

# **OUR LIFE TOGETHER**

## **Louisiana Conference of The United Methodist Church**

We recognize and affirm the covenantal relationship we have with each other as ministers in the Louisiana Annual Conference and the obligations we have to God, to the people we serve, to the world at large, and to each other to exemplify and maintain the highest standards of Christian conduct. Within that covenant, we agree that each of us shall:

- maintain spiritual, intellectual, physical, and emotional fitness.
- maintain the highest moral standard in speech and conduct.
- keep faith with loved ones, giving to them the time and attention needed for a healthy marriage and family.
- take care that attire and grooming do not detract from ministry effectiveness.
- stand beyond reproach in personal business and the stewardship of the resources of the Charge.
- imitate Christ in attitude and conduct toward all people – not setting aside convictions to win popular favor; impartially considering the needs of all people.
- set and maintain appropriate boundaries with all congregants and colleagues so that issues of impropriety, favoritism or sexual misconduct are not called into question.
- maintain a lifestyle that assures the parsonage is kept in presentable condition.
- preach and teach with integrity – give credit for the ideas and words of others.
- diligently care for his/her soul and mind through Biblical study and educational opportunities.
- maintain the highest standards regarding the use of modern technology, strictly avoiding even the perception of inappropriate use of the internet at work or at home, and understanding that email messages are not private and should not be treated as such.

And a MINISTER under appointment to a *parish* will:

- perform the “Responsibilities and Duties of Elders and Licensed Pastors” as described in ¶340 or “The Ministry of a Deacon” as described in ¶328 in the *2012 Book of Discipline*.
- serve as pastor, preacher, teacher, and administrator, observing diligent and healthy work habits.
- honor the confidentiality of all persons, unless otherwise required by law to reveal information.
- adequately share the ministry with other professional or lay persons assigned or employed to do so, seeking just compensation for all persons, to include vacation time and continuing education.
- nurture loyalty and trust among paid staff and volunteers.
- seek no gifts, bequests, or material benefits for self or family members from any organization or individual.
- affirm that “Full-time Service” means the pastor is not substantially supported in non-pastoral work (job or activities that would hinder the appointment to which they are assigned) without the knowledge of the District Superintendent and the Staff-Parish Relations Committee.

- upon leaving the appointment, have the parsonage clean and presentable for the following pastor and family.
- upon leaving the appointment, have all records and membership lists current and well organized.
- upon leaving the appointment, including retirement, sever pastoral relationships with the parish, recognizing that all future weddings, baptisms, communions, counseling, visitation, and funerals should be performed by the new pastor, unless in an unusual circumstance, and then only by the invitation and approval of the new pastor.
- welcome a regular evaluation of the pastor's effectiveness, being responsive to constructive feedback and humbly committed to improvements.

And, in relationship with *other ministers and churches*, will:

- live within the covenant community of the Annual Conference in ways that encourage and strengthen its members toward holiness of heart and life.
- make no disparaging remarks about previous pastors or new pastors.
- upon retirement, provide loyal support to pastors.
- treat with high regard and respect clergy of other churches/denominations.

(The term "minister" in this document shall include all those who maintain status of Full Member (Elder or Deacon), Provisional Member, Associate Member, Local Pastor, Diaconal, Ministerial Candidate, and others who are accountable to the Bishop and the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.)

**Initial affirmation by the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry – January 23, 2008**

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