

## **B. PARSONAGE STANDARDS OF THE NEW YORK ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

*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.*

### **I. Purpose**

The purpose of establishing parsonage standards is to help local congregations provide comfortable housing and to emphasize the mutual stewardship between the pastor and the congregation for proper care of the parsonage, its fixtures and its equipment. Implementation of these standards shall be by the pastor and (what is referred to here as) "the Committee". This may be the SPRC/PPRC, a Parsonage Committee, the Board of Trustees, or a composite group, as determined by the Charge/Church Conference. The ultimate responsibility resides with the SPRC/PPRC and Board of Trustees. (Discipline 2000, para. 2532.4)

### **II. Parsonage: Building, Equipment, and Grounds**

**A. Building:** Each Charge shall provide its pastor and family with a parsonage or comparable housing allowance. Where the parsonage is provided, and complies with the Conference parsonage standards, it is expected that the pastor will live there. If by agreement and consent of the Charge Conference, Pastor and District Superintendent, that the pastor does not live in the parsonage provided, no housing allowance shall be provided. The parsonage and grounds should be large enough to accommodate the needs of the pastor's family. The parsonage shall have an adequate heating system, shall be well insulated and equipped with storm windows, and shall include:

1. At least three bedrooms, with ample closet space in each.
2. Minimum of 1.5 bathrooms.
3. Utility/laundry area with adequate plumbing and wiring for all utilities.
4. Living and dining rooms adequate for entertaining.
5. Complete kitchen with built-in wall cabinets, floor cabinets, and counter space.
6. Pastor's study with book shelves where possible in addition to the pastor's office in the church.
7. Den or family room if possible.
8. A garage, car port, or off-street parking must be made available.
9. Essential items: adequate hot water heater, water softener where needed, sufficient three-prong electrical outlets in each room, at least one ABC-grade fire extinguisher per floor, smoke detectors for all

12B-2

floors and carbon monoxide detectors.

**B. Equipment:**

1. Appropriate window and floor coverings in each room. Window blinds or shades, curtains or drapes. Wall to wall carpeting or room sized rugs, area rugs, and appropriate floor coverings in kitchens, bathrooms, hallways, etc.
2. Appropriate paint and/or wall paper. The tastes of the occupant family should be taken into consideration when decisions are made. But neutral colors and textures will work best over time.
3. Kitchen: electric or gas range and oven in good condition; range hood with proper venting; modern refrigerator and freezer; dishwasher.
4. Laundry area: automatic washer and dryer
5. Outside equipment: lawn mower, lawn and garden tools, hose, ladder, and snow removal equipment.

**C. Grounds and Groundskeeping:**

1. Parsonage grounds shall be attractively landscaped. Steps, sidewalks, and walkways shall be in good repair.
2. The Committee shall meet with the pastor to determine responsibility for mowing lawns, raking leaves, tending flower beds, snow removal and other such services.

- D. Safety Issues:** Parsonage related safety issues such as determination of lead-free paint, radon detection, etc. are the joint responsibility of the S/PPRC and Board of Trustees.

**III. Furnishings**

All furniture is the responsibility of the pastor.

**IV. Responsibilities of the Charge**

- A. Insurance:** The trustees should be certain that the parsonage and church owned contents are insured for replacement cost against fire, theft, wind, and other area hazards. (See also V. B.&C.)
- B. Inspections:** Yearly inspection of all smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, oil or gas burners, fireplace chimneys, house drainage, and gutters. Bi-annual testing of well water, regular inspection for termites and other pests should be carried out by the Trustees.
- C. Utilities:** The Charge is to provide all utilities: heat--oil, gas, or electric; electricity; sewage line or septic system; private well or public water; garbage and trash disposal, paid directly to the vendor by local church/charge, unless pastor elects to pay them directly and be reimbursed.
- D. Provision for Adequate TV Reception:** The local church is to provide the

- cable hook up and “basic plus” service for up to two outlets. Premium channels and pay-per-view events are the responsibility of the pastor.
- E. Telephone and Electronic Communications Connections:** All parsonage communications charges are to be paid directly to the vendor by the local church/charge, unless the pastor elects to pay them directly and be reimbursed. This includes a telephone line (pastor to reimburse personal long distance use). Also a dedicated Fax and Internet service should be provided if not provided in the church office (pastor to reimburse personal long distance use).
- F. Annual Parsonage Review:** The S/PPRC Chair and Trustee Chair shall make annual inspections of the parsonage with the cooperation of the pastor and family to determine necessary repairs, replacements, and improvements: painting, papering, wiring, drapes and curtains, floor coverings, etc. Both the interior and exterior of the parsonage should be kept in good condition with maintenance work done regularly. Needs reported by the pastor between inspections should be taken care of promptly.
- G. Budget:** The Charge shall have an adequate annual budget item for Parsonage repair and replacement of property and equipment and to provide for a continual program of maintenance and improvement.
- H. Parsonage Book:** It is strongly recommended that the Committee and parsonage family maintain a record of all equipment belonging to the parsonage, including guarantees, instruction manuals, replacement parts, and telephone numbers of repair services and/or of members who assist in repairing equipment. This book should indicate all new purchases, location of item in the parsonage, a list of people who hold keys to the parsonage, improvements made on the premises, and other information helpful to an incoming pastor and should be kept on the premises.
- V. Responsibilities of the Pastor and Family**
- A.** The parsonage is the home of the pastor and his/her family while he/she is in the parish and their rights and privacy should be observed by the members of the Charge at all times. The pastor is responsible for any damage to the property by family members or pets. If possible, the damaged item is to be restored to its original condition or replaced. Any damage by pets, e.g. staining of carpets and/or floors is the responsibility of the pastor to repair or replace.
- B. Tenants’ Insurance Policy:** The pastor is responsible for carrying a tenants policy covering all personal property. It is strongly recommended that the pastor keep an inventory for this purpose of his/her possessions both at the church and in the parsonage.
- C.** Prior to leaving a charge, the pastor should meet with the committee to

12B-4

review any needed repairs or refurbishing and to plan cleaning. Redecorating should be done in consultation with the incoming pastor and family and arrangements made for a smooth and orderly transition.

- D. The pastor should leave for his/her successor:
1. Tagged keys for all locks.
  2. A list of who to call for emergencies.
  3. The Parsonage Book (see IV.H.) with notes on where to find such items as screens, garden tools, etc.

**VI. General Suggestions**

- A. An annual "open house" observance is recommended.
- B. The Committee and the parsonage family are responsible for the acceptance or rejection of any equipment offered to the parsonage as Charge property. When a donation is made, it should be clearly designated whether the item is a personal gift to the pastor and family or if the item is to remain in the parsonage.

**VI. Purchase of New Parsonages**

A local church which desires to build or purchase a new parsonage should take note of the requirements of paragraph **2543** of the **2000 Book of Discipline** regarding accessibility, ie

- (1) The parsonage must have on the ground floor level:
- a (A) one room that can be used as a bedroom by a person with disability;
- (B) one fully accessible bathroom; and
- (C) fully accessible laundry facilities; or
- (2) purchase a parsonage without the accessible features for persons with disabilities specified above and remodel it within one year's time, so that it does have those features.

## **New York Annual Conference Church Office Standards**

**VIII. Church Office**

**Church office** refers to space for secretarial and administrative personnel as well as space for the pastor.

The church is responsible for providing all furniture and equipment: This includes, but may not be limited to, desks, chairs, file cabinets, bookshelves, cabinets, all office supplies, etc.

Adequate offices today include computers with e-mail and web

capabilities, printers, plain-paper copy machines, fax machines, telephones and answering/voice mail machines. This is required equipment to adequately administer the church.

Since computer technology advances so rapidly, the Charge shall implement a program for system upgrading at least every five years or sooner.

In some cases it may be necessary for the church office to be in the parsonage. In those situations it must not intrude on the convenience and privacy of the parsonage family. The equipment, however, remains the property of the Charge.

NYAC 2001