Pastor Wellbeing Checklist

Wellbeing in Ministry

This checklist is an invitation for congregations to enter into discussion with their pastor(s) about how to create a healthier and more fulfilling work environment. When the congregation takes initiative to create a healthy environment for their pastor to live, work and function, the congregation also benefits.

The checklist items below fall into one or more of the following categories: physical, financial, spiritual, professional/relational and emotional/work-life balance. Congregations are invited to consider the variety of pastoral concerns addressed. This checklist is intended to be accessible for all congregations regardless of size and financial resources. Congregations are encouraged to do as much as they can with the resources they have, recognizing that the congregational role as employer is unique and complex. When looking to make changes, prioritize with your pastor items of greatest impact.

The Pastor Wellbeing Checklist is one of five resources MC USA congregations can access at the MC USA “Wellbeing in Ministry” page. Check off ten or more items to receive denominational recognition toward being a “Wellbeing in Ministry” congregation.

Other Wellbeing in Ministry resources include Corinthian Plan health coverage, pastor Salary Guidelines pastor Review Process guidelines, and Pastor Congregational Relations Committees. Find these resources at <http://mennoniteusa.org/wellbeinginministry>.

**Pastor Wellbeing Checklist***Assign one point per item checked*

1. \_\_\_\_\_The congregation has taken steps to encourage/eliminate barriers to biking or other types of exercise during the pastor’s workday (e.g. there is a secure way to store bikes at church, there is a place to shower and change if running or biking to church…).
2. \_\_\_\_\_ When snacks are provided at church functions, the congregation provides healthy options such as fruit or vegetables.
3. \_\_\_\_\_The congregation makes sure there is convenient access to drinking water at the church/church offices.
4. \_\_\_\_\_The congregation encourages and pays for half of financial planning consultation services for the pastor(s), such as through Everence’s financial planning services.
5. \_\_\_\_\_Congregational leadership reviews the MC USA pastor salary guidelines annually (at minimum) and takes them seriously when making financial, benefit and time decisions about the pastor(s).
6. \_\_\_\_\_The congregation offers a financial incentive for specific wellness activities completed either through participating in The Corinthian Plan incentive or on the congregation’s own initiative.
7. \_\_\_\_The congregation provides pastoral staff with sabbaticals, following the pattern outlined in MC USA’s pastor salary guidelines.
8. \_\_\_\_\_Congregational leadership implements a clear plan for an individual member, group or the congregation as a whole to regularly pray for the pastor(s).
9. \_\_\_\_\_The congregation encourages and pays for spiritual direction and considers it paid work time.
10. \_\_\_\_\_The congregation considers time spent on area conference and denominational work/meetings as paid work time.
11. \_\_\_\_\_The congregation has clear processes in place, which are reviewed annually, that support congregants and the pastor who may experience sexual harassment or other abusive behaviors in the course of church life/work.
12. \_\_\_\_\_The congregation is creative and flexible in providing for special reasonable requests like: data plan for phone, working from home or coffee shop, standing desk.
13. \_\_\_\_\_The congregation supports, even encourages the pastor to volunteer in community organizations. It is seen as a positive opportunity for the congregation and considered paid work time.
14. \_\_\_\_\_The congregation, for the benefit of a sustained creative ministry, asks the pastor to preach no more than three Sundays per month on average.
15. \_\_\_\_\_The congregation encourages the pastor to regularly participate in local pastor peer groups as part of their paid work time to establish a vital relational peer network and for continued growth.
16. \_\_\_\_\_Congregational leadership takes initiative to periodically remind the congregation which day is the pastor’s Sabbath day. The congregation honors the pastor(s) designated Sabbath day (since Sunday is a workday).
17. \_\_\_\_\_The congregation takes initiative and has a clear process to cover pastoral tasks when the pastor is absent so that vacation days are truly time away to refresh and restore.
18. \_\_\_\_\_The congregation has a pastor support committee (such as a PCRC) that meets at least twice a year with the pastor
19. \_\_\_\_\_The congregation expresses appreciation of the pastor at least annually in an intentional way (e.g. Clergy Appreciation Day/Día del Pastor is an unofficial holiday traditionally celebrated on the second Sunday of October and falls during Pastor Appreciation Month.)
20. \_\_\_\_\_The congregation provides support for pastors with young children or aging parents who need assistance with care needs such as: flexible schedules, ride assistance, family-friendly accommodations, respite or child-care help.
21. \_\_\_\_\_The congregation has a regular review structure in place to offer the pastor direct and honest feedback (both affirmation and constructive criticism) throughout the year and consults with professionally trained individuals (such as counselors and conference ministers) to help guide conversations toward positive outcomes.

**OTHER - assign one additional point per item listed.**

Other specific practices by which your congregation supports pastor wellbeing: (Describe below)

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Our congregation’s name and wellbeing score:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Our next steps towards cultivating pastor wellbeing are: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Submission of your form qualifies you for recognition by the denomination and gives us information about what congregations are doing. Submit to:** **MCUSAwellbeinginministry@gmail.com****.**

Comments to improve form:

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**Pastor Wellbeing Checklist Appendix**

Ideas and Resources

**Physical**

Corinthian Plan wellness incentive: <https://www.mennoniteusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2180531-2180532-Wellness-Incentive-Philosophy-and-Instructions.pdf>

Encourage one another to have walking meetings when appropriate

Hold a “bike to church” Sunday

Organize a walking challenge for the entire congregation

Explore creative ways to share exercise equipment and make space for exercise in your church building

Plan healthy themed potlucks such as: salad bar/main dish salads, vegetarian delights, dishes featuring beans & lentils, vegetables and/or bean soups

Host a healthy dish “competition” or challenge

Provide small plate, bowls and cups to encouraged healthy portions

Create opportunities to share garden plants and produce

Organize medically trained church members to take blood pressures or purchase an “at home” blood pressure cuff to have for use at church

**Financial**

MC USA pastor salary guidelines <http://mennoniteusa.org/resource/pastor-salary-guidelines/>

Corinthian Plan wellness incentive reward: <https://www.mennoniteusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2180531-2180532-Wellness-Incentive-Philosophy-and-Instructions.pdf>

Everence financial planning services. <https://www.everence.com/financial-services/financial-planning>

Debt relief available through the Lily Endowment pastoral financial assistance <https://www.everence.com/financial-services/for-churches/pastoral-financial-wellness-program>

**Spiritual**

MCUSA Spiritual Director directory[**https://mennosdn.org/**](https://mennosdn.org/)

Ideas for how to pray for your pastor: utilize options within your congregation’s already existing small group or Sunday School class structures, include it as an agenda item at your elder/pastoral care meetings, ask worship leaders to add it to your Sunday morning congregational prayer time.

**Professional/relational**

Pastor support committee (such as a PCRC) <http://mennoniteusa.org/resource/pastor-congregation-relations/>

Doves Nest, resources for keeping children and youth safe from abuse <https://dovesnest.net/>

Sexual abuse prevention and response <http://mennoniteusa.org/resource/prevention-and-response-sexual-abuse-and-non-credentialed-individuals/>

**Emotional/work-life balance**

Pastor support committee (such as a PCRC) <http://mennoniteusa.org/resource/pastor-congregation-relations/>

Consider offering two hours of child-care or respite care monthly either by members of the congregation or by a paid caregiver of the pastor’s choosing.

Creative ways to lessen the preaching load include: congregational members share testimonials/faith stories from the pulpit, multigenerational groups read and reflect on the text together in order to present it dramatically for the congregation on Sunday morning, make the fifth Sunday of a month a hymn sing.