

Standards for an Adequate Parsonage

In recognition of the need for common understanding of parsonage expectations in the longtime close relationship between lay persons and their pastors, the Annual Conference has adopted the following standards for appropriate parsonage housing. It is the hope of the Annual Conference that every parish will provide a parsonage that the church can be proud of since we are a parsonage conference.

We call the attention of all pastors and lay persons to the statement in the Discipline, which says, "The chairperson of the board of trustees or the chairperson of the parsonage committee, if one exists, the chairperson of the committee on pastor- parish relations, and the pastor shall make an annual review of the church-owned parsonage to ensure proper maintenance." (Par. 2533.4 2016 Book of Discipline) The parsonage is to be mutually respected by the pastor's family as the property of the church and by the church as a place of privacy for the pastor's family.

The House

It is essential that there be:

1. a living room
2. a dining room
3. a family room or recreational room
4. three bedrooms
5. a kitchen with adequate built-in cabinets, counter and work space
6. two baths
7. a utility area
8. an adequate laundry area
9. closets in all bedrooms, study, entrance hall and linen storage
10. a two-car garage
11. bulk storage area
12. Insulation
 - a. In the case of a new parsonage, full insulation of ceiling, walls and floors.
 - b. Older parsonages should be updated in an effort to be good stewards of energy resources.
13. Automatic central heat and air conditioning
14. Storm or thermopane windows and storm or insulated doors, with screens for the entire house
15. Window coverings throughout house
16. Carpeting or attractive flooring in living and dining areas; appropriate floor coverings in kitchen and finished flooring in the remainder of the house
17. adequate wiring which meets standard of local safety codes, sufficient outlets and attractive fixtures.
18. a study/office with provision for privacy either at the parsonage or at the church
19. outside lighting

It is desirable that there be:

1. a fourth bedroom with closet, with at least one bedroom on the first floor
2. an attached two-car garage
3. a study located at the parsonage and an office at the church
4. a garden area
5. additional storage space
6. a second bath or half-bath for each floor

The Utilities and Appliances

It is essential that there be:

1. an electric or gas cooking range with oven
2. a microwave
3. a garbage disposal
4. a dishwasher
5. automatic washer and dryer

6. hot water heater with adequate capacity
7. refrigerator with adequate freezer space
8. basic cable or basic satellite TV
9. private telephone service and equipment
10. soft water service where needed
11. a power lawn mower or lawn service
12. adequate sewage disposal
13. smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, and fire extinguishers, (especially kitchen and near furnace) as required by state fire code for rental property
14. high-speed internet connection via cable modem, DSL or other method, or if such service is not available in the locality, an additional telephone line that may be dedicated to a dial-up internet connection

It is desirable that there be:

1. a food freezer
2. cell phone service provided for the pastor (whether in a parsonage or on a housing allowance)
3. an automatic garage door opener
4. snow blower

General Items

1. The interior, exterior, the garage, and all equipment should be kept in good condition and repair and the exterior appearance attractive.
2. It is essential that the primary minister's study be supplied with computer, high speed internet service, printer, telephone, bookshelves, desk and chair, and copy machine. It is desirable that a fax or scanner be provided.
3. It is desirable that the parsonage home be readily accessible to school, shopping center, and church.
4. All new parsonage construction and/or purchase must meet, as a minimum, the housing construction codes for the county involved.
5. Every effort should be made to provide energy efficiency and handicapped accessibility in all new construction. It should be as maintenance-free as possible.
6. Renters Insurance for Pastors - Clergy living in church owned houses must have adequate coverage for their belongings and also for personal liability for their family. This type of coverage is usually NOT part of a church package and must be purchased separately by the pastor (renter's insurance). It seems prudent to place that responsibility in the hands of the pastor who will need to become a good consumer and verify the sufficiency of the coverage for her/himself. Placing the choice of carrier and coverage in the hands of the local church may result in insufficient coverage for the pastor/family.
7. The essential standards are to be met or exceeded in all purchased parsonages and/or new construction and are to be a goal for all existing parsonages.
8. *The family leaving the parsonage is expected to leave it in good order and clean. Unreasonable damage shall be paid for by the family doing the damage. (See policy on "Unusual Damages to Local Church Parsonages.")*
9. An air quality test for molds is to be conducted every other year in each parsonage, and the results be reported to the Charge Conference; and that if the test shows excessive mold contamination, remediation is to start as soon as possible with the pastoral family located to clean temporary housing. It is recommended that the same test be done in churches.