



## Our Clergy Covenant

The purpose of this document is two-fold: As a guide to what is expected of clergy and other church professionals in the Indiana Conference; and to inform the laity what they can expect from clergy as defined in ***The Book of Discipline***. While this document does not presume to speak to all areas of clergy life it does express minimum expectations for clergy honesty and integrity as we are guided by Scripture and ordered by ***The Book of Discipline***.

As clergy, we recognize and affirm the covenantal relationships we have with God, each other, the people and churches we serve, and the world at large. Further, we recognize and affirm our obligation to exemplify and maintain the highest standards of Christian living. To that end, with God being our helper, we agree that:

- A. WE WILL PERFORM “THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF ELDERS AND LICENSED PASTORS’ AS DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPHS 340 AND 341, OR “THE MINISTRY OF A DEACON” AS DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH 328 IN THE 2008 Book of Discipline.
  
- B. IN OUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS WE WILL
  1. Continually seek to grow personally in our relationship with God through Jesus Christ, diligently studying Scripture and practicing daily prayer, and professionally through Continuing Education.
  2. Maintain our intellectual, physical, and emotional fitness as outlined for us in the **Behavioral Health Guidelines** .
  3. Maintain the highest moral standard in our speech and.
  4. Keep faith with loved ones, giving to them the time and attention needed for healthy family relationships.
  5. Keep appropriate confidences and privileged information inviolable, according to para. 341.5 in ***The Book of Discipline***.
  6. In visitation and counseling sessions, set and maintain appropriate boundaries so as to avoid even an appearance of impropriety (I Thess. 5:22).
  7. Remain above reproach in matters of personal business and the stewardship of resources of the Charge we are serving.
  8. Practicing and fostering within the church and among colleagues a culture of conflict resolution.
  9. Avoid communicating (verbal, written, or electronic) negatively about a colleague, especially our predecessor or successor at a given appointment.
  10. When moving to a new appointment, leave the church records in good condition.
  11. Be good stewards of the parsonage and leave it clean, and accept financial responsibility for damage to the parsonage beyond normal wear and tear (See Conference Parsonage Policy).
  12. Don’t go back to perform hospital visitations, weddings or funerals.

C. IN ISSUES OF INTEGRITY WE WILL

1. Be honest.
2. Be loyal to The United Methodist Church and do everything in our power to strengthen its ministries.
3. Preach and teach with integrity—give credit for the ideas and words of others.
4. Maintain the highest ethical standards in our use of technology and the Internet, understanding that email, text messaging, *Facebook*, etc. are not a private domain and so should be used carefully.
5. Provide pastoral services to church members without charge. Receipt and use of honoraria from church members will be at each clergy person's ethical discretion.
6. Abstain from pornography and gambling in any form.
7. Abstain from misuse or abuse of prescription medications, alcohol and drugs.

D. IN REGARD TO POWER ISSUES WE WILL

1. Practice servant-leadership in the spirit of Jesus as found in Paul's teaching in Philippians 2.
2. Share ministry with other clergy and/or professional lay persons employed by the charge we are serving, seek just compensation for all employees, and take special care that appointed clergy under our supervision are afforded open access to the Staff Parish Committee.

E. IN AREAS OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST WE WILL

1. Be aware of how easily our judgment can be impaired by prior dealings, by becoming personally involved, or by becoming an advocate for one party against another; hence, we will carefully advise and refer persons to other clergy or other professionals such as lawyers, doctors, counselors, etc. when appropriate.
2. Recuse ourselves at an appropriate time from discussion and decision when there is an actual or potential conflict of interest in matters affecting ourselves, our family, or our financial interests.
3. Never take advantage of anyone to whom we are providing services in order to further our personal or financial interests or those of our family.
4. In order to avoid the appearance of impropriety, we will always confer with our District Superintendent before agreeing to serve as Power of Attorney or Estate Executor for any of our current or former parishioners.

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