

 GUIDELINES

nominations
and
leadership
development

*Identifying, Equipping,
and Deploying Spiritual
Leaders for the
Mission of the Church*

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General Board of Discipleship

NOMINATIONS AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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Some paragraph numbers for and language in the Book of Discipline may have changed in the 2008 revision, which was published after these Guidelines were printed. We regret any inconvenience.

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Contents

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Welcome | 4 |
| Welcome to Your Ministry! | 6 |
| What Is My Job? | 6 |
| Identify | |
| Develop | |
| Deploy | |
| Evaluate | |
| Monitor | |
| Conducting Your Work | 17 |
| The Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development | |
| Getting Started | |
| Working Together | |
| Tools for Your Work | 21 |
| Set Goals and Objectives | |
| A Checklist of Responsibilities for the Year | |
| Getting to Know You | |
| Develop a List of Positions | |
| Develop Job Descriptions | |
| Selecting and Supporting Leaders | 27 |
| Inviting People to Serve | |
| Preparing an Orientation Packet | |
| Support and Recognition | |
| Final Comments | |
| Resources | 31 |
| General Agency Contacts | Inside Back Cover |

Welcome

You are so important to the life of the Christian church! You have consented to join with other people of faith who, through the millennia, have sustained the church by extending God's love to others.

You have been called and have committed your unique passions, gifts, and abilities to a position of leadership. This Guideline will help you understand the basic elements of that ministry within your own church and within The United Methodist Church.

Called to Spiritual Leadership

Each person is called to ministry by virtue of his or her baptism, and that ministry takes place in all aspects of daily life, in and outside the church. As a pastoral leader or leader among the laity, your ministry is not just a "job," but a spiritual endeavor. You *are* a spiritual leader now, and others will look to you for spiritual leadership. What does this mean?

First, *all* persons who follow Jesus are called to grow spiritually through the practice of various Christian habits (or "means of grace") such as prayer, Bible study, private and corporate worship, acts of service, Christian conferencing, and so on. Jesus taught his disciples practices of spiritual growth and leadership that you, as a disciple, are to share with others as they look to you to be a model and guide.

Second, it means that you always keep your eye on the main reasons for any ministry—to help others grow to a mature faith in God that moves them to action on behalf of others, especially "the least" (see Matthew 25:31-46). This is an aspect of "disciple making," which is the ultimate goal of all that we do in the church.

CULTIVATING VISION AND MISSION

As a spiritual leader, a primary function you carry is to help those you lead to see as clearly as possible what God is calling your church to be and to do. Ideally, your church council first forms this vision and then forms plans and goals for how to fulfill that vision. As a leader, you will help your team remain focused and accountable to honor the vision and goals to which the church is committed. You will help your team create and evaluate suggestions, plans, and activities against the measure: *Does this move us closer to our church's vision to bring others to God in this place and time?*

CHRISTIAN CONFERENCING

While there are appropriate and useful business-like practices that apply to church life, Christian practices distinguish the church as the church. In the United Methodist tradition, how we meet and work together is important. “Christian Conferencing” involves listening not only to each other but also listening intently for the will of God in any given task or conversation. This makes prayer essential in the midst of “business as usual.” As Christians, we are called to “speak the truth in love.” This is a special way to speak in which we treat one another as if each of us were Christ among us. As a spiritual leader in your ministry area, you have the privilege and opportunity to teach and model these practices. By remembering that each of us is beloved of God and discerning the presence of God in all that the church does, every task becomes worshipful work.

THE MISSION OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The United Methodist Church is a connectional church, which means in part that every local church is interrelated through the structure and organization of districts, conferences, jurisdictions, and central conferences in the larger “family” of the denomination. *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* describes, among other things, the ministry of all United Methodist Christians, the essence of servant ministry and leadership, how to organize and accomplish that ministry, and how our connectional structure works (see especially ¶¶125–138).

Our Church is more than a structure; it is a living organism. The *Discipline* describes our mission to proclaim the gospel and to welcome people into the body of Christ, to lead people to a commitment to God through Jesus Christ, to nurture them in Christian living by various means of grace, and to send persons into the world as agents of Jesus Christ (¶122). Thus, through you—and many other Christians—this very relational mission continues.

(For help in addition to this Guideline and the *Book of Discipline*, see “Resources” at the end of your Guideline, www.umc.org, and the other websites listed on the inside back cover.)

Welcome to Your Ministry!

Welcome to your ministry! You have been asked to be involved in the important work of helping persons discover their spiritual gifts and develop their leadership skills in order to serve the world in the name of Jesus Christ. This means that you have been elected by the charge conference to serve as a member of the **committee on nominations and leadership development** (formerly the nominating committee or committee on lay leadership). This committee or team serves **throughout the year** to guide the church council or alternative structure on matters regarding the leadership of the congregation other than employed staff.

You were elected to serve on this committee because the charge conference considered you to be sensitive to the leadership needs of the congregation and to know the capabilities of the persons in the congregation. By accepting this role, you declare your intent to share your gifts with your congregation and to support and lead it in this way.

This committee's work will affect your life in the church, as well as the lives of others. The influence of the persons you recruit for the various tasks in your church, when elected, will go beyond the bounds of your congregation. These leaders will be representatives of the body of Christ in the surrounding community. Some will represent your congregation in the district and conference structures of The United Methodist Church as well.

What Is My Job?

according to *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* (§258.1) the charge of the committee on nominations and leadership development is to:

- **identify** the gifts and strengths of persons in the congregation
- **develop** their gifts and skills and nurture them in their mission or ministry roles
- **deploy** persons according to their gifts and passion in areas of service within the church, community, and world (see also §125.)
- **evaluate** the effectiveness of their service and provide necessary training and support
- **monitor** the progress of their development and celebrate their accomplishments and service.

Identify

What process is currently used to identify new leaders or fill the required positions in your congregation? If the committee on nominations and leadership development is functioning more like the former name “nominating committee,” now is the time to consider a better way of doing things!

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

As Christians, the body of Christ, we all share a common identity in Christ, but we certainly are not all the same. We each have unique gifts, strengths, talents, and abilities that enable us to live out our faith in a wide variety of ways. The apostle Paul explains it this way: “For as in one body we have many members, and not all members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members of one another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us” (Romans 12:4-6). He further explains in 1 Corinthians 12: “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone” (12:4-6). Paul insists that the body of Christ cannot function without all of the parts working together.

MORE THAN A WARM BODY

It is the role of the committee on nominations and leadership development to help people identify their gifts and understand how they can use their unique combination of gifts in service for Christ *in the world*. For too long, our churches have selected people to fill positions of responsibility only or primarily *in the church*, and we have done even this without regard to the specific spiritual gifts, passion, and preparation of the individuals concerned. We encourage congregations to use an assessment tool or inventory to help people discover their spiritual gifts and then seek to match the gifts needed for a particular position or area of service to the gifts, passion, and preparation of individuals.

Don’t confuse the skills required for secular jobs or professions with spiritual gifts. Although the gifts of the Spirit may be used in anyone’s secular job, being skilled at accounting may not be the gift God has given that person for work in the Kingdom. Persons who are teachers by profession may not have the spiritual gift of teaching. When you are thinking about who may teach in your congregation, be sure your process helps you identify persons who have the spiritual gift for teaching regardless of whether they are professionally credentialed as a teacher.

CONSIDER PASSION

God not only gives each of us different spiritual gifts but also gives a compelling desire or passion to make a difference in a particular area of mission

or ministry. Passion is another aspect to consider when searching for persons gifted for roles in mission and ministry. What if someone has the spiritual gift for teaching? Should she teach third-grade Sunday school? Perhaps, but perhaps not. He may not have a passion for the spiritual growth of children, but does have passion for community outreach. This gift of teaching may be better used to help others understand the importance of the church's role in reaching out to the world beyond the walls and windows of the church. When spiritual gifts are used in an area of passion, the effects and success can be even greater.

GOD'S PURPOSES

As members of the body of Christ, we are called to use our gifts, strengths, talents, and abilities in ways that fulfill God's purposes. When this linkage occurs, lives are enriched, mission and ministry ensue, and God's purposes are fulfilled. When this fails to happen, the whole body of Christ suffers.

As a member of the committee on nominations and leadership development, you have the privilege and responsibility to link persons who have gifts to share with opportunities to meet specific needs within your congregation and community. This requires diligence and a strong commitment on your part. But it can be a joyous and rewarding experience as you help persons discover and use their gifts in mission and ministry. Perhaps a spiritual gifts assessment can become a part of the new member class or orientation. Offering such an assessment on a regular basis can be a way to stay current with the membership and their spiritual gifts.

It can be empowering for people to discover that they do indeed have Spirit-given gifts that are intended to be used in mission and ministry for the sake of Christ's church. Imagine the people in your church on fire, ready and willing to use their gifts for service!

LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

Identify leadership qualities as you consider selecting persons to positions of leadership and service. Remember that not all opportunities for service require extraverted leadership abilities. People who may not be comfortable speaking before a group may do very well in one-on-one situations or behind the scenes. Keep these issues in mind when you are deciding how to deploy persons in ministry.

Develop

The functions of the committee on nominations and leadership development include more than filling empty slots and passing on those names to the charge conference. The primary purpose of this committee is to help find ways to develop persons' leadership abilities.

EFFECTIVE LEADERS:

- Are good listeners—they listen actively to ideas, concerns, or suggestions
- Show concern and compassion for others—they express the love of God through words and actions
- Are servant leaders—they are willing to share in the work but also know when and how to delegate responsibility
- Are aware of their own gifts and abilities—but they can recognize the gifts of others and are willing to step aside to let them use their gifts and abilities
- Attend to their own spiritual growth and discipleship
- Are able to lead meetings as times of Christian conferencing—they develop agendas that include ample time for Biblical reflection, prayer, singing, and so forth.

SPIRITUAL LEADERS

Developing spiritual leaders within the congregation is crucial and should begin with the committee on nominations and leadership development members. You have the opportunity and the privilege to be an example of spiritual leadership.

“Members of the committee shall engage in and be attentive to developing and enhancing their own Christian spiritual life in light of the mission of the Church” (*Book of Discipline* ¶258.1). In order to help others develop in their spirituality, the committee members must themselves engage in Christian spiritual practices that cultivate their relationship with God and participate in study for continuous spiritual growth and leadership skill improvement.

THE MEANS OF GRACE

John Wesley called these spiritual practices or disciplines the **means of grace**. These enable Christians to grow in grace and in relationship with God to become and remain the people that God has called us to be. Just as no runner tries to run a marathon without training and no musician tries to perform a solo or play in a symphony without rehearsing, so no Christian should expect to live well as a disciple of Jesus Christ without practicing the means of grace.

These means of grace are the basics of Christian discipleship. The practice of the means of grace enables Christians to obey the command to love God with all one’s heart, soul, strength, and mind; to love one’s neighbor as oneself; and to love one another as Christ loves. When we make these means of grace habits in our daily lives, we will grow in holiness of heart and life.

John Wesley mentioned what we now call the “classic” means of grace in the General Rules (*Book of Discipline*, ¶103, pp. 72-74), though they should be understood to include outward-directed activities of compassion and justice that also provide us a way to “watch over one another with love.” Covenant Discipleship groups, based on Wesley’s class meetings, are an excellent way for church leaders and members to practice these “works of piety” and “works of mercy” in a supportive and accountable group. The leader selection committee can encourage participation by modeling it. (For more information on Covenant or Accountable Discipleship see Resources.)

MEANS OF GRACE

- The public worship of God
- Prayer—public and private
- Daily searching the Scriptures
- Regular (at least weekly) celebration of the Lord’s Supper
- Fasting or Abstinence
- Christian Conferencing (fellowship and theological/spiritual conversation whose purpose is to find and live out the mind of Christ)

SERVANT LEADERS

As you develop leaders within your congregation, emphasize the importance of becoming a servant leader. Servant leaders serve out of a humble spirit, not out of pride or a sense of importance. When approaching someone regarding a leadership position, be sure to express this as a ministry of service and not simply as an elected position. (If it is that, either change the position into a vital ministry role or eliminate it!) Provide servant leader training sessions to support new leaders in their roles as servants of Christ.

SUPPORT AND TRAINING

When approaching persons to ask them to serve, be sure to let them know what support they will receive as they become a leader. First, commit your committee to pray for each new leader throughout the year. Let “recruits” know that they will have an assigned prayer partner from among the committee leadership or the congregation who will check with them regularly to ask how they are doing and if they have specific prayer concerns.

Follow through with a plan to orient each new person in a position of leadership. Develop an orientation plan and stick to it! There is little that is more frustrating than to assume a new position and not receive adequate orientation to the requirements or expectations. The Guidelines series is one useful tool. Other resources, including PowerPoint™ presentations, are available online.

Be sure to provide information on training opportunities within your local church, but don't stop there. Also include listings of training events available through the district or annual conference. Encourage people to attend lay academies and perhaps become lay speakers. Lay Speaking Ministries is not just about speaking. Its emphases include leading, caring, and communicating. Most of the Lay Speaking courses could be taught as short-term studies, small-group studies, or even as Sunday school classes. They are now labeled "*Learning & Leading*" for that reason. If persons wish to pursue Lay Speaking Ministries, guide them through the process (see ¶¶ 266, 267, 268 of the *Book of Discipline*) and provide services of recognition as they receive lay speaker status.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS

- Gifts Discovery
- Leadership Skills
- Servant Leadership
- Church Committee Work and Responsibilities
- Appreciative Inquiry, Asset Based Community Development
- Consensus Building, Group Dynamics, and Communication
- Orientation to Other Community Ministries
- Accountable Discipleship
- Spiritual Disciplines
- UM History and Polity

ENCOURAGING OR MENTORING

Walking alongside others to help them find and fulfill their call to ministry is Christian coaching. We find examples of this encouraging or mentoring in the Bible as followers were encouraged, held accountable, and guided in their insights and learning. Eli coached Samuel on listening for God's voice (1 Samuel 3). Nathan confronted King David by helping him become aware of his behavior (2 Samuel 12). Elijah encouraged Elisha to use his prophetic gifts (2 Kings 2). Priscilla and Aquila guided Apollos in proclaiming the good news and supported Paul in his ministry (Acts 18). Barnabas encouraged Paul and others by joining their journeys and sharing their ministries, and Paul, in turn, encouraged Timothy (Acts 15–16).

Remember that coaching is not advising or lecturing. It is encouraging, empowering, and challenging others in their discipleship. (For coaching training, see Resources.)

Be sure to find ways as individuals, and as the committee as a whole, to show support and encouragement during the year. Celebrate ministries and events as well as individual accomplishments. Services of recognition for incoming and outgoing church officers is one way (see Resource list and the CD-ROM that accompanies the complete set of Guidelines for suggested services.)

Deploy

As you deploy persons in mission and ministry, begin by discerning the opportunities for mission and ministry and the people whom you will seek to invite into these roles or initiatives. List both the mission and ministry opportunities and the gifts of the people, as well as the roles you must fill according to the *Discipline*. Begin a discernment process to match the gifts of the people with the ministry roles needed.

The required positions that are elected by the charge conference include leaders of designated ministries of the church council. The *Book of Discipline* (§249) requires “at least the following leaders for . . . basic responsibilities”:

1. Chairperson of the church council.
2. The committee on nominations and leadership development.
3. The committee on pastor-parish relations and its chairperson.
4. A chairperson and additional members of the committee on finance; the financial secretary and the church treasurer(s) if not paid employees of the local church; and the trustees. . . .
5. The lay member(s) of the annual conference and lay leader(s).
6. A recording secretary.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

There will likely be other areas of ministry in the church or community that need leadership. The committee on nominations and leadership development should work together with the church council on all the leadership needs within the congregation (*Discipline*, §252).

The committee on nominations and leadership development may also be requested to find persons with the gifts to represent the local church on district committees.

Keep in mind that the actual gifts, strengths, talents, and abilities of the people may determine mission and ministry opportunities and areas of service. Some people may have gifts that are uniquely suited to a specific mission or ministry opportunity. Do not dismiss the idea of developing a new ministry opportunity when you have the people gifted for and passionate about it. That your congregation may not have offered a particular type of ministry in the past does not mean that it is not the time (God’s time) to use the gifts of those who have the desire to serve.

Above all, remember that it is most important to focus not on church programs, activities, and filling positions, but rather **on seeing God at work in your congregation and the community and finding ways to join God in**

that work. This is done by focusing on prayer and discernment rather than by “fixating” on the next new activity or ministry.

INVITATION

The way you approach people to invite them into ministry or to a new opportunity for mission is important. How do you assess the match between the gifts of the person and the opportunity? Or how do you find a mission or ministry opportunity based on the gifts and passion of the people in your congregation?

Everyone has spiritual gifts. Most people want to “do something,” but they may not know what is available or how they can use their gifts for mission and ministry. When a person’s gifts are identified and he or she is motivated to act, an opportunity must be offered. You have the opportunity through the committee on nominations and leadership development to help persons in your congregation discover their gifts and match them with ministry opportunities or position needs.

This matching can happen from either direction: considering persons and their gifts first, or considering first the kinds of gifts needed in a ministry area. When you and your committee members approach people about these gift/ministry matches, decide how you will invite them to consider the mission and ministry opportunity, and how it fits with their passion and desire to serve. How will you ask them to join in Christ’s work? How will you let them know that their gifts are needed? Many people are motivated to act when they believe that what they have to offer is important and valued, so your approach is important.

Take the time to put together some questions to ask people whom you would like to invite into ministry. Instead of giving them your understanding of the needs, ask them what needs they see and how they want to use their gifts to address those needs. Avoid doing this casually. Be deliberate about making an appointment to meet with them as a committee or as individuals for a one-on-one dialogue or a small group conversation. You might invite several people to meet to discuss their gifts and how they might be used to further the mission and ministry of the church. Then discuss the position or ministry needs that exist or that might be created and how their gifts could be used in each.

You can build the bridge between people’s gifts and passion and the needs of leadership, mission, and ministry.

INCLUSION

When adding people to committees and choosing leaders, make every attempt to ensure diversity of the group. Diversity includes racial, cultural, age, economic status, and gender.

RECOMMENDATION

When you have matched the gifts and passions of the people with the mission and ministry needs of the church and community and when you have obtained the consent of the potential leaders, you are ready to present these persons to the charge conference. New mission and ministry opportunities discovered should go to the church council to gain their support.

Confidentiality is an absolute requirement! The committee must covenant to keep the information gathered, opinions heard, and records discussed in confidence. This commitment to privacy shows respect for each individual member. Be sure to discuss and form a covenant agreement on the policy of confidentiality at the **first** committee meeting—before any discussion of persons or positions.

Evaluate

As in any process, evaluation is the key to continued success. Develop an evaluation plan to assess the status and effectiveness of the committee on nominations and leadership development work and processes.

Include an Appreciative Inquiry approach when evaluating or considering changes.

- What is going well? Appreciating and valuing the work that has been done.
- What might be? Envisioning how it could be even better.
- What should be? Dialoguing about what is important—essentials.
- What will be? Innovating ideas about ways to work in the future—changes that you need to make.
- Are those recruited for leadership positions practicing servant leadership principles?
- Are the missions or ministries they are leading effective?
- Has the committee followed through on the support and training promised?
- Are the resources used appropriate? If not what changes are needed?
- What challenges have you experienced?
- How can your committee function be improved? Are there processes that need to be redesigned or improved?
- Are the committee members following their commitment to spiritual disciplines and confidentiality? If not, how can we improve?

Evaluate the *Plan* as well as the person. The church council or specific ministry groups are responsible for developing an intentional and agreed-upon strategy to achieve your church's ministry goals. Evaluation should then center on whether and how well the leader and committee members have followed the agreed-upon strategies. If you have faithfully followed the plan, but you do not get the results you want, ***change the plan.*** Acknowledge (even reward) sincere efforts to do what was expected, rather than blame persons for poor results of a faulty plan.

ONGOING ASSESSMENT FOR IMPROVEMENT

Try not to make evaluation a once-a-year assessment. Make an effort to be constantly aware of the progress of your work, to lift up those who are doing good work, and to provide help to those who may be struggling. Don't wait until things are going badly to make changes. Be proactive in the work and assessment of progress of both your committee and the various ministries and leadership over which you have responsibility. Consider scheduling time for formal evaluation of your committee's progress at least quarterly.

Monitor

Monitoring the mission and ministry needs and opportunities of the church and community is critical because they are ever changing. In your gifts assessment of the people, watch for new gifts, abilities, and passions that may lead to new opportunities for service in the world.

RECOGNITION

Work as a committee to recognize all areas of mission and ministry occurring either as an official local church program or participation in ministries in the district, annual conference, or surrounding communities. By doing this you will help the congregation gain an understanding that ministry is not just what happens within this particular local church. It will provide a view of the connectional Church at work in the world.

MINISTRY IN DAILY LIFE

Take every opportunity to recognize the many ways that people are in mission and ministry in the work or activities they perform every day. Too many times "ministry" means only things like serving on a committee, singing in the choir, or helping to serve a church dinner. These certainly are valid ministries, but persons have the opportunity to live their faith outside the church every day. This too is ministry.

Whether persons work outside the home, are students, or are stay-at-home parents, every task the people of your church are engaged in may be a form of ministry. How they relate to their coworkers, fellow students, neighbors, or families is a witness to God’s love for the world. How they show care and respect and honesty in each assignment or task shows faithfulness to doing their best—whatever they are doing.

You may be able to organize a time during worship that provides a witness to ministry in everyday life. Perhaps a bulletin insert, feature, or newsletter column could be written that describes ways that people in your congregation live their faith at school, work, or other social or community contexts.

PASSING THE BATON

A part of monitoring the leadership and ministries of the church is to be aware of how long someone has held a certain position or been on the same committee. Some committees have term limits, while others do not. Leadership in the church should be shared. Those who are experienced and have served faithfully should be recognized and commended but also encouraged to “pass the baton” to new leaders. All persons in leadership should be looking for potential leaders—people who exhibit the gifts and qualities that can be nurtured to develop future leaders. Encourage the leadership in your congregation to look for the “shining eyes” of those who are ready to be mentored into a leadership role. This will help the work of the committee on nominations and leadership development when there are future leaders who are identified by others.

Train those in the current leadership to become mentors or at the very least to help identify potential leaders. No one person should hold a position for an unlimited period of time—be alert to these situations and work to change them. Arrange for mentoring of new leaders by those who have been effective leaders themselves. This could lead to a smoother transition process from year to year.

For Reflection: “Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one” (1 Corinthians 9:24-25).

- In what ways can you train for the race for the imperishable wreath?
- How can you help others train?
- In what ways can you practice self-control?

Conducting Your Work

Your tasks as a committee are listed in the *Discipline* in ¶258.1 as:

- Engage in biblical and theological reflection on the mission of the Church, and the primary task and the ministries of the local church.
- Provide a means of identifying the spiritual gifts and abilities of the membership
- Work with the church council on matters regarding the leadership of the congregation (other than employed staff)
- Focus on mission and ministry as the context for service
- Guide the development and training of spiritual leaders
- Recruit, nurture, and support spiritual leaders
- Assist the church council in assessing changing leadership needs
- Recommend to the charge conference the names of people to serve as officers and leaders of designated ministries.

The Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development

There should not be more than nine members on the committee on nominations and leadership development in addition to the pastor and the lay leader. All members must be professing members of the local church. One or more members may be a youth, and at least one member should be a young adult. Remember that you are encouraged to have a diverse and inclusive group, including race, culture, economic status, gender, and age (¶258.1.e).

The pastor chairs the committee, and a lay person elected by the charge conference serves as vice chair. The membership is divided into three classes, each elected for a three-year term. This ensures a more stable committee because not everyone is new at the same time. A rotation is suggested in ¶159.1.d of the *Discipline*.

ROLES OF THE CHAIRPERSON (PASTOR) AND VICE CHAIRPERSON (LAY)

- Guide the work of the committee throughout the year; plan the meeting agendas; preside at meetings; and foster an environment for spiritual, creative, and valuable work in the congregation through this committee.
- Maintain close communications between chairperson and vice chairperson.
- Establish and maintain a working relationship with the church council or alternative structure.
- Study the passages in the *Discipline* and other resources that relate to this committee and the Ministry of All Christians, Servant Ministry, and Leadership (¶258.1, and ¶¶125–139).

- Allow for the development of community within the committee by providing ample time for Christian conferencing.
- Share the work and ministry (see *Discipline*, ¶130).

A WORD TO PASTORS

As the pastor of this congregation, you have the opportunity to become familiar with the gifts, talents, and abilities that are manifested in the congregation. You should also be aware of service opportunities and needs in the congregation, the community, and the world through your contacts in the community, district, and annual conference. Work with the committee to discern and match these gifts and ministries. Now is the time to encourage the committee to take a fresh look at these members and the gifts they have to offer. It may be time to choose new leadership. This is your chance to guide the committee in looking at a new way to choose and prepare the non-staff leadership of the congregation. It is important that your own attitude be one of willingness and openness to change as well.

A teamwork approach and delegation of tasks will not only relieve you of much of the work but also instill a sense of purpose in the committee rather than the tendency to “let the pastor do it.” Remember that all Christians have been gifted and called through their baptism to be Christ’s representatives in the world through a ministry of servanthood (¶125 and Baptismal Covenant I).

New Pastors

As a new pastor you should rely on the committee members’ knowledge of the congregation. However, this is also an opportunity to ask insightful questions, to offer alternative suggestions, or to propose new and creative ways of performing the tasks of the committee. Your newness may enable you to notice gifts and strengths in members that others may not have seen. This is a time for you to share your observations with the committee.

Getting Started

The work of the committee on nominations and leadership development continues, rather than ends, after the charge conference. Your committee will work to help persons discover their gifts and ways to be in mission and ministry; train new, existing, and potential leadership; support those who have been elected in their roles; and discern new mission or ministry opportunities. These tasks recur throughout the entire year.

VISION

Work together with your committee to develop a vision for your work. Use the Appreciative Inquiry process (see pages 11, 14, and Resources) to maintain a positive focus rather than dwelling on what’s wrong or needs to be

fixed. Schedule a retreat for the committee to form community and do the work of visioning. Some sample questions to guide your visioning:

- Where do you see God at work in the church, your community, the world?
- How can you join God in that work?

What Would It Look Like?

- If all persons were involved in servant leadership in our congregation, what would it look like? What would they be doing?
- If persons were truly being formed as disciples, what would be happening?
- If members were using their gifts and skills faithfully and effectively in the community, what might happen?
- If we helped all members of our congregation to identify their gifts, to understand what God is calling them to do, and to equip themselves for ministry, what would be possible?
- If all leaders were ready to forget former ways and do a new thing (Isaiah 43:18-19), what would be allowed to happen?

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

This task can be done at each meeting as you begin the work of your committee. Your reflections/meditations should focus on the mission and ministry of the church and the primary task to make disciples (see Part III, “The Ministry of All Christians: The Mission and Ministry of the Church” ¶¶120-124 and ¶201 in the *Book of Discipline*, 2008).

Each meeting can and should be a time of Christian conferencing where the members meditate or reflect on Scripture, share prayer concerns, pray, and possibly sing together. Time is taken to pray over the agenda and to seek discernment or guidance before making decisions. Prayer at the end of the meeting is more than a formality. It is a sincere request that God bless the work accomplished, and bless and keep each member until they meet again.

If it is truly God’s work that we are about, then we must take time to seek God’s will for the mission and ministry of the church. Tithing our meeting time means that we spend at least one-tenth of the meeting time in biblical reflection, prayer, and the practice of other means of grace.

There are several ways you may meditate on Scripture and discern direction and meaning for your work. Choose Scripture passages that relate to the task of the committee or use the daily lectionary readings.

Lectio Divina is a method for meditating on Scripture that can be used in a group setting. For other suggested ways to meditate and discern God’s will and for a sample Christian conferencing format, see the CD-ROM.

Working Together

How well your committee accomplishes its task depends in part on how well the members work together. You are coworkers with one another and with God, seeking to identify, guide, and nurture the leadership of your church. As committee members, you have assumed a commitment and a responsibility to one another. Your task of overseeing the leadership of your church is crucial to strengthening the body of Christ. You can develop a sense of Christian community by sharing together, reflecting on your faith, and understanding the mission of the people of God.

It is important that this committee work as a team to share and to learn together. Meeting agendas should be formed to maximize the time and yet allow sufficient opportunity for the task of biblical reflection and Christian conferencing. People are more willing to attend meetings at which there is both intentional community formation and work accomplished.

MUTUAL INVITATION

This method involves an initial speaker presenting the agenda item or concern, speaking to it, and then inviting someone else to speak. That person can either speak to the item or pass, but invites another person to speak so that all persons have a chance to participate. Set ground rules for how you will interact with one another. For example:

- **The climate in our meetings is one of warmth, informality, comfort, and hospitality.** Our discussions are open and honest.
- **We understand our roles and responsibilities.** We take responsibility and are accountable for completing assignments.
- **Everyone participates.** One or two do not dominate the discussion.
- **We work for consensus, not necessarily unanimous decisions.** We avoid win-lose voting where possible.
- **We maintain confidentiality.** This helps establish an atmosphere of trust.
- **We will use effective listening techniques.** We will also provide feedback to the speaker to ensure a clear understanding.
- **We may disagree, but we are not disagreeable.**
- **We establish ground rules for communication.** Consider using a mutual invitation model for group discussion.
- **We use resources available to us** to complete our work efficiently and effectively.
- **We assess ourselves and our work frequently** to keep track of how we are doing, spiritually and functionally.

Tools for Your Work

Set Goals and Objectives

The goals you set will be the means by which you will accomplish your work. Your objectives are the things you will do to meet those goals. By establishing goals and objectives you will establish a framework from which you can evaluate your progress.

Here are some suggested goals with objectives that follow the assigned tasks of your committee:

Engage in biblical and theological reflection on the mission of the Church, the primary task, and the ministries of the local church by reflecting and meditating on Scripture and other resources (for example, the *Discipline*) at each meeting.

Be active and attentive to developing your own spiritual life both individually and as a team by attending to the means of grace or by joining or forming an accountable or covenant discipleship group.

Become a learning community and encourage the congregation to do the same by attending classes, workshops, and seminars on pertinent topics and by announcing upcoming learning opportunities to the congregation.

Provide a means of identifying the spiritual gifts and abilities of the membership. Lead or set up spiritual gifts assessment workshops or make this a part of new member classes/orientation. Be intentional about becoming acquainted with as many persons in your congregation as possible. Build and maintain a database or people bank, if there is not one available, by listing persons' gifts, skills, interests, knowledge, and areas of passion or commitment. Develop a system for keeping this list up-to-date.

Work with the church council on matters regarding the leadership of the congregation (other than employed staff) by listing the leadership positions established in your congregation. Study the responsibilities for each leadership position and identify the gifts and competencies needed to function effectively in this position. Work cooperatively with the leadership of work areas, ministry teams, and other groups or individuals to prepare job descriptions that are appropriate to the needs and organizational style of your church.

Focus on mission and ministry as the context for service. Emphasize servanthood in all leadership roles. Get to know the members of the congregation, their gifts and passions or interests. Prayerfully match potential leaders with particular leadership positions. Invite persons to serve in leadership positions and receive their responses.

Guide the development and training of spiritual leaders. Encourage participation in all the means of grace. Facilitate the formation of covenant discipleship groups or accountability groups. Provide opportunities for spiritual growth and practice, for example, prayer meetings or spiritual renewal retreats. Provide information on other means of spiritual renewal and growth such as the Walk to Emmaus and the Academy for Spiritual Formation.

Assist the church council in assessing the changing leadership needs. Explore new mission and ministry opportunities in the community or within the church. Pay attention to the members' expressed interest or passion regarding new ministries. Evaluate the effectiveness of the current leaders.

Recommend to the charge conference the names of people to serve as officers and leaders of designated ministries. Discern the best match between gifts and the job description. Advise the potential new leaders of their responsibilities. Present those nominated to the charge conference.

A Checklist of Responsibilities for the Year

- ___ 1. **Read through this Guideline carefully.**
- ___ 2. Meet as a committee and review your responsibilities, using this Guideline and the job descriptions already mentioned.
- ___ 3. Begin to build a vision for the work of your committee. Review the mission and aims of your congregation. (Ask your pastor or the church council chairperson for a copy of these.)
- ___ 4. Individually and as a committee, reflect on your spiritual life in light of the mission of the Church. Consider how you can help one another grow in that spiritual life as you provide leadership for the congregation.
- ___ 5. Develop a confidentiality covenant for working together. (See sample covenant on the CD-ROM accompanying the complete set of Guidelines.)
- ___ 6. Take stock of what is happening now. How are persons using their gifts and skills? How effective or ineffective is the present system of leadership recruitment and development? Where will you need to concentrate your efforts?

____ 7. Determine the gifts, skills, and interests of your membership. Use an information file, if one is available. If such information is not available, consider using one of the gift discovery inventories or workshops listed in the Resources section.

____ 8. Review the leadership positions that the *Discipline* requires to be nominated and elected by your charge conference. Review other leadership positions your church has identified. Also review other positions of service in your church and community that may not require charge conference action but still need to be filled, such as Sunday school teachers, ushers, greeters, or soup kitchen workers. Determine the number and kinds of leadership and service positions needed by your church or charge.

____ 9. Consider the qualifications, skills, and abilities needed for particular leadership and service positions.

____ 10. Review any written job descriptions for leadership and service positions, noting the responsibilities, activities, and skills required. Work with the appropriate persons, council, or committee to prepare other job descriptions that might be needed.

____ 11. Review the information gathered and the decisions to be made. Identify the persons who best match the mission and ministry and leadership opportunities.

____ 12. Decide who will do the inviting and what information they will need for recruiting. Develop and follow a timetable for inviting and reporting back to the committee.

____ 13. Report to the charge conference the names of those persons to be nominated for elected positions who have indicated their willingness to serve. When leadership positions become vacant during the year, nominate persons to fill those positions.

____ 14. Work earnestly and cooperatively with the church council, church school leadership, and other concerned groups to develop training plans for new and experienced leaders and workers, paying special attention to nurturing and developing leaders as *spiritual* leaders.

____ 15. Work cooperatively with appropriate groups to support, recognize, and show appreciation for workers and leaders.

____ 16. Assign committee members or others in the congregation to be prayer partners with the new leaders and check in with them regularly.

Begin early in the year to gather the information you need. Become familiar with the job descriptions of the positions for which you will make nominations. Study the descriptions provided in *Job Descriptions and Leadership Training for Local Church Leaders* and the other Guidelines (see Resources). The committee may revise those descriptions to meet the specific needs of your church or may create new descriptions.

Getting to Know You

Before you can match people effectively with leadership and service opportunities, your committee will need up-to-date information about the gifts, interests, and skills of your members. You might begin with your membership roll and list the qualities, abilities, and interests for each member. In a larger church, an information file can serve as a source to identify persons for elected leadership and service positions, for long- and short-term projects, for behind-the-scenes tasks, and for leadership needs of the community, the district, and the conference.

Establish a Confidential File that includes

- Name
- Age and birth date
- Occupation and employer
- Training and education
- Hobbies and special skills
- Special interests
- Present participation in worship, Sunday school, and other activities
- Address and phone number
- Family relationships
- Spiritual gifts and abilities
- Time available for service
- Church / other experience

You can select one or a combination of the following ways to gather this information from your congregation:

1. **Survey your congregation** through your church newsletter, by direct mail, by phone, or before or after a worship service or a church program. You might also place copies of the survey in pew racks or use the survey as a bulletin insert. Be creative!
2. **Interview each church member.** (This takes the most time but will give you the best information base.)
3. **Gather information on current members** during a church-wide emphasis on the stewardship of time and abilities.
4. **Gather information on all new members** as a routine part of their membership classes or at the time they are received into membership.

KEEP INFORMATION USEFUL AND USABLE

Churches have selected many different methods of storing this type of demographic data. Choose the one that works most efficiently for you, noting that the card file, file drawer, and notebook are time-consuming. Your committee needs to have access to this information, especially at times when you are matching persons with available service opportunities, so **be sure that someone has the responsibility of keeping the information updated.**

- **A card file.** This is one of the most common methods of keeping the information.
- **A file drawer.** The drawer contains a manila folder on each household with an information sheet on each member of the household, no matter how young or how old.
- **A notebook.** A three-ring notebook kept in the church office with an information sheet on each person.
- **Computer records.** Many churches now use a computer to store in a database their financial records, as well as information on the interests, gifts, and skills of each member. This method has become the one of choice because of the ease of updating and retrieving information.

Develop a List of Positions

Begin by preparing a complete list of positions for which your committee will make nominations. You can prepare your own worksheet (see Resources for a sample). Include all of these positions:

____ The required positions elected by the charge conference (see the *Discipline*, ¶249). Include members as well as chairpersons for the committees on finance, committee on nominations and leadership development, staff/pastor-parish relations, and the board of trustees.

____ Other leadership needs requested by the church council (*Discipline*, ¶252), such as Sunday school teachers, persons in ministry with those who have disabilities, the coordinator of scouting ministries, the coordinator of older-adult ministries, the coordinator of single-adult ministries, the coordinator of small-group ministries, a representative to a local ecumenical group, communion stewards, a committee on church childcare, or a buildings-and-grounds chairperson.

____ Leadership positions requested by your conference or district—for example, a local church representative to a district organization or a representative for a conference-sponsored United Methodist college.

____ Officers and leaders of designated ministries of the church council.

Develop Job Descriptions

The committee should provide written descriptions of the responsibilities for each position, board, council, or committee to which persons may be elected, appointed, or assigned. These descriptions make the tasks of inviting and matching persons with positions much easier. More importantly, *if individuals have clear expectations about the tasks they will be asked to do and the potential impact, it is easier for them to respond with a sense of confidence and increased commitment.*

If you already have descriptions for the leadership positions in your church, be sure they are up-to-date with current leadership needs. *Job Descriptions and Leadership Training for Local Church Leaders* provides a brief summary of the task, information about job responsibilities, suggestions about ways to get started, the skills and interests helpful for the job, and training that might be available. It also lists references from the *Book of Discipline* and people and agencies that might help for most leadership positions in large or small-membership congregations. The committee should also have the entire set of Guidelines as reference material for the responsibilities of all the elected committees (see Resources).

You may want to practice this process on many emerging kinds of ministries in your congregation or community for which there are no descriptions provided. Revise and update as needed. The following are questions to answer when developing other job descriptions:

- What do you do (what are your functions and responsibilities)?
- To whom do you report about the work?
- What is the primary objective of your ministry team or service?
- How does it facilitate the primary task of the congregation?
- What gifts, abilities, and special skills does this job require?

Another possible way to develop job descriptions is to ask district or conference groups or other United Methodist churches for descriptions of leadership, mission, and ministry positions similar to those in your church. Then, modify the descriptions to fit your local needs.

Check with the church council for other information such as:

- What training can this leader count on receiving? (The committee on nominations and leadership development needs to be particularly sure about this. If the training will not be adequate, begin planning for the types of growth experiences that the new leaders will need.)
- Where and how does this leader get the resources needed to fulfill the task? For instance, what budget is available; how many other people can be counted on to be a part of the work effort?

Keep copies of the job descriptions on file and update them each year. You will need them each time you ask persons to consider giving their time and gifts.

Selecting and Supporting Leaders

Now you are ready to begin the crucial task of selecting leaders and matching them with the available opportunities or helping to create new ones that match their gifts and passion. (See the Suggested Meeting Procedure on the CD-ROM, and at www.gobd.org/laity.)

You are entrusted with helping persons find their places in the congregation and in the community. As you offer them opportunities to serve, you are helping them fulfill their calling as disciples of Christ.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Do the persons considered (overall) represent a balance of the economic, social, and theological orientation of our congregation?
- Have we remembered persons with disabilities?
- Have we taken seriously our commitment to maintaining our diversity in the midst of our oneness in Jesus Christ?

Throughout the process, be especially aware of those situations where the incumbent has served several terms of office. Ask whether a change should be made, either for the sake of the person or the task. (The *Discipline* forbids some committee members from succeeding themselves, so be sure you are aware of which officers can hold successive terms and which cannot.) In some cases where change seems wise, the committee will need to plan carefully how this move can be interpreted diplomatically to persons not being renominated. If a person is ending long-term service in an area of ministry, it is appropriate to celebrate that ministry, especially if the person is not pursuing another area of ministry.

Inviting People to Serve

A face-to-face meeting is much more satisfactory and conveys the importance of the decision to be made. Use the telephone, instant messaging, text messaging, or email only to set up an appointment.

Train those committee members who are willing to contact the potential nominees so that they understand each step in the process. Roleplaying is a helpful way to practice the recruitment process. Give each person the opportunity to roleplay a visit with a prospective leader. Here are some suggestions for the committee members to roleplay.

- A committee member telephones John Jones to set up an appointment to talk with him about a leadership position. Have two persons roleplay the telephone conversation.

- A committee member arrives at the home of Andrea Ward to talk with her about being church council chairperson. Have two persons roleplay the appointment when Andrea is not interested in serving in that position. Then ask two persons to roleplay the same appointment in which Andrea agrees to serve.

INVITATION TIPS

As a committee, decide who will invite prospective leaders. Arrange a time to talk with the person selected. Both the person and the position are important.

Share the ministry opportunity that is available and how the committee feels that person's gifts are particularly suited for this position. Be honest about the responsibilities of the position and what is expected.

Go over the description and make sure the prospective leader knows the answers to the following questions:

- What are my responsibilities?
- To whom will I report?
- Who gives me information and resources?
- What time commitment will be required?
- Of what other committees does this make me a member?
- With whom will I work?
- How long is the term?

People need a clear and realistic picture of what a position requires. Such statements as "It won't take much time" or "It's easy" or "You won't have to do very much" are misleading and may be dishonest. These statements also minimize the position as well as the person.

Be positive and enthusiastic when presenting a job opportunity.

Outline the training opportunities and the support the church offers.

Describe the election process. The charge or church conference actually elects persons to positions. If the person being recruited accepts the nomination, his or her name will be given to the charge or church conference as the committee's recommendation. Explain that another person might be nominated from the floor and could be elected to the position.

Give the person time to think and pray about the decision.

When persons being invited say no, try to clarify what they mean. Are they unwilling or unable to serve at the present time? Are they not interested in this particular position? Would they be interested in other areas of

service? Would they be willing to consider prayerfully and get back to you in a reasonable period of time? Thank them for their consideration and any suggestions they may have offered. Allow them to feel comfortable in saying no to this particular invitation.

Let the committee know the decisions of persons who have been invited.

Be sure that each person considered for a position has been asked and has accepted before announcing nominations.

Give a copy of the “Invitation Checklist” (see below) to each person who will be contacting a prospective leader.

INVITATION CHECKLIST

- ___ Make an appointment to talk with the person being asked to serve.
- ___ Prepare for the visit with prayer.
- ___ Take two copies of the job description to use as you talk together.
- ___ Have on hand any needed information to answer questions about the position, including the desired length of service.
- ___ Arrive at the appointment on time.
- ___ State the reason for your visit.
- ___ Begin with a prayer.
- ___ Explain the position in detail. Be honest. Be clear. Be positive.
- ___ Be sure the person being asked to serve understands that election to the position occurs in the charge or church conference.
- ___ Answer any questions the prospective leader may have.
- ___ Seek a commitment. Give the person time to think and pray. Arrange to be back in touch, and be sure to contact the prospect again as arranged.
- ___ Leave a copy of the job description.
- ___ Express your appreciation to the individual for giving this request serious consideration.
- ___ Close the meeting with prayer.

REPORTING TO THE CHARGE CONFERENCE

After potential leaders have been invited, present a list of the recommendations for all positions to the charge conference. Forms are provided in the Official Forms and Records System in Local Churches (available from Cokesbury) for the committee’s annual report. *Highlight the gifts and skills of each person being recommended.* This not only provides recognition for the individual but also shows how seriously the committee undertook its task.

Preparing an Orientation Packet

The orientation packet should include:

- The objective of the church and the statement of its mission
- The policies and procedures of the church and of the particular position
- A description of the job responsibilities
- A calendar of church events for the year
- The times and dates of meetings and events
- Resource materials and appropriate Guidelines
- Budget information for the church and for that particular area of ministry.

Support and Recognition

Congregational support, appreciation, and recognition undergirds the ministries of those in leadership positions. Ongoing support encourages those who serve. This is a very important task for the committee. Work closely with the church council to make sure scheduled events acknowledge and recognize leaders and persons in service. Here are some ideas:

1. Keep in touch with persons who serve, through informal and planned conversation, support meetings, and times of evaluation.
2. Begin the church year with a consecration service for persons who serve.
3. Hold an annual service or day of recognition and appreciation.
4. Provide orientation and ongoing training programs.
5. Provide the necessary resources.
6. Acknowledge the progress of each person's work and express appreciation.
7. At the end of the term, thank the outgoing leaders and workers personally and publicly for their ministry in your church and community.

Final Comments

Remember that people are the most valuable resource in the life of a church. With them, and with careful leadership and guidance, the church can effectively proclaim Christ's good news to the world.

The ministry of a local church moves forward, falters, or grinds to a halt based in large part on the work done by your committee. Your task is crucial to the ongoing ministry of your congregation and to the Church as a whole. You will be blessed as you work together cooperatively, trust one another, and remain open to discerning God's guidance at every step of your work.

Resources

** Denotes our top picks

GENERAL CHURCH RESOURCES

- *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2008* (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House). Available from Cokesbury.
- *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation 2009–2012* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008). Available from Cokesbury.
- ** *Job Descriptions and Leadership Training for Local Church Leader, 2005–2008* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2004. ISBN 978-0-88177-439-9). A set of descriptions for local church offices.
- *Program Calendar* (Nashville: United Methodist Communications).

LAY LEADERSHIP RESOURCES

- Concepts in Leadership I, Discipleship Resources—PDF format download from www.upperroom.org/bookstore
- *Four Tools for Lay Leader Selection*. Print these forms to use during the leader selection process. (www.gbod.org/laity/resources.asp)
 - Suggested Planning Cycle (chart)
 - Leader Selection Worksheet
 - Leader Selection Worksheet for Classes
 - Leader Selection Gifts/Skills Data bank
- ** Lay Ministry Training Resources (Nashville: Discipleship Resources—free catalog).
- *What Every Leader Needs to Know [Series]* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2004).

OTHER RESOURCES

- ** *Accountable Discipleship: Living in God's Household*, by Steven W. Manskar (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2000. ISBN 978-0-88177-339-2).
- *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook: For Leaders of Change*, 2nd Edition by David Cooperrider, Diana Whitney, and Jacqueline Stavros (New York: Amacom, 2008. ISBN 978-1-57675-493-1).
- ** *Becoming Barnabas: The Ministry of Encouragement*, by Paul Moots (Herndon: Alban Institute. ISBN 1-56699-293-1).
- *Discerning God's Will Together*, by Danny E. Morris and Charles M. Olsen (Herndon: The Alban Institute, 1998. ISBN 1-56699-177-3).

- *Each One a Minister: Using God's Gifts for Ministry*, by William J. Carter (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2007. ISBN 978-0-88177-375-0).
- *Eight Life-Enriching Practices of United Methodists*, by Henry H. Knight III (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001. ISBN 978-0-687-08734-1).
- *Faithful Leadership: Learning to Lead with Power*, by Thomas R. Hawkins (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1999, 2001. ISBN 0-88177-253-1).
- *Guide for Covenant Discipleship Groups*, by Gayle Turner Watson (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2000. ISBN 978-0-88177-305-7-0).
- *Leading a Life with God: The Practice of Spiritual Leadership*, by Daniel Wolpert (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2006. ISBN 978-9-8358-1003-6).
- *Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts: Building Up the Body of Christ Through the Gifts of the Spirit*, by Charles V. Bryant (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1991. ISBN 978-0-8358-0633-2).
- *Spiritual Preparation for Christian Leadership*, by E. Glenn Hinson (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1999. ISBN 978-0-8358-0888-2).
- *The Heart's Journey*, by Barb Nardi Kurtz (Nashville: Discipleship Resources 2001. ISBN 978-0-88177-326-2).
- *The Leadership Baton: An Intentional Strategy for Developing Leaders in Your Church*, by Rowland Forman, Jeff Jones, and Bruce Miller (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007. ISBN 978-0-310-25301-3).
- *Transforming Church Boards into Communities of Spiritual Leaders*, by Charles M. Olsen (Bethesda: Alban Institute, 1995. ISBN 978-1566991483).
- *Vital Signs*, by Dan R. Dick (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2007. (ISBN 978-0-88177-495-5).

WEBSITES

- [www. Ladiocese.org/ki](http://www.Ladiocese.org/ki) (Eric Law—Kaleidoscope Institute)
- www.mike-green.org (Asset Based Community Development)
- www.appreciativeinquiry.case.edu. (<http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu>)
- www.gbod.org/laity (Nominations and Leadership Development Guideline Power Point Presentation)