

# How GCUMM Supports Pastors



All around the world men are absent in church worship services and community ministry. Most men simply do not go to church.

Most churches have strong United Methodist Women organizations, but in spite of the fact the *Book of Discipline* requires churches to have chartered organizations of United Methodist Men, this is not always the case.

Pastors who want to develop and expand their ministries to men will find a strong ally in GCUMM. The commission is helping men and youth grow in Christ - and pastors, churches and communities reap the benefits.

Pastors who find only a small percentage of men come through the front doors of their church will find the commission offers a host of suggestions about “back-door” ministries.

Working with partner organizations, the commission provides ways for pastors to link with:

- The Society of St. Andrew — potato drops and gleaning projects
- Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries — prison ministry
- Programs of Religious Activities with Youth — God and Country studies
- The Upper Room Prayer Center — operating remote prayer lines
- Big Brothers Big Sisters — mentoring program
- Hope of Hearing — providing hearing aids for children in Haiti
- Man in the Mirror — small group studies
- Mobility Worldwide — building hand carts for Third World amputees
- Stop Hunger Now — filling plastic bags of dehydrated meals for the hungry
- Strength for Service — providing devotional books to the military and first responders

## Scouting Ministry

Hundreds of scouting ministry specialists are connecting men with their local churches through youth serving agencies. Some 7,000 United Methodist Churches now host Scout troops and Cub packs. This is extraordinary because 50 percent of Scouts have no church home. Engaging kids in church-sponsored scouting activities frequently results in families becoming church members. Plus, many churches that take advantage of God and Country studies see a higher engagement in confirmation classes.

The commission believes that discipleship occurs best through the local church and under the guidance of the local pastor. The Nashville-based agency works with leaders of UMM and men’s ministry specialists to help pastors assess, identify, equip, resource and ignite their ministries to men.

Men and men's issues are two of the least resourced areas in our society. The commission provides materials and helps pastors organize their ministries to men through traditional organizations of UMM and a host of other small groups, service organizations, recreational activities and studies.

## Ways in which the commission supports pastors

- ❖ The commission and scouting ministry specialists are dedicated to helping pastors develop effective ministries to men and young people through scouting and other youth-serving agencies.
- ❖ The GCUMM website provides resources focused on ministries to men and youth.
- ❖ The commission provides an annual President’s Packet to all chartered churches with scores of materials to enrich ministries to men.
- ❖ The commission provides a quarterly magazine that provides information about innovative ways to expand ministries to, with and for men.
- ❖ The commission staff has the heart, gifts, and experience to help pastors develop relational ministries.
- ❖ A national team of men’s ministry specialist helps pastors expand their ministries to men.
- ❖ Jurisdictional, conference, and district leaders of UMM provide pastors with the “do’s” and “don’ts” in men’s ministry.
- ❖ Webinars, conferences and special events provide practical models to create and maintain effective ministries to men.

# 52 ways to support your pastor

## Physical Dimension

1. Allow the pastor to choose which areas to focus on when improving his/her health and well-being. Do not make recommendations.
2. Provide fruits, vegetables, or other healthy foods as welcome/appreciation gifts instead of baked goods.
3. Encourage the pastor to be physically active and participate in recreational activities appropriate to his/her abilities.
4. Encourage the pastor to care for his/her physical health by resting when overworked or when ill.
5. Allow the pastor sufficient time to recover from illness, injury or surgery.
6. Ensure healthy food choices are available at potlucks and other church events.
7. Don't insist the pastor "try everything" at food-related events or push him/her to eat unhealthy foods.
8. Work to correct any parsonage, office or other physical environment problems in a timely manner with input from the pastor.
9. Allow the pastor to take time off for doctor's appointments and preventive screenings.
10. Respect the pastor's privacy regarding personal health issues.

## Emotional Dimension

11. Encourage the pastor to schedule two days off each week.
12. Respect your pastor's days off. Contact him/her only for "true emergencies." Discuss in advance what constitutes a "true emergency."
13. Encourage the pastor to take his/her full allotment of vacation time each year and to not return from vacation to perform funerals, whenever possible. Arrange for pastoral care coverage while he/she is on vacation.
14. Recognize that serving as a pastor requires a great deal of emotional energy (e.g., dealing with deaths, conflicts in the church, and multiple demands from members, the district superintendent and others).
15. Be sensitive to more demanding times of the church year and arrange for additional support from lay members.
16. Respect the pastor's responsibility to keep many issues and information confidential, such as details of member illnesses and financial information.
17. Encourage the pastor to have a coach or counselor outside the church with whom he/she can discuss church and personal issues.
18. Respect the privacy of the pastor and his/her family at home and in the community.
19. Observe "Pastor Appreciation Month" in October.
20. Discuss any conflicts or disagreements with the pastor directly and confidentially. Give him/her the benefit of the doubt and seek reconciliation. Encourage others to do the same.
21. Support the pastor in establishing congregational expectations for his/her time, talents and priorities.
22. Work with the pastor to identify which church programs and activities truly require the pastor's presence and which might be equally guided by lay leaders; manage congregational expectations accordingly.

## Spiritual Dimension

23. Recognize that Sunday is a work day.
24. Allow time for the pastor to take regular spiritual retreats.
25. Encourage the pastor to include prayer/reflection as a part of daily work-time, letting others know calls/e-mails will not be answered during this time except for emergencies.
26. Recognize that the pastor is also on a spiritual journey and will not have "all the answers."
27. Pray for the pastor, spouse and family. Ask if the pastor would welcome a group of UM Men to pray with him/her before worship services.
28. Discuss theological differences in a respectful manner. Recognize that Christians can come to somewhat different understandings depending on their backgrounds, life situations, and God's unique work in their lives.

29. Encourage the pastor to take a renewal time (several weeks for renewal and/or study) every few years, particularly before or after very demanding times, such as a building campaign, relocation, or other major church endeavor.
30. Encourage the pastor to meet periodically with a trained spiritual director.
31. Share with the pastor how his/her ministry has strengthened your own relationship with Christ.
32. Support the pastor in practicing spiritual disciplines in a way that fits his/her personal relationship with Christ.

### **Social Dimension**

33. Encourage the pastor to socialize with others outside the church “family” with whom he/she can “step outside” the pastoral role for a period of time.
34. Understand that “social” events with church members (although fun for everyone) are not always truly social events for the pastor who can be pulled into the pastoral role at any time.
35. Respect the pastor’s time set aside to spend with spouse, family, and friends.
36. Support the pastor in “getting out-of-town” regularly, particularly when serving in a small town, in order to engage in activities outside the church’s direct mission field.
37. Encourage the pastor’s participation in a clergy accountability/support group and allow him/her time during the work week to participate.
38. Invite the pastor and his/her spouse/family to civic and community functions where he/she can meet others in the community.
39. Welcome the pastor’s spouse and family as a part of the congregation and community without unrealistic expectations or demands, such as expecting the pastor’s children to always be perfectly-behaved or expecting the spouse to be an “unpaid staff member.”
40. Encourage the pastor to engage in hobbies and enjoyable recreational activities outside the church setting.
41. Avoid scheduling church meetings or activities requiring the pastor’s presence more than two nights a week.
42. If your pastor is single, do not try to “set him/her up” with a member of the congregation or a member’s relatives. Respect his/her privacy in dating relationships.

### **Financial Dimension**

43. Compensate the pastor fairly according to his/her experience, education and effectiveness.
44. Provide all paychecks and reimbursements to the pastor on schedule. Never ask the pastor to wait for his/her paycheck or reimbursement because church funds are low.
45. Ensure that all pension, insurance and any other benefit payments are made when due. Delayed payments may result in loss of earnings or put important benefits at risk of cancellation.
46. Recognize that pastors who are recent seminary graduates may have significant student loan debt that must be repaid; many continue to have significant debt later in their career as well.
47. Understand that the pastor’s spouse may also work to support the family financially in order to reach long-term goals, such as sending children to college and retirement.
48. Budget adequate funds to cover the costs of the pastor’s continuing education.
49. Ensure adequate funds are budgeted to cover the costs of the pastor’s attendance at annual conference or other clergy meetings.
50. Be aware of the unique tax laws that apply to United Methodist clergy. Work with the pastor to structure his/her compensation package in a way that best fits his/her family and life situation.
51. Be sure the pastor is aware of ways to make personal contributions toward his/her retirement and to utilize the financial planning resources available through Wespath Benefits and Investment.
52. Confirm your congregation supports the Ministerial Education Fund apportionment and other conference-level funds supporting clergy education and scholarships.

*This information is provided by Wespath Benefits and Investments  
(formerly the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits)*