

## **MANSE USE GUIDELINES** **(Approved 01/27/07)**

When a congregation provides manse housing for a minister, experience has shown that there are issues and concerns that may arise. It has been found that when these issues and concerns are discussed and clarified, both at the beginning of the call or contract and then annually thereafter, rather than waiting for them to arise, the trusting relationship between the minister and the congregation is greatly enhanced and unnecessary hard feelings can be avoided.

The following are offered as potential issues and areas of concern that may be considered in discussions related to use of a manse:

1. What are the expectations and desires of the incoming minister regarding manse use and redecoration? What are the expectations of the church for the condition of the manse upon the minister's leaving? What are acceptable redecoration limits for minister and family? How will redecoration expenses be handled? In what condition should the manse be prepared by the church and left by the minister? Who will represent the church in discussions about manse use and redecoration? When are such discussions required?
2. How will the utilities (electric, gas, telephone, cable television, etc.) be managed? Who will pay? When? How to bill? In whose name and through what utilities company?
3. Maintenance inside and out: What is expected of the minister and the church for routine inside and yard upkeep, snow removal, etc.? Who should be contacted for upkeep issues? Who should be contacted for maintenance repairs to items such as plumbing, appliances, or heating system?
4. Capital improvements: How and with whom will capital improvements on the manse be discussed and decided? Shall the minister be a participant?
5. Animals/pets: Will animals or pets be allowed in the manse? With what restrictions?
6. Entertainment expectations: Are there time and traditions expected for the manse to be used for entertainment by the congregation? Is the minister expected to host, plan, or negotiate these events? Are

there limitations on the minister's use of the manse for entertaining?

7. Are there limitations on the minister's use of the manse for commercial endeavors such as a gift shop, art or music studio, or a B&B?
8. Security: Who will have keys to the manse? What about locks, chains, peepholes, screen doors, etc.?
9. Privacy: Who will have access to the manse? With what notice?
10. Contact with Session: Who is the contact person? What is the relationship between the manse contact and the Session? How is the manse overseen as a budget item?
11. Annual manse discussions: When and with whom will there be a regular, at least annual, discussion of issues regarding the manse?
12. Use of manse between ministers: How will the manse be used between ministers? Rented? Leased? To whom? Restrictions? Tax role implications to the church if manse is not used to provide housing for a minister and his or her family?

It is recommended that thorough written records be prepared and kept on file (by the Clerk of Session and the minister) of all discussions and agreements (both initial and subsequent annual) made related to use of the manse in order to minimize unnecessary misunderstandings in the future.