

**United Methodist Church of Chugiak
PO Box 670909 - Chugiak AK 99567**

Employee Policy

Approved by: Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC)
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1. Authorization

- a. Paragraph 258.2 of the 2008 *The Book of Discipline* outlines the duties and authority of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC).
- b. Paragraph 258.2 g (12) states the following: "*The committee and the pastor shall recommend to the church council a written statement of policy and procedures regarding the process for hiring, contracting, evaluating, promoting, retiring, and dismissing staff personnel who are not subject to episcopal appointment as ordained clergy.*"
- c. This collection of policies and procedures has been developed for the United Methodist Church of Chugiak (UMC Chugiak) in fulfillment of this statement in *The Discipline*.
- d. Policy with respect to contracts and contractor services is covered in a separate policy document.

2. Employment Considerations

- a. Paragraph 204 of *The Discipline* states as follows: "*Each local church shall have a definite evangelistic, nurture, and witness responsibility for its members and the surrounding area and a missional outreach responsibility to the local and global community. It shall be responsible for ministering to all its members, wherever they live, and for persons who choose it as their church.*"
- b. Using reason, it follows that in hiring, evaluating, promoting, retiring and dismissing staff personnel and in the establishing and implementing of policies and procedures to accomplish these, SPRC must give the highest consideration to the role and mission of UMC Chugiak as a local church.
- c. On the other hand, UMC Chugiak is an employer, and its employees, the staff of UMC Chugiak, are people, fellow children of God, and fellow members of the body of Christ. With this in its mind and on its heart, UMC Chugiak will seek to be the most reliable and responsible type of employer. The church has the responsibility to see that entrance into employment and departure from employment are open and fair to all persons involved; that hours of work and basic salary compensation are equitable and just; that supporting benefits are provided when applicable; and that a comfortable working atmosphere is made available.

3. Hiring

- a. **General.** UMC Chugiak strives to hire the best-qualified applicant with consideration of such factors as education, experience, skills and professional ability. Selection for the job is contingent upon receipt of satisfactory reference reports. Many positions require satisfactory completion of criminal background checks in order to comply with the UMC Chugiak Safe Sanctuary program. Hiring is accomplished by advertisement by the SPRC, after Church Council approval. A list of applicants can be obtained from the Chairperson of SPRC.
- b. **Filling Existing Positions.** When a staff member gives notice of resignation or SPRC otherwise becomes aware that a position is being vacated, the following procedures will be followed:
 - (1) SPRC will notify the chair of the appropriate committee or board of the impending vacancy, as follows:

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- (a) The Trustees, if the position is related to care of the building (e.g., Custodian).
 - (b) The Worship Committee, if the position is related to worship functions (e.g., Director of Music, Accompanist).
 - (c) The Finance Committee, if the position is related to financial functions (e.g., Treasurer).
 - (d) The Nursery Committee, if the position is related to the nursery (e.g., Nursery Care Coordinator).
 - (e) An ad hoc Committee appointed by the Chair of the Church Council, if the position is a general support position and does not fall into either of the categories in (a) through (d) above (e.g., the Office Manager).
- (2) The appropriate committee will meet and confer with SPRC to review and evaluate the current Position Description for the position, determine whether changes in duties and/or compensation are appropriate, and explore whether the functions carried out by the position could be accomplished by a volunteer or team of volunteers.
 - (3) If it is determined that no significant changes in the position are appropriate, then the SPRC will advertise for said position and in accordance with procedures contained in 3.d., fill the staff position and advise the Church Council. The SPRC will provide for all of the personnel-relations functions.
 - (4) If it is determined that significant changes to the position are appropriate, the same committee, in continuing conference with SPRC, will develop a revised Position Description, along with a proposal indicating the justification for the action, proposed compensation, and other supporting information, for presentation to and action by the Church Council, in the same manner as for a new position as set forth below.
- c. **Creating and Filling New Positions.** In most cases the Church Council would initiate the process of creating a new church staff position. Others wishing to initiate discussion of a new position would make their point known at a meeting of the Church Council, where it would be referred for study according to the following procedures.
- (1) The initiating person or committee would present to the Church Council a brief statement concerning the perceived need for the position.
 - (2) The Church Council may or may not agree to proceed with detailed consideration of the proposed position.
 - (3) If the Church Council agrees, further consideration will be referred to a conference committee including the following:
 - (a) SPRC
 - (b) The initiating committee or, if the nature of the proposed position does not fit well with one of those, to an ad hoc committee appointed by the Church Council Chair.
 - (c) Finance Committee
 - (d) The Pastor

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- (4) This conference committee will develop a Position Description, along with a proposal indicating the justification for the action, proposed compensation, budgetary considerations and other supporting information, for presentation to and action by the Church Council. Whether the conference committee's findings are favorable or unfavorable, they will be presented to the Church Council, including any unresolved concerns or other dissent.
 - (5) If the Church Council's action is favorable, SPRC will advertise for said position and in accordance with procedures contained in 3.d., fill the staff position and advise the Church Council. The SPRC will provide for all of the personnel-relations functions.
- d. **The Hiring Process.** When it has been determined through the processes above that a staff position is to be filled, SPRC will use the following process:
- (1) Depending on the nature of the position, SPRC will announce its availability through the public media, the *Chugiak Crier* newsletter, District and/or Conference publications, and/or other means. The following notice is to be included with all position availability notices:

The United Methodist Church of Chugiak is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer. Hiring, as well as all other personnel practices, will be carried out without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, or handicapping conditions. The United Methodist Church of Chugiak does reserve the right to consider the religious faith of applicants for positions directly involved in the Christian programs and ministries of the Church.
 - (2) In selecting for interview, and in interviewing and evaluating applicants for staff positions, SPRC and a member of the appropriate committee will consider education, experience, skills and professional ability, as they relate to the requirements set forth in the Position Description. In verifying experience and skills, SPRC may seek reports from references. No preference in hiring will be given to UMC Chugiak members.
 - (3) Once the hiring committee has made a tentative selection, the SPRC Chairperson or Vice Chairperson will prepare a written offer of employment to the prospective employee. Only the SPRC Chairperson or Vice Chairperson is authorized to formally offer employment to a prospective employee. Verbal offers of employment should not be made by other individuals.

4. Employee Records

- a. The Church Treasurer will keep payroll records on each employee. Other records will be kept by SPRC.
- b. UMC Chugiak will respect the confidential nature of employee records. They will be released only to the employee, the supervisor, SPRC and, as applicable, the Church Treasurer.
- c. The employee is responsible for informing SPRC of any changes in address, telephone number and for informing the Church Treasurer of any change in withholding (W-4) status.

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5. Work Schedule

- a. **Work Week.** The basic workweek is from Monday through Sunday, depending on the position. Work week will be defined for each position in the position description.
- b. **Full-Time Versus Part-Time Employment.** Employment where the regularly scheduled workweek is forty (40) hours is considered full-time employment. All other employment is part-time employment. Full time or part time will be designated during the hiring process.
- c. **Hourly Employment.** Hourly employees will be paid a stated wage for each hour actually worked.
- d. **Salaried Employment.** Salaried employees will be paid a stated salary for each calendar year of employment.
- e. **Seasonal Salaried Employment.** Seasonal salaried employees will be paid a stated salary for each month in the designated season.
- f. **Pay Period.** For all employees the pay period shall be semi-monthly. Paychecks will be issued on the fifteenth and last day of each month.
- g. **Attendance**
 - (1) Each employee is to report to his/her assigned workplace at the scheduled day and time, except when on duty approved leave or in case of emergency.
 - (2) Leave is provided to some employees, as stated below. An employee proposing to use vacation leave must request it in writing and have it approved by his supervisor in advance.
 - (3) In the event of bad weather, an employee shall contact his/her supervisor to determine whether or not he/she should report to work. Time lost to bad weather will be charged as vacation leave (which will be advanced in case of insufficient leave balance), unpaid leave, or worked on a following day, as negotiated between the supervisor and the employee.
 - (a) An hourly employee will be paid for at least two hours' work if either 1) he/she has tried but failed to contact the supervisor, has reported to work and is sent home, or 2) has reported to work as normal but is sent home by the supervisor during the work day due to bad weather conditions which are threatening or have begun.
 - (b) The pastor or the Worship Committee chair will make the determination if weather conditions are bad enough to prevent worship, office operations, or other programs. A liberal leave policy during inclement weather may be used at the discretion of the pastor.
 - (4) Any employee who cannot report to work due to personal illness, family emergency, etc., regardless of whether or not the situation is covered by leave, must notify his/her supervisor as soon as possible.

6. Compensation and Other Benefits

- a. **Salary.** Each employee's salary is set by SPRC, subject to budgetary review and approval by the Church Council.

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- (1) An initial salary will be set by SPRC during the hiring process, and documented in the written offer of employment.
- (2) SPRC will review annually each employee's salary in September. Factors affecting salary changes will include:
 - (a) Changes in the level of the employee's performance, as measured against the standards set forth in the position description during the annual performance evaluation.
 - (b) Changes in the general cost of living.
 - (c) Budgetary considerations.
- (3) Any changes in salary must be documented by a written memo or email to the Financial Secretary from or signed by the SPRC Chairperson or Vice Chairperson.

b. **Leave**

- (1) **Eligibility.** All employees, except those in 6.b.(2), earn paid Vacation Leave and paid Sick Leave at the rates described below.
- (2) **Employees Not Eligible for Leave.** Part-time, hourly employees with a scheduled workweek of less than 20 hours receive no paid Vacation Leave or Sick Leave.
- (3) **Vacation Leave**
 - (a) All eligible employees earn Vacation Leave at a rate of one week per year after their first full year through the third year of employment, then two weeks per year thereafter until the end of their 10th full year of employment, then three weeks per year thereafter.
 - (b) Vacation leave will be paid to hourly employees based on normally scheduled hours during a work week.
- (4) **Sick Leave**
 - (a) All eligible employees accrue Sick Leave at a rate of 2 days per year. Sick leave will be paid to hourly employees based on normally scheduled hours during a work day. Unused Sick Leave does not transfer over from one year to the next calendar year.
 - (b) Generally, Sick Leave is for the physical illness of the employee. In accordance with applicable laws, Sick Leave may be used for bereavement due to death of an immediate family member, serious illness of an immediate family member, or other serious personal circumstance preventing the employee from reporting for work.
 - (c) Sick Leave is not a right that is earned and may be taken at the employee's discretion: it is a benefit designed to protect the employee's income due to bona fide illness. UMC Chugiak reserves the right to require an employee to see a doctor at employee's expense, if recurring illness gives rise to questions about the employee's health and physical suitability for employment.

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(5) **Maternity/Adoption Leave**

- (a) **Policy.** Up to six weeks unpaid maternity/adoption leave may be granted. Any unused Vacation and/or Sick Leave may be used during the maternity leave, but in no case will leave exceed six weeks.
 - (b) **Example.** Employee A has one week of Vacation Leave available and wishes to use it during maternity leave. Employee A will then have 5 weeks unpaid leave and one week paid for a total of six weeks.
- (6) **Other Leave Requests.** Any other leave requests not contained in this document shall be given to the SPRC for consideration.

c. **Holiday Pay**

- (1) **Eligibility.** Full time and hourly employees with a scheduled workweek of more than 20 hours receive holiday pay. Salaried employees do not receive holiday pay.
- (2) **Hours Paid.** Holiday pay will be paid to hourly employees based on normally scheduled hours during a work day.
- (3) **Holidays**
 - (a) National holidays will be observed by the entire Church staff to the maximum extent possible. If the holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, Friday or Monday may be taken off with the pastor's knowledge and approval.
 - (b) Consideration must be given, however, to the fact that many normal holidays, such as Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving are times of maximum activity for the Church and the operation of the Church must be maintained to meet the needs of the congregation. There is no extra compensation for holidays worked.
 - (c) Paid holidays that are observed by UMC Chugiak are as follows:
 - New Year's Day
 - Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday
 - President's Day
 - Memorial Day
 - Independence Day
 - Labor Day
 - Thanksgiving
 - Day after Thanksgiving
 - Christmas Eve
 - Christmas Day
 - New Year's Eve

7. **Evaluation and Promotion**

- a. **Initial Evaluation.** After the first ninety calendar days of employment, the supervisor and a representative from the SPRC will conduct a performance evaluation with the

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employee. The first ninety days' evaluation is intended to provide an early indication of the employee's adjustment to the new job and to clarify performance expectations.

- b. **Annual Evaluation.** During the month of August, the supervisor and a representative from the SPRC will conduct an annual evaluation for each staff employee.
- (1) Performance appraisals will be used by the SPRC for annual salary increases, promotions and other personnel action. The employee's supervisor or SPRC may request additional performance appraisals, whenever it is deemed necessary. During the evaluation sessions the supervisor should discuss the employee's job performance in terms of specific objectives standards. The employee should take this opportunity to discuss the evaluation and any other job related concern.
 - (2) A performance form obtained from the SPRC Chairperson will be used for all evaluations. Completed forms will be filed with the SPRC Chairperson and placed in the employee's record. This information will be available to SPRC. The evaluation form and process shall be designed to measure effectively the employee's performance during the previous twelve months, or since his/her last evaluation, according to the following factors:
 - (a) How well the employee's skills, abilities and talents match the requirements of the job as set forth in the job description.
 - (b) The employee's work habits (punctuality, diligence, responsibility, use of time, ability to work as a team member, etc.).
 - (c) The quality of the employee's work.
 - (d) The employee's attitude, enthusiasm and level of motivation for his/her work.
 - (e) The employee's overall contribution to the achievement of the Church's goals and missions.
- c. **Promotion Opportunities.** Promotion preference will be given to those employees with a consistently outstanding record of performance as established in annual performance appraisals.

8. Termination – Retirement

- a. UMC Chugiak has an "at-will employment policy". Under Alaska law, at-will employees may be terminated for any reason, so long as it's not illegal.
- b. An employee who wishes to resign voluntarily should give his/her supervisor and the Chairperson of SPRC written notice two (2) weeks or more if possible prior to the last day of work.
- c. Retirement age and other pertinent information have not been established at this time because the church does not have a retirement program other than Social Security.
- d. Employees who leave employment for any reason are asked to meet with the Chairperson of SPRC for an exit interview. This exit interview meeting is the responsibility of both the employee and the SPRC Chairperson.

9. **Grievance Procedure.** It is the intent of UMC Chugiak that employees, their supervisors, the Pastor and SPRC will maintain open communications and a cooperative spirit of teamwork, substantially reducing or eliminating the need for a formal "Grievance

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Procedure." Recognizing that this ideal cannot always be met, the following procedure is established:

- a. A grievant is an employee who feels that a situation exists or has occurred which impairs his or her ability to perform his or her job responsibilities and who has been unsuccessful in resolving this situation through informal discussions with his or her supervisor.
- b. A grievant will write down the grievance in sufficient detail that someone not necessarily familiar with that employee's day-to-day work situation can understand the situation leading to the grievance.
- c. The grievant will present the grievance in writing to the supervisor, who will try to resolve the situation as soon as practical. The supervisor will respond in writing to the grievant within five days. Copies will be given to the chair of the SPRC and placed in the employee's file.
- d. If the grievant is not satisfied with the supervisor's proposed resolution, the supervisor will deliver the written grievance and the supervisor's written response to the SPRC Chairperson.
- e. The SPRC Chairperson will appoint a grievance committee, which will meet, hear from all affected parties and render a decision within 5 days. The size of the grievance committee shall be at the SPRC Chairperson's discretion, but not less than 3 members; it may be a "committee of the whole" if the Chairperson considers the grievance serious enough to warrant.
- f. The grievance committee's decision will be final.
- g. Records of grievance proceedings will be maintained by SPRC.
- h. Employees have access to the SPRC at all times.

10. **Disciplinary Action**

- a. Employees are expected to be self-motivated and responsible for their own job performance and proper behavior, and disciplinary action should seldom be required.
- b. Sudden, severe disciplinary problems may warrant immediate termination; however, in case of lesser problems, "progressive discipline" normally will be employed. That is, the severity of the problem and the extent to which it is a repeat problem will be considered in selecting the severity of discipline. The decision on whether to use progressive discipline, and at which step to start, is the supervisor's. The progression of discipline will normally follow these 3 steps:
 - (1) Verbal Reprimand
 - (2) Written Reprimand
 - (3) Termination
- c. The supervisor shall advise the SPRC Chairperson of any disciplinary action. Copies of written reprimands will be filed with the employee's record.
- d. The supervisor will consult with the SPRC in making a decision to terminate an employee.

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- e. "Inappropriate Behavior" warranting disciplinary action includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - (1) Unauthorized absence
 - (2) Chronic tardiness
 - (3) Smoking in any church building, or where otherwise prohibited
 - (4) Inappropriate personal appearance
 - (5) Failure to report an on-the-job injury
 - (6) Gambling or soliciting (selling) on church property
 - (7) Disruptive behavior
 - (8) Child abuse

11. Other Policies

- a. **Volunteer Activities.** Employees can only volunteer for UMC Chugiak if they do so in a capacity that is different from their regular employment duties. If the employee is volunteering in the same capacity (doing the same duties for which s/he is also paid) then the hours worked, whether "volunteered" or not, must be combined for Fair Labor Standards Act purposes and the employee must be paid for all the service hours provided to the employer.
- b. **Payment for Attendance at Committee Meetings.** Employees will be compensated at their normal rate of pay when attending meetings associated with their primary job activities. For example, if the Office Manager attends a Communications Committee meeting, that individual would be paid at their normal rate of pay. It is incumbent on the employee to notify the committee chairperson prior to the meeting that payment is necessary, and the chairperson will make the decision on whether the individual should attend the meeting.