A GUIDELINE FOR AN EFFECTIVE PASTORAL MINISTRY
WITHIN THE NEW YORK ANNUAL CONFERENCE
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH:

A. Preamble:
The calling to pastoral ministry is a high and holy calling from the body of disciples known as the church of Jesus Christ whereby some are set apart to take particular responsibility for making disciples for the transformation of the world.

Each person in pastoral ministry, whether beginning, continuing, or completing the journey of service as deacon, elder, or local pastor, embodies and is held to the high standards contained in Wesley’s historic questions (paragraph 310)

An effective clergy person knows God, has the necessary gifts, and perhaps most importantly, produces fruits.

The purpose of this document is to set forth a working definition of clergy effectiveness. It attempts to discern the skills, abilities, knowledge, attributes and practices that facilitate the transformation of lives in a particular place of ministry. In the future this document may identify appropriate metrics of clergy effectiveness and set forth evaluative processes to be used by local church SPPR committees, District Committees on Ordained Ministry, and the Board of Ordained Ministry, as well as the Bishop and the Cabinet at their discretion, to ascertain clergy effectiveness with the intent of helping all of our clergy continue to develop and grow toward excellence in ministry. Evaluation of clergy effectiveness needs to examine evidence of both performance and fruits as they relate to the ministry context. Clergy supervisors (DS) and Staff Parish Relations Committees (SPRC) will be vital participants in this process.

Defining Clergy Effectiveness:
Scripture affirms many pastoral roles: shepherd, prophet, servant, teacher and caregiver among others. Effectiveness must be defined with mindfulness of all these roles and must be assessed in terms of the desired outcome of the mission of The United Methodist Church: “To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

Empowering Clergy Effectiveness:
Clergy persons at all stages of their vocation need resources and systemic support from all levels of our conference and denomination, in addition to personal support systems, to empower them to grow in effectiveness.

Assessing Clergy Effectiveness:
Clergy effectiveness needs to be measured within the context of an individual’s ministry and in light of the transformation that takes place in and around the faith community through her or his presence and work. Even though the question “How well is this clergy person performing each task of ministry?” is important, it must be weighed in terms of the ultimate question, which is: “To what extent are disciples of Jesus Christ made and is transformation happening in and through the Christian community he/she serves?” This question is explored with the
understanding that clergy are not the sole contributors to transformation in their communities or in the world.

Defining, empowering, and assessing clergy effectiveness in terms of fruit is a paradigm shift: effective clergy produce transformational outcomes.

Clergy persons are disciples of Jesus Christ, who are called, set-apart and model discipleship. Through word and sacrament and other means of grace they foster, sustain, nurture and equip the community of disciples in their journey to live out their ministry as part of the body of Christ in the world.

In order to foster clarity around such performance outcomes we present the following working definition of “disciples of Jesus Christ.”

A Working Definition of Disciples of Jesus Christ:

1. Disciples have an identity grounded in Jesus Christ and a sense of calling and vocation reflected in what they do in all aspects of their lives:
   a. Disciples are born out of personal experiences of God’s redeeming and healing grace in Christ Jesus.
   b. Disciples respond to Jesus’ call to follow him in his ministries of healing, reconciliation, justice, compassion and love for all peoples and all God’s creation.
   c. Disciples understand their life and work as part of God’s unfolding work of salvation.
2. Disciples have a passion for their own continued spiritual growth through faithful practices of spiritual disciplines. Therefore, disciples:
   a. Deepen prayer life and spiritual discernment.
   b. Grow in scriptural knowledge and theological reflection.
   c. Identify and apply their spiritual gifts in places of ministry both within and outside their faith community.
   d. Move beyond comfort zones, cross boundaries and break down walls of separation.
   e. Attend to the means of grace (¶102, BOD 2012) and allow them to inform their works of grace, mercy and justice.
   f. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, see themselves as agents of transformation in fostering healing, hope, justice, reconciliation and peace in the world.
3. Disciples, empowered by the Holy Spirit, make other disciples of Jesus Christ. Therefore disciples:
   a. share their faith with others through witness and testimony of the works of Jesus Christ in their lives.
   b. extend the invitation of discipleship to others.
   c. model discipleship through service and practice of the means of grace.
   d. continue to teach and nurture other disciples in their faith journey.
   e. recruit and enlist people of all backgrounds for ministry, including ordained ministry.
4. Disciples recognize and celebrate the communal nature of our life and work of ministry, and work to strengthen our connection and the church universal. Therefore disciples:
   a. Have the ability to understand and enter into various cultural contexts to work with communities of faith to grow together in Christian discipleship.
   b. Recognize personal limitations to facilitating growth in discipleship in a global cultural context and creatively work to overcome them.
   c. Grow into being comfortable in diverse cultural settings, even those that are hostile or difficult, are self-assured in ministerial identity and vocation in such diverse settings, and are intentional about their growth in cross-cultural competencies.
   d. Learn about, and are sensitive to, the cultural nuances of their communities and seek to grow with them in appreciating diversity.

B. Criteria for Clergy Effectiveness:

1. Preaching, teaching, leading in worship, and joyfully embodying a life of faith, hope and love in Jesus Christ.

An effective clergy person believes in God who is active always and affirms the redemptive power of God in every situation. Even when the present ministry fails to bear the desired fruits, spiritual leaders will enable their communities to seek new ways of embracing purposeful life, which may sometimes include purposeful death to yield new life, for the sake of God’s transformative ministry. Therefore:

   • An effective clergy person preaches, teaches and embodies hope with clarity and theological grounding in all situations.
   • An effective clergy person engages people in transformative worship that recalls the story of God’s saving acts in history and proclaims the presence of the reign of God in Christ Jesus to bring good news to the poor, freedom to the captives and God’s favor for all.
   • An effective clergy person deepens their own connection to God through spiritual practices and will encourage the congregation to do the same.
   • An effective clergy person understands, believes in and celebrates the power of Jesus Christ to bring healing and wholeness, forgiveness and reconciliation, justice and peace, to the lives of individuals, congregations, communities and to the global context.

2. Casting a vision for the church and helping the church make the vision a lived reality

An effective clergy person has an ability to discern, shape, articulate and proclaim God’s vision for the community. As part of a team, they help discern what God calls the people to be and to do at this point of their journey. Therefore:

   • An effective clergy person works with laity to develop a vision and strategies to reach that vision.
• An effective clergy person proclaims God’s vision for personal transformation in the ministry context as well as the larger community.
• An effective clergy person takes reasonable risks and demonstrates an ability to be flexible through openness to the Holy Spirit in order to facilitate the needed changes.
• An effective clergy person demonstrates leadership skills for bringing the vision of the ministry context into fruition.

3. Identifying and equipping lay leaders and ministry partners for the mission of the church

An effective clergy person has the ability to identify, inspire and maintain ministry partners. However, he or she cannot be held responsible for all aspects of ministry. A clergy person must be able to identify, recruit and nurture laity to partner with him or her in fulfilling God’s purpose for the ministry context. Therefore:

• An effective clergy person always looks for potential ministry partners inside and outside of the ministry context.
• An effective clergy person knows her/his spiritual gifts and enables the laity to claim and develop theirs.
• An effective clergy person understands conflict management, ministry burnout, and other group dynamics and prepares lay leaders to manage these processes effectively.

4. Engaging in holistic pastoral care both to self and to the community

An effective clergy person has an ability to model the life and work of transformation that we desire for the community. Especially in these times of change and anxiety, clergy need to be a non-anxious presence embodying peace, compassion, purpose and joy. Therefore:

• An effective clergy person cares for all people in times of joy and struggle and helps them grow.
• An effective clergy person knows her/his own limits in care, seeks qualified resources in the larger community, and makes referrals as appropriate.
• An effective clergy person matures in his/her Christian discipleship and is able to articulate purpose for his/her own life and encourage others to do the same.
• An effective clergy person keeps his/her own morale high through self-care, support systems and continued learning.

5. Demonstrating a commitment to the mission of The United Methodist Church and the church universal through accountability and integrity in all personal and professional relationships

An effective clergy person recognizes that she/he does not work in isolation, but rather as a part of a larger network of partners in ministry. She or he understands the need to continue growing
in her/his skills, gifts, and abilities. An effective clergy person recognizes that all ministry is inherently relational and connectional and thus seek to foster healthy relationships in all aspects of her/his life. Therefore:

- An effective clergy person maintains a sacred covenantal commitment, built in trust, in working with her/his peers for the mission of the gospel.
- An effective clergy person welcomes supervision and constructive feedback and maintains accountability with other ministry partners.
- An effective clergy person maintains high moral and ethical standards and is committed to working within the connectional and itinerant United Methodist structure.
- An effective clergy person demonstrates and continues to grow in cultural competency and flexibility, creatively overcoming barriers, and becoming more able to minister in increasingly diverse contexts and settings.
- An effective clergy person takes advantage of training and resources both inside and outside the Conference to continue to grow toward excellence in effective ministry.