

PETITION TO THE 2016 ROCKY MOUNTAIN ANNUAL 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 of these standards in
2 the 2016 Conference Journal and at appropriate quadrennial intervals.
- 3 I. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CLERGY PARSONAGES/HOUSING
- 4 A. A very important part of the clergy compensation package is that of housing. The Commission on Equitable
5 Compensation recommends that every charge provide either a parsonage that meets the following minimum
6 requirements, or a housing allowance that will enable the rental or purchase of a suitable equivalent, for
7 full-time and part-time clergy staff, unless a special exception is negotiated with the local church and
8 conference by the District Superintendent.
- 9 B. Responsibility for clergy housing
- 10 C. Ultimate responsibility for clergy housing lies with the Church Council. (See paragraphs 252.4.e, 2012
11 Discipline.)
- 12 1. The church council may delegate administrative responsibility for clergy housing to the committee on
13 pastor-parish relations (staff-parish relations) or a pastoral advisory committee. (See paragraph 258.16,
14 2012 Discipline.)
- 15 2. If a housing allowance is provided, it should be reviewed annually by the Pastor-Parish Committee and
16 provision made for an adequate allowance equal to a fair rental value for providing suitable housing and
17 utilities in a specific geographical area.
- 18 3. If a Parsonage Committee is established, membership may be appointed by the church council or be
19 nominated by the Committee on Lay Leadership and elected by the charge conference. Rotation of
20 members is advised.
- 21 4. If a Parsonage Committee is established, it is recommended that its membership be:
- 22 a. one trustee (selected by the Board of Trustees)
- 23 b. one member from the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee
- 24 c. three members at large
- 25 d. the pastor's spouse
- 26 e. the Pastor
- 27 f. Where there is more than one church on a charge, then the members at large and the Pastor-Parish
28 Relations Committee and Trustees representation should reflect members from each of the
29 churches.
- 30 5. The Parsonage Committee should meet at least twice a year and shall report to the charge conference on
31 the forms provided by the annual conference.
- 32 6. Responsibilities of the Parsonage Committee shall include:
- 33 a. Cooperate with the Pastor-Parish Committee in sensitizing the congregation to the fact that the
34 parsonage is a part of the clergy compensation and should be considered as the private home of the
35 parsonage family.

- 36 b. Follow the Parsonage Maintenance guidelines for a yearly checklist. (See II A)
- 37 c. Follow the Parsonage Maintenance guidelines “When There Is A Change in Pastors” (See II B)
- 38 d. Assure that all budget requests pertaining to the parsonage are submitted to the Finance Committee
- 39 for recommendation to the church council. In the absence of a Parsonage Committee, the duties and
- 40 functions described in the “Clergy Housing Policies and Standards” guideline shall belong to the
- 41 Pastor-Parish Relations Committee.
- 42 D. Minimum Parsonage/Housing Standards
- 43 1. If a parsonage is provided, it should be an adequate, comfortable and structurally sound home for the
- 44 pastor and family built according to local building codes.
- 45 2. Recommendations Relating to Parsonage Planning/Size of Rooms/Furnishings
- 46 a. Location-Item to be considered:
- 47 1. Is, or will the location be conducive to good living on the part of the parsonage family and
- 48 equivalent to the average family home of the area?
- 49 2. Is, or will the location be in convenient relationship to shopping areas, schools, recreation and
- 50 in an area conducive to property value appreciation?
- 51 3. Location should not be such as to conceivably be a hindrance to future growth of the church
- 52 plant and should be convenient to the ministry community which the church serves.
- 53 4. While some parsonages are located next door to the church, the goal of the church should be to
- 54 insure the privacy of the parsonage family. If there is to be a change in the parsonage location,
- 55 it ought not be next to the church.
- 56 b. The Office of Architecture of the Board of Global Ministries, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY
- 57 10115 has recommended parsonage planning guides.
- 58 c. House/Parsonage Arrangement
- 59 1. Bedrooms: There should be a minimum of three bedrooms each of adequate size and allowing
- 60 for privacy.
- 61 2. Closets: Adequate closet space should be provided
- 62 3. Bathrooms: One and three fourths bathrooms are considered essential.
- 63 4. Study:
- 64 (i) A pastor’s study, (in addition to the three bedrooms) is desirable. The pastor’s study in the
- 65 parsonage is not to be utilized for counseling, nor is it to take the place of an office in the
- 66 church or in some other facility outside the parsonage.
- 67 (ii) It is desirable that the study be located so that it can be protected from family and kitchen
- 68 noises.
- 69 5. Kitchen and laundry space:
- 70 (i) there should be adequate kitchen and laundry space.
- 71 (ii) There should be adequate electrical outlets.
- 72 6. Living area:

- 73 (i) The parsonage is to be considered as home for the pastor and his or her family. A living
74 room should be large enough so that entertaining or dining is possible.
- 75 (ii) Where possible, there should be an area where the family can “be at ease” whether it is a
76 kitchen-family room, a den, or a recreation room.
- 77 7. Closets and storage: Considering the fact that pastors acquire equipment and personal
78 possessions not always usable in the present appointment and the possession of equipment not
79 normally found in the average home, the need of average or more than average closet and
80 storage space is recommended.
- 81 8. Heating and cooling: Adequate provision for these should be made in relationship to the area
82 and the climate. Adequate insulation and storm windows should be installed where required for
83 energy conservation.
- 84 9. Home grounds:
- 85 (i) All permanent planting should be the responsibility of the church and planned by a
86 landscape architect whenever possible.
- 87 (ii) Landscaping and exterior care of the parsonage should be such as to be a credit to the
88 church in the community (Section II A #8 & 9)
- 89 (iii) An outdoor patio area and recreational space are useful additions.
- 90 10. Miscellaneous
- 91 (i) Adequate shelter sufficient to house two cars should be provided. Minimum requirement
92 is a garage suitable to house one car.
- 93 (ii) Because the need for a type of TV antenna or basic cable varies with location, the church
94 shall provide an adequate antenna or basic cable for the area.
- 95 (iii) One telephone should be provided with jacks installed for additional phones in the master
96 bedroom, study, family room or where most convenient.
- 97 (iv) Internet shall be provided with at least one jack.
- 98 (v) Smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, fire extinguishers and safety ladders should be
99 present.
- 100 3. Basic Parsonage Furnishings and Equipment. It shall be the responsibility of the local church to furnish
101 the parsonage with basic furnishings as listed below of good quality and to maintain them in good
102 condition or replace when necessary. It is recommended that all furniture for the parsonage be purchased
103 new.
- 104 a. Bedrooms – Rugs or carpets and window coverings. Furnishings for all bedrooms shall be the
105 responsibility of the parsonage family.
- 106 b. Study – Carpets and draperies. It is recommended that the study include the following: desk,
107 comfortable chair, filing cabinet, telephone, bookshelves, and computer. The room should have
108 adequate light and storage.
- 109 c. Kitchen and laundry – Range and oven, refrigerator/freezer, automatic washing machine and dryer,
110 dishwasher, sink with garbage disposal where possible and water conditioner where needed or
111 required.

- 112 d. Carbon monoxide detectors should be present and there should be grounded wiring throughout the
113 parsonage, with ground fault protectors in the bathrooms.
- 114 4. Regarding Duplication of Furnishings and Equipment – Where the church provides mutually acceptable
115 furnishings as outlined above, but the pastor prefers to use his or her own, the pastor shall arrange for the
116 storage of the parsonage furniture in cooperation with the parsonage committee.
- 117 E. Joint Responsibility
- 118 1. It should be remembered that a home expresses character and that the condition of the parsonage reflects
119 on the relations of the clergy family and the church. Happy is the pastor who can be proud of his/her
120 church for the kind of parsonage provided for them as good stewards. The church is encouraged to
121 choose neutral colors for drapes, carpeting, furnishings, and so on when considering the décor of the
122 parsonage. The tastes of the parsonage family should also be considered in choosing colors, furnishings
123 and appliances. Clergy and families living in a church-owned parsonage are expected to maintain the
124 parsonage in conditions of reasonable cleanliness and repair avoiding the necessity of extensive cleaning
125 or repair upon the change of pastors.
- 126 2. When a pastor moves out of a parsonage, the Board of Trustees, upon recommendation of the
127 chairperson of the S/PPR, may elect to withhold the pastor’s final check, for a period not to exceed 10
128 days, and deduct from that paycheck (1) the cost of necessary repairs and replacement for any breakage
129 or damage which exceeds normal wear and tear or (2) the cost of cleaning, if the parsonage is not left
130 “broom clean” and ready for the next occupant. The amount of the paycheck exceeding those costs shall
131 be sent to the pastor within 10 days of his/her last day of appointment to the church. At the same time,
132 the church shall provide to the pastor and the pastor’s district superintendent, a detailed accounting of the
133 use of the funds. In the event there is a dispute between the pastor and the church concerning the amount
134 needed for repairs, breakage, or cleaning, the district superintendent or a third party, agreed upon by both
135 the church and the pastor, shall mediate the dispute. The decision of the district superintendent or the
136 mediator shall be final.
- 137 F. Options: While we advocate these parsonage guidelines as outlined above, we recognize the need for options
138 in specific situations as mutually agreed upon by the pastor and the Parsonage Committee, in consultation
139 with the district superintendent.

140

141 II. PARSONAGE MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

142 A. Yearly Check-List for the Parsonage Committee

- 143 1. Cooperate with the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee in the annual review of the parsonage: “The
144 chairperson of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, the chairperson of trustees, and pastor shall make
145 an annual review of the church-owned parsonage to assure proper maintenance.” 2012 Discipline,
146 paragraph 2532.4.
- 147 2. The parsonage committee should indicate replacing furniture, appliances, curtains, carpets, etc., when
148 they can see it is needed rather than the family having to ask. However, the family should ask if this is
149 not done. When things are to be replaced, the parsonage family should make selections in consultation
150 with the Parsonage Committee. Furnishings should have a budget line. An inventory of the parsonage
151 with annotated condition of things should be done yearly.
- 152 3. An inventory of furniture and appliances with original cost and expected life-span should be maintained.
153 An item in the church budget should provide funds each year on an accumulating basis to replace items
154 as they are worn out.

- 155
156
157
4. Emergency maintenance and repairs: An emergency fund (suggested minimum of \$200) should be available as an amount that could be spent without consultation with the committee in order to allow the parsonage family to deal with emergency repairs.
- 158
159
160
5. The exterior of the house should be inspected to see that it is properly maintained (paint, roof, etc.) in order to avoid costly repairs. Exterior painting, repairs, and roof maintenance should be the responsibility of the church.
- 161
162
6. The parsonage should have a periodic termite and pest control inspection. Corrective measures should then be taken.
- 163
7. The church should have the heating and cooling systems checked seasonally.
- 164
165
166
167
168
8. Major renovation, repair, and replacements should be done by the church as they are needed, taking into consideration the church's financial ability to do these things. (The pastor, not the church, shall be responsible for correcting extreme or unusual damage beyond normal wear and tear to the parsonage and furnishings.) Changes in interior decoration should be done with the mutual consent of the church and the family.
- 169
170
171
9. It is recommended either that basic lawn maintenance (including mowing, edging, fertilizing, and sprinkler system) be taken care of or paid by the church or that the church provide, maintain, and repair a power lawn mower and other tools required to maintain the grounds with ease.
- 172
173
174
175
176
10. For the safety of the parsonage, property and the parsonage family, the church should carefully evaluate the overall security of the building and grounds. Attention should be given to screens, window and door locks, gates, and alarm systems. This should also include fire prevention measures such as smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, escape ladders and a fire escape plan. When possible, an annual inspection should be made by the fire department and utility companies.
- 177
- B. When There Is a Change in Pastor
- 178
179
180
181
182
183
184
185
186
1. The parsonage should be thoroughly cleaned when there is a change in pastor. The exterior of the parsonage and the grounds should be clean and present a good appearance. Walls, carpets, draperies, and floors should be clean and in good repair. Refrigerator, cook-top, oven, disposal, dishwasher, washer, dryer, air conditioner, heater, water heater (50 gallons minimum), smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, TV antenna or cable, garden hoses, ladder, and trash cans where needed (minimum of four 30 gallon cans with covers) should all be in proper order. A thorough inspection of plumbing and electrical placements is also recommended. If requested by the new pastor, locks should be changed and new keys issued. A termite and pest control inspection is recommended, as well as necessary corrective treatment. The church has final responsibility to see that these things are adequately accomplished.
- 187
188
2. The following suggestions are for creating a "Guide" to be completed by the Parsonage Committee and given to the parsonage family when it moves into its new home.
- 189
190
- a. An up-to-date inventory of all parsonage furnishings including, if possible, the date purchased, cost, present condition, and a projected replacement time. See II A 3.
- 191
- b. For each appliance:
- 192
1. Operating instructions or manuals, etc.
- 193
2. Repair instructions
- 194
- (i) service personnel to call
- 195
- (ii) which, if any, parsonage committee member to call

- 196 (iii) service calls and repairs of major appliances owned by the church should be paid for by the
197 church
- 198 c. Where to find:
- 199 1. Turn-off valve for gas
- 200 2. Turn-off valves for outside and inside water
- 201 3. Meters
- 202 4. Fuse or switch boxes, circuit-breakers, and main-switch- all properly labeled
- 203 5. Size and change intervals for heating and cooling filters.
- 204 6. Various permanent plants which are seasonal.
- 205 7. Any unusual appliances, equipment, or household peculiarities (such as hidden attic door)
- 206 8. Sprinkler systems
- 207 9. Sewer clean outs
- 208 d. Numbers to call in emergencies: Police, Fire, Ambulance, Insurance Company, Trustees, etc.
- 209 e. Basic information for cleaning carpets and draperies. The local church is to establish the desired
210 policy. For example: The church is responsible for a once-a-year cleaning to be determined by
211 committee upon recommendation from the parsonage family. It may be simpler for a policy to be
212 established that carpets and drapes be cleaned annually without the recommendation of the family
213 but with the committee selecting the cleaning company and the church paying the bill.
- 214 f. It may be helpful, upon the arrival of a new parsonage family, for a member of the committee to
215 conduct a tour of the parsonage, and point out that the committee is aware of certain needs (furniture
216 that is wearing out, painting that is needed, etc.) and also point out the good maintenance that has
217 been done in the past. this conveys to the parsonage family that the church is proud of their home
218 and wants them comfortable, but might also convey that the church expects something from the
219 parsonage family in maintaining the parsonage. The parsonage family should also be reminded to
220 treat the parsonage as if it were their own home.
- 221 g. When it is possible, the parsonage should be open for visitation by the newly appointed clergy
222 family prior to the effective date of appointment. If this is not possible, pictures of the parsonage
223 (outside and inside) could be taken when a change is expected, and those pictures might be taken or
224 sent to the new family ahead of moving time, providing added rapport between the church and the
225 new parsonage family.
- 226 C. Energy conservation
- 227 1. The church and parsonage family should make every effort possible to conserve energy. This should
228 include:
- 229 a. Inviting utility companies (gas, electric, and water) to inspect, provide an energy audit, and make
230 recommendations
- 231 b. More efficient lighting
- 232 c. Insulation in attic and walls
- 233 d. Weather-stripping
- 234 e. Investigating possible use of solar energy or other energy-saving devices.

235 f. Water-saving devices.

236

237 III. PARSONAGE UTILITIES

238 A. The local church shall provide utilities: water, electricity, gas and basic telephone (not including personal toll
239 calls), sewage fee, trash and garbage collection, internet and cable and/or antenna where required for TV
240 reception.

241 B. Those congregations with church-owned, but rented out, homes should take into account the actual cost of the
242 above-mentioned utilities when providing a housing allowance.

243 C. Parsonage families should be conscious of the high cost of utilities, and should practice cost and
244 energy-saving measures at all times. This should include regular self-monitoring, analysis, and comparing
245 against previous usage.

246

247 IV. RECOMMENDTION FOR PARSONAGE INSURANCE

248 A. Insurance on real and personal property is the responsibility of the owner of that property and should be
249 provided with adequate liability coverage.

250 B. Insurance should be reviewed annually and when there is a change of pastor(s).

251 C. It is recommended that a renter's Insurance Policy be obtained by the parsonage family residing in the
252 parsonage to insure the parsonage family's personal property, including clergy library.

253

254 V. REVIEW OR REVISION OF STANDARDS

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

257

PETITION DETAILS

This Petition is

- A Legislative Petition (Binding on the Annual Conference)
 A Resolution (Not Binding)

Effective Date: January 1, 2017

Termination Date: December 31, 2021

Does this Petition modify the Annual Conference Standing Rules and Operational Procedures (SROP)?

- Yes
 No

If "Yes," please complete the information below.

- This petition will modify Section 1.2
 This petition will create a new Section x.x.x

Conference Agency responsible for implementation and termination review:

Commission on Equitable Compensation

NOTE: All paragraph numberings within the SROP and the final designation of the Conference Agency responsible for implementation and termination review are subject to review by the Rules Committee.

ORIGINATOR OF THE PETITION (individual, church, or organization):

Name Commission on Equitable Compensation
Address
City, State, Zip
Email
Phone

PERSON TO PRESENT PETITION AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE:

Name Rev. Steve Earnshaw
Address 1888 East Four Mile Road
City, State, Zip Cheyenne, WY 82009
Email pastorsteve@frontierumc.org
Phone 307-778-3098
Phone @ Conference 307-701-0944

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Will there be any identifiable financial impact to the Conference?

Yes
 No

If "Yes," please fill in the information below.

To Be Completed by the Originator of the Petition

Cost: \$
Period
 One Time
 One Year
 Multiple Years

To Be Completed by Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CFA)

Review by CFA: 04/22/2016

Included in proposed 2017 budget: N/A

Yes
 No

Amount if included \$

May be considered for budgets in future years

Yes
 No

Projected Amount \$

Recommendation by CFA concerning funding: N/A

Reason for recommendation

RATIONALE (Not Debatable):

- 1 This petition consists of the previous Minimum Standards for Clergy Parsonages/Housing with the Discipline
- 2 paragraphs number updated to the 2012 Discipline. The information concerning the Office of Architecture of the
- 3 General Board of Global Ministries (Lines 57-58) was also updated.

ATTACHMENTS (For Information / Not Debatable)

None