



Mission Resourcing

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Functions of an absentee Parish Superintendent

This paper seeks to formulate a job description for the duties expected of those parish superintendents appointed to parishes where they are not resident and do not otherwise exercise ministry in that place. Such parish superintendents are often appointed when a parish is deemed “One Wanted”, or when a probationer, or lay pastor is appointed to a parish, or when a LSM team runs the parish. In these circumstances, it has not always been clear what the reasonable expectations of such an absentee parish superintendent are when in most cases such absentee parish superintendents already have full time appointments elsewhere. This paper attempts to offer some guidance.

The superintendent has the right to attend every official meeting within the parish. It is recognized that it is impracticable to expect such a thing.

It is the parish superintendent’s responsibility to ensure that all meetings of the parish council and leaders’ meeting(s) and office holders fulfil their duties in accordance with Methodist practice and discipline. This can be monitored by conversation with the appointed probationer/deacon/lay pastor and parish stewards and by keeping an eye on Minutes from official meetings.

The absentee parish superintendent may wish to attend every parish council and every leaders meeting within the parish, but it is very unlikely a presbyter with other existing duties could attend so frequently; so, s/he may arrange for another chairperson to preside at the meetings, but the parish superintendent must attend any parish council or leaders meeting if asked to do so by the parish stewards and must at least preside at the Annual Church Meeting.

The parish superintendent must ensure that synod and connexional functions and responsibilities are fulfilled within the parish. This does not mean the superintendent carries out these responsibilities, but monitors through conversation with the appointed probationer/deacon/lay pastor and parish stewards that they are being carried out.

The parish superintendent is responsible for informing the synod superintendent and connexional officers of any important development in the life of the parish. This can again be done through conversation with the appointed probationer/deacon/lay pastor and parish stewards.

The parish superintendent shall ensure that pastoral records of membership, baptisms and marriages are being duly kept. This can be done by checking periodically with the appointed probationer/deacon/lay pastor or parish stewards.

The parish superintendent shall represent the parish at synod, alongside any other representative function (of another parish for example), unless granted a dispensation.

The parish superintendent shall ensure that any paid lay worker/administrator/lay pastor in the parish has an employment agreement in place. This merely needs checking through the parish stewards at the commencement of the superintendent's appointment.

The parish superintendent shall meet periodically with the appointed probationer/deacon/lay pastor and parish stewards (at least quarterly) to offer support, encouragement and challenge.

The parish superintendent has particular care for the nurture of any probationer appointed to the parish so that the probationer may "derive utmost benefit from personal counsel, studies and practical guidance" (Law 2.5.6). Regular support meetings with the probationer are essential (at least monthly).

The parish superintendent has particular care for the support and guidance of any candidate for ordained ministry within the parish. The superintendent shall cooperate with the synod candidates' convenor in establishing a local support group and take responsibility for writing the "Presbyter's Report" for Mission Resourcing, even when that will entail speaking with past presbyters or others who will know the candidate better in order to gather sufficient material for such a report. Mission Resourcing will give any guidance requested in this matter.

The absentee parish superintendent shall be reimbursed any costs incurred in fulfilling these duties by the parish s/he is caretaking, unless synod approves other arrangements.

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