

## **Appendix B: PARSONAGE GUIDELINES\***

**Adopted June 2005; Amended: June 6, 2006; Amended June 2008;  
Amended June 2009**

....THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

That the South Georgia Annual Conference adopt the revision of "The Parsonage Home 2005" as the new guidelines for the care, maintenance, and updating of parsonages.

....FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED:

That the education of the new guidelines is the responsibility of each District Superintendent.

### **A Guide for the Care, Maintenance, and Updating of Parsonages 2005**

#### **2005 Parsonage Initiative**

**"Happy the home when God is there..."**

Parsonages within the South Georgia Conference have been greatly improved during the past years. Our churches should be commended for the splendid manner in which they have provided their pastors' families with attractive and comfortable homes.

In the South Georgia Conference, housing for appointed pastors have traditionally been parsonages. However, upon mutual consent, a church may provide a housing allowance in lieu of the parsonage. It is suggested that ample funds to purchase a parsonage quickly or a substantial down payment is held in escrow, in case another pastor needs a parsonage at a later time.

In 2004, Bishop B. Michael Watson established a Parsonage Task Force for the South Georgia Conference. The Task Force has determined that the primary issues involving parsonages are accountability and communication between the pastor, the parsonage family, the Parsonage Committee, and/or the Staff Parish Relations Committee. Therefore, an effort to improve the communication and relationships between the church and the parsonage family utilizing these guidelines is necessary.

#### **GUIDELINES**

##### **The Church Should Provide:**

The Church should provide adequate furnishings for livable occupancy leaving room for some of the pastor's personal possessions. If the pastor and church agree that some of the parsonage furnishings be stored to allow for use of the pastor's personal belongings, storage shall be the responsibility of the pastor. The following items should be provided:

1. All heavy furnishings, including cooking range, refrigerator with a large freezer and ice maker, adequate hot water heater, washer, dryer, dishwasher, vacuum cleaner.
2. Bedroom, dining room, den, and living room suites.
3. Good mattresses, pillows, floor coverings, shades or blinds, curtains or drapes in all rooms.

4. Some floor and table lamps, occasional tables, and bookcases.
5. Stepladder. Power lawnmower.
6. Smoke alarms and fire extinguisher.

**The Pastor Should Provide:**

1. Linen, blankets, baby beds.
2. Dishes, china, crystal, silverware.
3. Pots, pans, cooking utensils.
4. Other personal items which he/she desires, such as radio, television, pictures.

**Parsonage Grounds:**

Parsonage grounds should have foundation shrubbery, shade trees, adequate yard space for children, and a riding lawn mower where there is a large lawn. Fenced in back yard for the safety of small children and pets, if possible. Also, garden space, if possible.

**Insurance:**

An amount of insurance equal to at least 80% of the replacement value of the parsonage and furnishings should be carried by the church (fire and extended coverage). The pastoral family should carry adequate insurance to cover their own personal belongings and furnishings.

**Care of Property:**

The parsonage family should take care of the house, furnishings, and property making it a policy to leave them in good condition. Best results will be obtained as the parsonage family and committee work together, feeling free to discuss the needs with each other. It is understood that there will be a natural depreciation of property and furnishings which calls for repairs and replacements periodically.

**Recommendations for Parsonage Upkeep:**

1. The Church's annual budget should include a parsonage fund equivalent to at least 3% of the value of the property for the purpose of repairs, maintenance, and insurance.
2. The parsonage family should be consulted in the selection of furnishings, color schemes, curtains, and equipment.
3. The parsonage should be kept well painted inside and out.
4. The parsonage should be periodically checked for pest control.
5. The pastor's family should change the air conditioner and heating filters as recommended with filters provided by the church.
6. The pastor should keep the "Parsonage Folder" updated. In the case that one does not exist, begin one. This folder should include all guarantees, repair parts lists, instructions for use of equipment, and also the "Parsonage Book". The "Parsonage Book" is an inventory of all parsonage furnishings, dates of when and from whom items were purchased and who to call for repair of various items, when and by whom various improvements were made, and any other information helpful to future parsonage families. A pictorial record, preferably video, should be taken as soon as possible on or after each moving day. This pictorial record will be invaluable for insurance purposes in case of a fire or other catastrophe. It also would serve as a record of the parsonage's initial condition. An extra copy of the pictorial record and the "Parsonage Book" should be stored in a secure place away from the parsonage. The District Superintendent can provide a sample Parsonage folder and "Parsonage Book."

### **Guidelines for Pets:**

Keeping animals outside is highly recommended. It is understood, however, that family pets kept inside the home bring much comfort and joy. Therefore, if they are kept inside the parsonage, the following guidelines must be met:

1. The church trustees must be kept informed of any pet inside or outside the parsonage.
2. Only a domestic pet, which will be defined as a small dog, cat, caged bird, or aquarium fish can be kept in the parsonage. Guide animals are not considered pets. Any other animal requires the approval of the church trustees. Also, more than one pet requires the approval of the trustees.
3. All damages incurred by any pet will be the responsibility of the pastor. Flea and tick management is strongly advised.
4. If pets are kept inside, the parsonage family must make an extra effort to thoroughly clean the parsonage to eliminate any evidence of pets having been present, which includes fleas, ticks, pet hair, pet dander, stains, excrements, etc.
5. Damage to the parsonage incurred by pets is the pastor's responsibility and should be reported to the Trustees and assessed. Payment should be immediate, but no later than moving day.

### **Guidelines for Smoking:**

With the understanding that smoking cigarettes, cigars, pipes, etc., cause a residual odor to remain in carpets and walls, it is recommended that there be no smoking inside a parsonage. Any damage that is incurred will be the responsibility of the pastor.

### **Recommendations for Updates**

All parsonages should be updated or renovated to conform as nearly as possible to the suggested minimum standards in these guidelines.

### **General Suggestions for Updating Parsonages:**

1. To enhance the relationship between the congregation and parsonage family, it is suggested that "Open House" be observed occasionally.
2. Periodic meetings with the Parsonage Committee should be held in the parsonage to discuss needed updates. Dates should be agreed upon by the committee and the pastor. This is the suggested time to update "The Parsonage Book". Copies of "The Parsonage Book" and a pictorial record should be kept by the Pastor, Parsonage Committee Chairman, and on file in the church or a safety deposit box.
3. Discarded furnishings from church members should not be placed in the parsonage.
4. When a gift of furniture or furnishings is made, it should be designated whether the gift is for the pastor's family or for the parsonage. Many pastors' families mark parsonage items so that there is no confusion on moving day.
5. The pastor's family is responsible for thoroughly cleaning the parsonage and grounds when he/she is moving. This is not the responsibility of the church.

### **Mandatory Parsonage Review Guidelines:**

1. A meeting concerning the parsonage will be conducted each year prior to charge conference.
2. This meeting will be held in the parsonage and will include a mandatory review of the entire parsonage – inside and out.
3. The attendance of the following individuals is expected: the pastor, the Trustees Chair, the Parsonage Committee Chair (if one exists), and Pastor Staff Relations Committee Chair. (*The Book of the Discipline*, ¶2532.4) If the pastor has a spouse, he or she should also be included.
4. The specific date can be set any time during the year, but it must be set at least two weeks prior to the church's annual Charge Conference with all parties agreeing to the date set.
5. Even though this mandatory meeting takes place to satisfy a disciplinary requirement, it is recommended that other separate Parsonage Committee meetings be held to consider parsonage improvements and other concerns.
6. A special form, called the Parsonage Report, will be filled out and signed off by all in attendance at the Parsonage Review. This report will be submitted to the District Superintendent during Charge Conference.
7. Any concern by either pastor or charge may be addressed at a later meeting. The District Superintendent may become involved, if deemed necessary by either party.
8. Continual patterns of parsonage abuse will be documented and stored in each pastor's file.

### **PARSONAGE STANDARDS Housing, Furnishings, and Equipment.**

**BEDROOMS:** Minimum of three, preferably four with either carpeting or hardwood floors and with ample lighted closet space in each. Walk-in closets are preferred. Also, the master bedroom and bath should be located on the first floor.

**BATHROOMS:** At least two. In a two-story house, at least one bedroom and one bathroom (master suite) should be on the first floor.

**KITCHEN:** Built-in cabinets, sink, dishwasher, refrigerator, range, oven, disposal, large enough for family eating space, or a breakfast nook.

**LIVING ROOM/GREAT ROOM:** Large enough for necessary parsonage entertaining with either carpeting or hardwood floors.

**DINING ROOM:** A dining room with carpeting or hardwood floors is desirable because of necessary entertaining.

**STUDY:** It is advantageous to have a study at home as well as at the church. Preferably, the study should be on the first floor away from family activities with a separate outside entrance and adequately equipped.

**DEN or FAMILY ROOM:** Very desirable, situated away from main living room and study, with either carpeting or hardwood floors.

**GARAGE or CARPORT:** Preferably connected to house and large enough for two cars. Extra small metal storage building for the safe storage of lawnmower fuels away from the house.

**SCREEN and/or STORM WINDOWS:** In all windows and outside doors to conserve energy.

**WIRING and PLUMBING:** Provide for present and future needs in order that all appliances and computer equipment may be used safely. All receptacles must be grounded.

**TELEPHONE:** Private line with extensions in at least the study, living area, and master bedroom.

**TELEVISION:** Provide cable access. Where cable is not available, an antenna should be mounted on a pole or pipe to protect the roof of the house.

**HEATING/COOLING:** Provide central air conditioning and heating with insulation to meet present day building codes.

**STORAGE:** Outdoor storage for lawnmower, tools, fuel, etc. Inside storage, preferably an attic and extra closets, other than those in bedrooms.

**UTILITY AREA:** Space for the washing machine, dryer, shelves, cabinets, etc. For security reasons, this space should be under the roof of the parsonage rather than in the garage or in a building away from the house.

## **CHECK LISTS**

### **Checklist When Vacating a Parsonage**

1. Inform the Parsonage Committee about the items that need attention.
2. Clean windows inside and out.
3. Draperies cleaned, if there were inside pets. Otherwise, clean as needed.
4. Rugs and carpets vacuumed. These should also be shampooed, especially if there were inside pets. Otherwise, clean as needed.
5. All hard surface floors (tile, linoleum, wood) cleaned.
6. Walls, woodwork, and baseboards cleaned.
7. Refrigerator is defrosted and cleaned.
8. Range and oven are cleaned.
9. All cabinets and furniture are cleaned outside, inside, underneath, and behind.
10. Closets and shelving are cleaned.
11. Vacuum mattresses, springs, and bed frames.
12. Light fixtures cleaned, and blown bulbs are replaced.
13. Bathrooms thoroughly cleaned, including fixture, tile grout, shower doors, curtains, medicine cabinet, walls, and floors.
14. Clean exhaust fans, hot and cold air vents, install new filters in AC/H system. (Filters are supplied by church.)
15. Attic, garage, carport, basement, and outside buildings are swept and left orderly.
16. Lawn mowed and shrubbery trimmed within week of the move.
17. Damage done by pets and/or parsonage family is reported to the Parsonage Committee or Trustees.
18. Assessments for damage are paid to Chairperson of Parsonage Committee or Trustees.
19. All trash is properly disposed, preferably not in the parsonage's trash receptacle.
20. Make arrangements with appropriate companies to prorate all utility bills up through moving day. Do not have the utilities turned off.
21. Professional extermination.

### **Checklist When Moving Into a Parsonage**

1. Rate the following as excellent, satisfactory, or poor:

#### **Interior of the Parsonage**

Windows  
Draperies  
Rugs  
Floors  
Walls, Woodwork, Baseboards  
Kitchen  
Appliances  
Cabinets  
Furniture  
Bathrooms  
Mattresses  
AC/Heating System  
Attic, Closets, and Other Storage Areas  
General Cleanliness

#### **Exterior of the Parsonage**

Driveway  
Shrubbery  
Lawn  
Trash or Garbage Condition  
Outside Storage  
General Appearance

2. Report any evidences of pet damage.
3. Report any needed repairs.

When moving, your current District Superintendent will provide the "Check-Off List for Vacating a Parsonage" and your new superintendent will provide the "Check-Off List for Moving Into a Parsonage." Completed copies of each should be turned into the respective Parsonage Committee or Trustees and District Superintendents within one month.

### **PRIVACY ISSUE**

Although the parsonage is the property of the church, it must be understood that it is also the pastor's family's private home. Courtesy dictates that the parsonage is visited only upon invitation by the parsonage family. Even the Annual Mandatory Parsonage Review and Parsonage Committee meetings must be scheduled with the pastor.

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**FYI:** The Parsonage Committee is a Sub-Committee of the Trustees.