, compassion, and empathy should be guiding lights throughout this review. No one is harder on pastors than themselves. They heeded a powerful call on their lives and do their best to live it out faithfully and well. The same is true for the members of a congregation. They do their best to live up to the expectations of disciples of Jesus Christ. How often must Jesus look at all of us and recall his words from the cross: “forgive them, they know not what they do?” In this review, you have the opportunity to make love the watchword in your conversations, in crafting every response, and embracing one another in the grace and truth of the gospel.

MINISTERIAL RATING ELABORATION

Feedback following last year's review included frustration with the amount of detail and number of questions included under each of the nine categories. There were, though, also many who appreciated the elaboration. The compromise is to include that material here, instead of in the body of the review. Take it or leave it. Use it or don't. If it is too much, stop reading now and go back to the categories themselves. But if you're not sure what a particular category is asking for, and an interpretation pertinent to your setting doesn't come readily to mind, the following is here for your edification. Again, please incorporate throughout this review the ways COVID has either held you back, stretched you to new places, or both.

Remember, the materials connected with this review are not just about evaluation and assessment. Every pastor and faith community has blind spots and areas ripe for growth. Some of these questions and reflections may be seen as aspirational, or suggesting areas to consider going forward. At the end of this appendix is an article that describes some of the language found in the nine factors on which you've been asked to rate your pastor. It may provide further fodder for conversation.

1. Spiritual Formation & Personal Care

A pastor's vocation requires a commitment to lifelong learning, self-care, and deepening faith.

Spiritual formation refers to what you know of your pastor's devotional life and spiritual disciplines and how these practices guide their ministry.

Self-care includes your pastor's physical, spiritual, mental and emotional health and the balance they maintain between personal/family time and ministry demands.

Reflect on your knowledge of any peer or covenant groups in which your pastor is a participant and its value to their ministry.

2. Preaching & Teaching

Reflect on whether the pastor's sermons seem well-prepared and make Christian teaching relevant to people's daily lives and demonstrate thorough preparation.

Are sermons prophetic and challenging?

Are sermons well organized, with listeners able to follow central ideas?

Does the pastor demonstrate commitment to the spiritual development of: Children, Youth, Younger Adults (18-39), Adults (ages 40 plus), and Older Adults?

Does the pastor provide active leadership in the teaching ministry of the church?

Does the pastor communicate effectively in written and verbal form?

3. Leading the Congregation in Passionate Worship

Some congregations could be described as the "frozen chosen," as opposed to making a joyful noise to the Lord and leaving a service inspired to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the community. Passion for God need not be loud, but it should run deep.

How well does the pastor lead in crafting worship that focuses on and leads people to encounter God?

Does the pastor regularly study worship attendance compared to previous years, and share this data with leaders and the congregation with an eye toward inviting more people to engage with the Word and Sacraments?

Does the pastor evaluate and plan worship services with a worship planning team and effectively plan for weekly and/or occasional worship services?

How does the pastor lead the congregation in follow up with visitors?

4. Equipping Laity for and Participating in Missional Engagement

A pastor is to assist the laity in recognizing how Christ has equipped each of us for our roles in the church (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Reflect on how well the pastor shares leadership, decision making, responsibility and accountability for ministry with the laity.

In what ways does the pastor assist laity in discovering their spiritual gifts and how to live them out?

In what ways does the pastor encourage service and outreach in the local, national and global community?

How does the pastor intentionally involve laity in mission and ministry?

How well does the pastor encourage and support connectional United Methodist outreach through such ministries as the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) and United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)?

How much time does the pastor spend outside of the church in a “third” place (other than home and church) in the community where they can connect with “nones” and “dones” (those who have left church or never been a part of one)?

In what ways is the clergy person connected in the community?

Has the pastor encouraged and supported a church/school partnership or other new forms of ministry?

5. Equipping Laity for and Engaging in Radical Hospitality

Jesus repeatedly shows us what it means to be “all in” for those who are “out.” Some churches are little more than social organizations for like-minded people. This category pushes into uncomfortable territory for some of us.

In what ways does the pastor intentionally model reaching out to people in the community and invite them to worship or another form of engagement with your church family?

Does the pastor lead in facilitating Confirmation and New Member classes?

Professions of faith tend to be low in many churches. How effective is your pastor in modeling how to talk to, pray with, and/or build relationships with people who may be led toward a commitment to Christ?

Does the pastor, in worship, teaching, and by example, challenge the congregation to form relationships with people outside the church and to invite them to visit the church?

How well does the pastor lead the congregation in intentional faith sharing ministries such as prayer walks, servant evangelism, etc.?

Reflect on how well the pastor assists the congregation in providing a welcoming environment for people who are new to the faith.

6. Leading Laity in Intentional Discipleship and Extravagant Generosity

In what ways does the pastor hold up intentional discipleship—following Jesus and growing a Jesus-shaped life—and spiritual formation as a priority for every Christian?

How transparent is the pastor—as a living, not perfect by any means, example for the congregation—in deepening their personal theology, developing practical skills for ministry, and strengthening their leadership skills?

Does the pastor work to ensure that the congregation has an intentional and well-articulated discipleship and spiritual formation process?

Does the pastor ensure that the congregation offers classes/groups for those new to the Christian faith?

In what ways does the pastor model inviting newcomers to church to connect with small groups, classes, or other means of discipleship formation?

How well does the pastor lead the congregation to focus on stewardship that emphasizes extravagant generosity?

Does the pastor teach and preach on giving a tithe of 10% or more to God’s work through the church?

7. Leading the Congregation, Staff & Lay Leadership

Reflect on how the pastor develops a shared vision with the congregation and helps them stay focused on that vision. What is that vision?

How is the pastor effective in team building and leading people through change?

How does the pastor help the congregation evaluate ministries and assess the need for new ones?

How does the pastor help the congregation, and specific ministry teams, achieve their goals?

How does the pastor clearly communicate the expectations of each staff member and the lay leadership and encourage them to meet their goals?

How effectively does the pastor deal with conflict within the staff and lay leadership when it occurs?

How available is the pastor to the staff and lay leadership? Do they have regular meetings with them?

8. Interpersonal Skills

Does the pastor form relationships with people that are caring and compassionate?

How well does the pastor relate to people on a one-to-one basis or in a group setting?

Is the pastor willing to listen to different points of view?

Does the pastor use grace and good judgment in working with people?

Does the pastor care for the personal needs of the congregation through calls, visits, or the delegation of such ministries to an equipped lay team?

9. Connectional Matters

The United Methodist Church is a connectional denomination. That is, each congregation is bound to several hundred congregations in the Mountain Sky Conference and thousands of other congregations around the world. We share a common set of doctrines and practices, rather than each local church acting on its own. United Methodist congregations and clergy are expected to support and participate in this connection, which makes possible many missional objectives that would be difficult or impossible alone.

Does the pastor maintain a collegial spirit with other clergy?

Is the pastor involved in ecumenical (with other Christian denominations) or interfaith work?

Does the pastor support and participate in work and activities of the District, Conference, and General Church?

Is the pastor well prepared for the yearly Charge Conference and are year-end reports completed on time and in order?

Does the pastor appreciate, understand and uphold the doctrine and polity (rules of the church) of the United Methodist Church?

Does the pastor support the paying of Apportionments and other Conference obligations in full and on time?

CONGREGATIONAL RATING ELABORATION

1. Compassionate and Consistent Support and Advocacy for Pastor's Wellbeing

Pastors have paid a price during the months of COVID. They are in a 24/7 profession as it is, and the pandemic has further blurred the lines between work time and rest time. Many are exhausted and unsure how to rejuvenate as expectations for in person ministry are now joined with the continuing emphasis on an expanded online presence.

What has the SPRC done in the past 12 months to educate your congregation on how to support your pastor's wellbeing?

How have you encouraged your pastor to take regular Sabbath, days off, vacation, and continuing education time?

How has the SPRC worked to become a more effective team in the past 12 months?

How have you interpreted/explained to your congregation the role of a pastor in the 21st century?

2. Collaboration with Pastor in Providing Opportunities for Passionate Worship

The word "liturgy" translates to "the work of the people."

How does the congregation offer constructive feedback regarding worship?

How do members of the church family participate in its worship life?

How receptive is the congregation to new or different ways of glorifying God in worship?

How does the congregation assist in follow up with visitors?

3. Participation in and Support of Ministry and Outreach Beyond the Church Walls

A congregation that concentrates primarily on itself is a dying congregation. Looking outward with the eyes of Jesus to see where he can be found already at work is a task for every one of his followers.

What portion of the congregation is active in the mission and ministry of the congregation?

How proactive are members of the congregation in identifying ways for the congregation to be in service locally and beyond?

How, and how well, are your people connected with the "least, last, and lost" of your community?

How receptive is the congregation to the pastor spending time in the community outside the church?

4. Extending Welcome and Hospitality Beyond the Church Doors

Evangelism. Many United Methodists cringe at the word. At its root, though, is the good news of Jesus Christ, which must be shared (Isaiah 52:7) for others to join us on the journey. There are many ways to go about it, and the pastor can't be the only one expected to reach out with the gospel.

How welcoming is the congregation to outsiders and people not like them?

How would you rate the congregation at reaching out to unchurched people in the community and inviting them to worship?

How does the congregation value forming long term relationships with people outside the church?

5. Intentional Deepening of Our Faith Journeys and Generosity in Financial Giving

Discipleship doesn't just happen. It takes purposeful commitment, and the pastor can't do it for anyone. As Paul reminds us (Philippians 2:12), each follower of Jesus is responsible for their own walk with God.

How receptive is the congregation to involvement in small groups?

How does the congregation show evidence of a commitment to diligently pursue a deepening faith?

How well does the congregation incorporate newcomers into discipleship formation?

Is there a general commitment by households within the congregation to support the local church and its connectional commitments through giving, or working toward giving, a tithe of 10%?

11 TIPS FOR CRAFTING S.M.A.R.T. GOALS

To improve **GOAL SPECIFICITY**, consider:

1. **“What” Targets:** What specific job activities will you improve? What is the visible outcome others will see in your congregation or community when you succeed?
2. **“Who” Targets:** What specific relationships will you improve? Who is the target population or audience?

To improve **GOAL MEASURABILITY**, consider:

3. **Monitoring Flags:** What milestones, deliverables, or results will confirm your progress? What question can you ask yourselves to inspire accountability?
4. **Future State:** What will success look like? After months of effort, what beliefs will congregation members hold, what will be happening, what moments or interactions will be noticeable?

To improve **GOAL ATTAINABILITY**, consider:

5. **Progression:** What is the series of milestone accomplishments that can happen one at a time to create momentum?
6. **First Commitment:** What is the immediate first step that will get the ball rolling? What needs to happen to prepare and take that step? Who can help?
7. **Resources:** Whose inputs of time and energy are needed to truly accomplish our vision for this goal? Can we confidently enlist and commit those resources? Think about: Frequency, Persistence, Consistency, Intensity, and Innovativeness – these are all possible options to energize a goal and make outcomes achievable. Is a team effort needed?

To improve **GOAL REALISM**, consider:

8. **Importance:** Why does it matter to achieve this goal? How will it forward our Mission?
9. **Meaning:** What values does this goal embody and reflect? What will it mean about our identity serving the world if we are able to accomplish this goal?

To improve **GOAL TIMELINESS**, consider:

10. **Why Now:** How will accomplishing this goal create a positive moment in history?
11. **Under My Watch:** What is the opportune alignment to accomplish this goal in the congregation with this pastor at this time?

FIVE PRACTICES FOR FRUITFUL CONGREGATIONS IN A POST-ATTRACTIVE ERA

By Robert Schnase

Why do we assume that people who do not know our congregation will one day find themselves as a member of our church? Most congregations, consciously or unconsciously, operate with attractional assumptions. They imagine that a person, couple, or family becomes aware of their church, perhaps through the invitation of a friend, an advertisement on a billboard, or by driving past the sanctuary. Churches then hope that what the new persons hear or see will draw them toward the congregation. They assume that the visitors will share a common interest in the purpose of the church or feel a desire to form an affinity with the church. A yearning to learn, grow spiritually, belong, and serve will cause them to visit and will lead them to greater participation. We assume this is the pathway for entry into the church because it matches the experience of many people who currently belong.

Why the Attractional Model is No Longer Enough

Attractional models worked in the past when the culture expected people to attend worship and people wanted to be members of churches. What happens when people no longer trust institutions in general or the church in particular? Or when next generations don't share a taste for the style of music we offer in worship and don't appreciate the one-way verbal communication of a sermon? Becoming a member of anything is unappealing to many people and does not motivate them to deepen their spiritual lives. They are not seeking to join anything. Many churches are surrounded by neighbors who speak a different language or who are of a different ethnicity than the majority in the congregation. What would cause them to show up for worship?

What happens when generations of people living around us have no experience with worship, no vocabulary for understanding faith, no familiarity with scripture, and have never once stepped inside a church? The culture provides an ever-increasing number of competing activities on Sundays that are more compelling than church attendance. When people do not find the idea of church appealing, they are not attracted to what we do, no matter how well we do it.

A Significant Shift

What is required is a significant shift in how we think about ministry:

- "Come to us" ideas must be balanced with "go to them" initiatives.
- Strategies for doing things "better" must be strengthened with ideas of doing things "differently."
- Teaching people to "do things our way" must be intermixed with "learning new things" from others.
- Doing ministry "for" becomes doing ministry "with."
- Welcoming the guest expands to becoming a newcomer among others.
- Increasing activities "in the church" shifts toward offering ministries "beyond our facilities."
- Making our church more interesting to others expands to becoming more interested in the spiritual needs and real-life issues of others.
- Receiving people in the spirit of Christ expands to being sent to people around us in the spirit of Christ.

The New Five Practices

The original Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations relied on attractional assumptions. Today, fruitful congregations have discovered that while attractional models are helpful and necessary to fulfill the mission of Christ, they simply are not enough. Faith communities must also develop ministries that derive from missional assumptions, activities that primarily benefit people who are not members of the church, often in places far away from their facilities. These ministries require a different posture toward our neighbors, a more deliberate outward

focus, and a willingness to carry Christ's love to where people already live and work and play, rather than hoping for people to come to us.

Radical Hospitality

Radical hospitality is not merely focused on getting people to come to church. Rather, it focuses with greater intentionality about how we carry hospitality with us into our neighborhoods, work life, and affinity networks. What good is Christian hospitality if it's something we only practice for an hour on Sunday morning while failing to form relationships with people who live next door?

Passionate Worship

Passionate worship extends beyond improving what happens on Sunday morning in the sanctuary. Worship becomes mobile, portable, on the move, going where people live, and work, and play.

Intentional Faith Development

Intentional faith development includes more focus on experiential learning, mentoring, spiritual formation, and forming relationships in addition to traditional content-based education in Bible studies and Sunday school classes.

Risk-Taking Mission and Service

Risk-taking mission and service explores relationships more deeply and offers examples of shifting from doing ministry *for* to less patronizing, more relational models of doing ministry *with* those who suffer hardship or injustice.

Extravagant Generosity

Extravagant generosity involves helping people learn to love generosity as a way of life not just a way of supporting the church.

This shift of energy, focus, and imagination is life-giving. When the church leaves the building to offer ministries that matter, we view ourselves as part of Christ's mission in a whole new way, as sent into a mission field uniquely prepared by God that uses the talents, gifts, and relationships God has given us.

This material is excerpted from *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations, Revised and Updated* (Abingdon Press, 2018) by Robert Schnase. You can find it on the website of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership: churchleadership.com. The book is available at [Cokesbury](#) and [Amazon](#).