

# FAQ about the LPRC of UCUC

## *Frequently Asked Questions about the Leadership Staff Parish Relations Committee of University Congregational United Church of Christ*

### **Why was the Leadership Staff Parish Relationship Committee (LPRC) established at this time?**

After careful study over a number of months, a subcommittee of the personnel board recommended the establishment of the LPRC at UCUC. Several UCC church councils with similar committees have reported them to be useful to healthy life of their congregations. Since the church is not experiencing any major crisis, it was a good time to establish an LPRC and our pastors strongly agreed. Our church council set up the LPRC as a small standing committee reporting to the council.

### **What is the purpose of the LPRC?**

Providing support for the leadership team (Catherine, David, Amy and Peter) and serving as a regular channel of communication between them and the congregation are the two primary purposes. The committee advises, nurtures and supports the four leaders and works to maintain an open and healthy relationship between them and the congregation. The committee not only shares concerns of the congregation with the pastors and church administrator, it also helps to interpret the needs of the pastors and the church administrator to the congregation.

### **Why is it important to have a LPRC at UCUC?**

The LPRC provides a channel for communication which helps to acknowledge the importance of maintaining an open and healthy relationship between the leadership team and the congregation. A healthy relationship enhances the ministry of both the team and the congregation. The LPRC affirms and supports the professional growth and well-being of all members of the leadership team by helping to prevent ministerial burnout, and by providing a climate in which the ministerial relationship can be strengthened, thus enhancing the spiritual life and mission of the church.

### **What is the task of LPRC?**

Actually, the LPRC is not primarily a task-centered group; instead it is relational. It recognizes the feelings and personal factors of ministry through active listening, clarification of information, and constructive criticism. Affirmation and expression of care, appreciation and acceptance are essential for the LPRC to be successful for both the leadership staff and the congregation. The LPRC will want to be

especially observant when a new pastor is hired. The arrival of a new member of the leadership team will influence the congregation's relationship with the ministerial staff.

Our pastors and administrator need a supportive environment for discussion, feedback and renewal. They need a group within the congregation that is committed to explore any role ambiguity, as well as personal and church issues, so that vulnerabilities, feelings, concerns and ideas can be shared. Being concerned with the leaderships' total well-being, the LPRC provides a confidential place for reflection about personal issues, hopes, ambitions and frustrations.

For the congregation, the LPRC provides an avenue for open, honest and affirmative discussions between the leadership and the congregations. Members of the committee have a critical responsibility to become knowledgeable about pastoral and congregational expectations. It is important for the committee to candidly express its views to the team, including congregational feedback regarding the leadership team.

### **How will the LPRC deal with serious conflict should it arise?**

While the LPRC recognizes that not all differences can be resolved easily, it provides regular meetings, support and feedback in an effort to avoid serious conflict. Identifying areas of potential conflict and misunderstandings between the leadership team and the congregation and assisting in the search for solutions is a critical goal of the LPRC. The committee can serve as a reconciling agent between the leadership team and the congregation thus avoiding destructive conflict.

Seeking successful negotiation of differences, the LPRC will always encourage people involved in a concern, conflict or misunderstanding to relate directly to the others (including the leaders) involved in the situation. Central to preventing or resolving conflicts is the recognition and clarification of mutual reasonable expectations. In the case of an irresolvable conflict or of an ethical concern, the LPRC has the option of referring that issue to the personnel board, the council, or the conference minister.

### **How is the LPRC different from other committees at UCUC?**

The functions of the LPRC augment and enhance the already existing informal and formal means of support within the congregation. The LPRC is neither programmatic nor policy-oriented; nor does it have an evaluative function. It has different functions from the personnel committee. It does not replace the role of that committee and council to deal with policy, salary and benefits, evaluations, continuing education, sabbaticals, goals, performance reviews, or opportunities to serve the wider church mission in the community.

There are a number of reasons why existing boards or committees were not recommended to perform the role of a LPRC. Size is an important consideration. The size of a LPRC is small enough to deal with sensitive and confidential matters. Constructive and caring communication in an atmosphere of confidentiality and trust is essential to the success of this committee. The single focus of LPRC's mission is another. Our leadership team can feel more comfortable being candid in a committee specifically designed for disclosure in an atmosphere of mutual respect and acceptance.

The LPRC will assiduously avoid attempting to solve problems or perform tasks that appropriately belong to other committees or boards.

### **How will we know if the LPRC is working for us at UCUC?**

Council will evaluate committee effectiveness after one year and periodically thereafter to decide its

modification and continuation. This evaluation will be based on feedback from the congregation and the leadership team.

### **How were the members of the LPRC selected?**

The subcommittee of the council which recommended the establishment of the LPRC and the pastors recruited the initial members of the LPRC and recommended them to council. In doing so they sought members who are not only supportive of the pastors, but who are also sensitive to the feelings and needs of both the congregation and the pastors and church administrator.

The LPRC consists of six members, plus the four members of the leadership staff. The congregational members serve for six years with replacements occurring in a revolving manner. Initially, the first person would be a participant for a year, the second for two years, the third for three years, etc. The first person would have the option of renewing his or her participation for a full six-year term.

Future LPRC members will be chosen and appointed by the committee members and the leadership team together.

### **How does a member of the congregation make her/his concerns known to the LPRC?**

The LPRC meets regularly, usually once a month, to provide support and minimize any possible issues. However, congregational members and members of the leadership team are encouraged to contact any member of the LPRC about any concerns at any time. Members of the LPRC promise these concerns will be met with confidentiality and careful listening.

#### ***Leadership Staff Parish Relationship Committee***

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