

# **Cooperative Parish Roles and Responsibilities**

## **Parish Council**

*2016 Book of Discipline, ¶206.3.b*

A Parish Council is a body of active clergy appointed to the churches and charges in the Cooperative Parish and lay persons from each church and charge in a Cooperative Parish. All appointed clergy will participate in the Parish Council, including Deacons, Elders, Associate Members and Local Pastors serving in the Cooperative Parish. The lay members of Parish Council will be chosen by the congregation with the consultation of the appointed clergy of the Parish. There will be up to two lay members from each church or charge of the Cooperative Parish. The Parish Council will have an equal number of lay members from each church and charge in the Cooperative Parish. Parish Council formation will be balanced in gender, age, ethnicity and diversity.

The role of the Parish Council is critical to the life of the Cooperative Parish. Through the building of relationships, discovery and mutual sharing of gifts, expertise and skills, the Parish Council envisions, directs and implements the mission and ministry of the Cooperative Parish to meet the needs of all people in the communities of the Cooperative Parish and invites all people into a relationship with Jesus Christ through the Gospel message of hope, love and grace. The Parish Council will align the Cooperative Parish with the Mission, Vision and Core Values of the New York Annual Conference.

## **Parish Coordinator**

*2016 Book of Discipline, ¶206.3.b*

A Parish Coordinator is appointed by the Bishop to lead the Parish Council and coordinate the Cooperative Parish's activities in alignment with its mission and ministry to the communities and congregations of the Cooperative Parish. The Parish Coordinator convenes and presides at Parish Council meetings, provides leadership to the discovery and visioning process for the Cooperative Parish's mission and ministry, ensures communication of Cooperative Parish activities and updates to all communities and congregations in the Cooperative Parish. The Parish Coordinator is the primary liaison between the Parish Council and the Cooperative Parish to the District Superintendent. The Parish Coordinator facilitates cooperation and the collaborative process in the Cooperative Parish. They motivate and encourage the leaders of the Parish to mutually serve and engage the people in their community.

## **Appointed Clergy in the Cooperative Parish**

Deacons, Elders, Associate Members and Local Licensed Pastors who are appointed to the Cooperative Parish are members of the Cooperative Parish Council. They are appointed to serve

the Cooperative Parish and may also be appointed to serve a local church or charge. They will serve in their appointments to participate, facilitate, implement and support the work of the Parish Council and serve their congregation(s). The appointed clergy of the Cooperative Parish will work with the laity to strengthen the alignment in mission and ministry between the congregations of the Cooperative Parish through communication and opportunities for cooperative and collaborative activities and ministry.

### **Lay Members of the Parish Council**

The role of the elected lay members of the Parish Council is to fully participate in the exploration, decision-making and implementation of the mission and ministry of the Cooperative Parish. They will have “a Vision of what Cooperative Ministry is and the difference it can make, the Willingness to work to make the vision a reality, the Ability to work to help bring about change, and the Leadership Role to make the shared vision a reality.” –*Excerpted from Together We Can: Twelve Ways to Start and Strengthen Cooperative Parish Ministries, by Jerry D. Chapman, 88.*

See “[Responsibilities of Lay Members on Cooperative Parish Councils](#)” for more details.

### **Lay Members of the Cooperative Parish**

*2016 Book of Discipline, ¶127, 206.1-2*

All laity within the Cooperative Parish are members of their church and of the Cooperative Parish. When laity become professing members of a United Methodist congregation, they profess their faith in God, their desire to live as disciples of Jesus Christ, and their commitment to join with their church community to keep the vows of the Baptismal Covenant. One of these membership vows is to faithfully participate by their prayers, their presence, their gifts, their service, and their witness. This promise is fulfilled in the local church and in the cooperative parish.

The role of the lay members of the Cooperative Parish is to work in partnership with laity and clergy in the Parish to share the Gospel message and transform lives and communities. They will be interested, involved and active in the ministries of the Cooperative Parish. They will use their gifts, skills, expertise and experience in the strengthening of cooperative activities, ministries and relationships throughout the Parish.

Lay members of the Cooperative Parish are “active advocates of the gospel of Jesus Christ,” and are called to “carry out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) and to be missional.” As members of the Cooperative Parish, laity are responsible for engaging in the means of grace to build and strengthen their inward Christian discipleship and their outward Christian ministry and service to all people in the Cooperative Parish.

### **District Superintendent**

*2016 Book of Discipline, ¶206.2,5 ff*

District Superintendents give oversight, support and guidance for the effectiveness of each Cooperative Parish in their District. They communicate the expectations, needs, strategies and vision from the Bishop and Cabinet to the Cooperative Parish Coordinator and Parish Council. Through regularly scheduled consultations, they will provide resources, support, encouragement and share best practices with the Parish Coordinator and Parish Council. Their interactions with the Parish Coordinator and Parish Council will be part of the consultation process that will help inform the appointment needs for the Cooperative Parish.