

SPRING 2021



# CLERGY-IN-RESIDENCE STYLE PROGRAM DESIGN

ENGAGING CLERGY IN SUMMER CAMP PROGRAMMING.  
THIS DESIGN GUIDE WILL HELP YOU CREATE A POWERFUL  
CLERGY-IN-RESIDENCE STYLE PROGRAM.



## WHAT'S INSIDE?

Whether it's called, Clergy-in-Residence, Pastor of the Week, Minister-in-Residence, Camp Chaplain, or something else, engaging clergy at summer camp brings value to campers, clergy volunteers, and your overall ministry. In this guide, you will find real examples of United Methodist Clergy-in-Residence style programs. You will learn about the benefits of offerings like these, as well as things to consider when designing your own Clergy-in-Residence style program.

01

*Examples*

02

*Benefits*

03

*Obstacles*

04

*Logistics*

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## INTRODUCTION / WHAT'S POSSIBLE?

Across the country, you will find a variety of Clergy-in-Residence (CIR) style programs. Each Annual Conference and region has a unique combination of needs and opportunities which contribute to the specific way clergy are utilized throughout summer camp experiences.

### Varieties of CIR-style Programs:

- In eastern Tennessee, a well-established Minister-In-Residence (MIR) program typically engages one to four MIRs on-site each session of camp. All the summer staff and campers refer to these clergy volunteers as though their name is actually, "MIR". (rhymes with "Sir"), regardless of what their actual name or title is, which is fun and memorable for everyone involved. We also give them a MIR t-shirt that is unique to the year. Some MIRs collect these.
- The West Ohio Conference has a strong history of clergy participation at their camps. Their Pastor of the Week (POW) program gives pastors the opportunity to share the lesson at morning and evening worship sessions based on the summer curriculum. POWs are also a valuable resource for supporting campers and staff who need a little extra love or just someone to talk to.
- A Western North Carolina "Pastor of the Week" program continues to grow, adapt, and find success. Their focus is on a ministry of presence, with the pastor primarily responsible for two campfire worship "sermonettes." The pastor is also encouraged to visit with each camp group at least once throughout the week. It's usually a UMC pastor, but youth pastors have also served in this role.
- Also in North Carolina, one camp's Pastor in Residence program has been offered for the past 5 summers. The minister typically provides the all-camp Morning Watch message and preaches at least once during their week. The frequency of preaching depends on the number of camper-led worships offered that week. Throughout the summer, those camper-led worships become more frequent. Counselors are encouraged to invite the pastor in residence to come and lead vespers one night for their group. Otherwise, the minister and their family are free to enjoy the camp experience. He or she will also provide pastoral care as needed to staff.

There are other varieties of Clergy-in-Residence style programs out there as well. Assessing the needs of your ministry and the gifts of the clergy in your area will bring you inspiration for which elements you should bring to your program.



## Basics of CIR-style Programming:

Clergy-in-Residence style programs are an opportunity to engage clergy in the summer camp program. Clergy and pastors bring unique gifts that can create a strong faith formation experience among campers and staff. Typically clergy attend a camp event and are given the responsibility of planning and implementing worship experiences, times of devotion, and at times lead Bible Studies. Their gifts are often also utilized when campers are homesick,

## Benefits of CIR-style Programming:

This vital volunteer role brings benefits to all people and organizations involved in your summer camp program. The following sections speak to the benefits CIR-style programs can bring to your ministry. While the sections are divided into benefactors, many benefits overlap between areas:

### • CAMPERS

- Campers are hearing a high-quality and engaging lesson during worship times. While camp staff can fill in if needed, they don't have the same training as pastors/clergy. These programs also provide opportunities for campers to get to know pastors in a more personal and informal way than they might at their home church.
- One of the most important aspects for kids is seeing pastors in more relatable ways. Whether they see a pastor jumping off a diving board, paddling a canoe, or engaging in play it helps humanize pastors in a healthy way. They may get to sail with the pastor or play basketball. It also offers the opportunity for campers, especially older campers, to discuss ministry and call with an ordained minister.





- CIRs often casually visit camper groups and are also “available” by hanging out in spots where campers and staff can visit publicly but have private conversations. CIRs are people that are available for anyone to chat with, about anything on their hearts.
- Because United Methodism is a connectional church and many of our United Methodist campers come from our conferences, it is a great way for them to get to know other ministers who might be their minister some day OR to catch up with a former pastor. Many of ministers have campers or staff members in their families---another connection through place and faith.

## • STAFF

- CIRs can be a great resource for summer staff. They can help provide some pastoral care and someone to talk to other than their supervisors. If a group of campers needs some additional guidance or has some particularly difficult questions or discussions, the staff can ask the pastor to join in their small group time and help talk through these things with the campers. CIRs are also great for staff to talk to who are discerning a call to ministry. They can have someone to give them advice and help in their discernment. Meeting and building relationships with a diversity of pastors beyond the local church expands a staff person's reference for pastors.
- Having pastors on site can relieve the pressure of having to offer “high quality” devotions. As camp leaders, we know that faith matters can be a point of shame or self-consciousness for staff. Having an “expert” available takes some of the edge off. Full-time staff are able to focus on handling other administrative/safety items during camp.



- Some programs ask their CIRs to lead morning devotions (they are provided with the theme/verse and sample ideas) and to present the evening message based on a provided outline. The morning devotions and evening messages dovetail with the Bible Study. Each CIR presents this a little differently - this keeps things fresh for the staff and multi-session campers.
- CIR programs don't need to pass off all sermons/messages to the CIRs, some sites structure their program so that the staff share one or two messages and/or offer camper-led worship. Staff-only worship on Sundays before campers arrive is another opportunity for full time or leadership staff to provide the message.

## • CLERGY/VOLUNTEERS WHO PARTICIPATE

- CIR-style programs provide space away from the hum of “routine” ministry. While it’s still a demanding ministry setting, there is an element of spiritual renewal that can happen.
- Many pastors find that their week at camp provides a space to do ministry that may not be possible in their particular ministry appointments. For instance, if a pastor’s church has no active children’s ministry.
- At times, sites will also allow pastors to bring their children to camp at no cost in exchange for their volunteer service. This is a monetary benefit that pastors express gratitude for.
- CIR -style programs offer clergy the chance to serve the greater body of Christ. Just like working at camp can sometimes feel more like a “job” rather than a “mission”, clergy can feel the same way at their churches. Serving at camp gives them the opportunity to use their gifts outside of the ordinary day-to-day.
- These programs give clergy time away to be in the camp setting and share their ministry.



- From Don Lee Camp & Retreat Center:  
***"We are fortunate and blessed to have the Wardlaw Pastoral Retreat, which is a small cottage/house. Pastors stay there while serving at no charge and all meals are provided. There is room for them to bring their families. They also can choose to participate in camp activities during the day/evening. They get to see our ministry up close and in action, which allows them to share what we are doing at camp with their congregations and connect with young people from across the state."***





- **THE BROADER CHURCH**

- CIR-style programs are ministry renewal experiences for pastors which bring value to their ministries and are a positive for the Church
- These programs help to increase the connections and relationships between camps and local churches. When we have strong relationships with local pastors we can better refer campers who don't have a home church to one in their area.
- These programs also help connect the camp & retreat ministry to the Annual Conference in which they relate. Pastors network with other clergy away from camp and this shared camp experience helps to create conversation about the many resources our camps provide for local churches. CIRs obtain a better understanding of faith formation work at camps and how that is different from, yet builds upon, the experience of the local church.
- Many CIR participants become passionate advocates for CRM in their churches and beyond. There is nothing like an close-up view of the personal transformation that occurs at camp to convince someone of camp's value.





## OBSTACLES & BARRIERS

Before creating your own CIR-style program, it is important to know upfront the obstacles and barriers that you may run into while implementing your program. Here are several things you may want to consider:

Philippians 4:13  
***“I can do all this  
 through Him who  
 gives me strength.”***

### Time & Role Commitment

Summertime brings competition with pastors' vacations and regular ministry commitments such as VBS. Beyond the usual calendaring time, you may find inconsistencies in pastors' commitment to the CIR role. While having a variety of pastors is listed in the previous pages as a benefit, this factor can also create challenges. Being clear on expectations, ministry objectives, "takes on specific themes", and speaking time limits, will be vital in your program.

### Church Calendar & Appointments

Clergy hesitate to commit because they may be moving, or not sure if they will be moving. In our UMC system, summer is hard because of Annual Conference Gatherings, appointment moves, and mission trips.

### Preparations

Like with all new programs or positions there is a learning curve and a with new CIR programs, the pastor will need to spend time in preparation. Being CIR isn't a vacation for the pastor. It is important to do the prep work with them to make sure they understand what is expected and what the curriculum or theme is, especially if they have never participated in camp before.

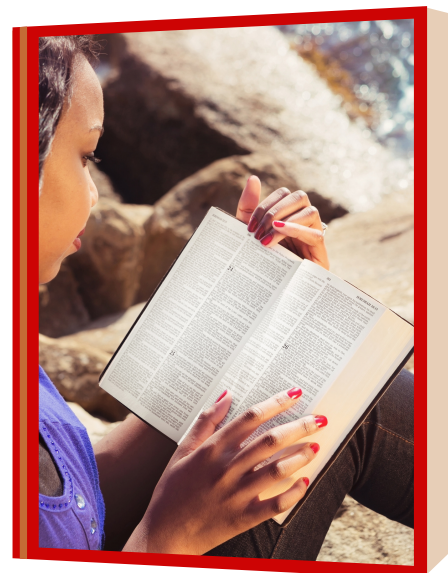
### Housing

Some pastors may not want to participate because they do not consider themselves “outdoorsey”. Having a nice, private place for clergy to stay and/or work is very important. This is not a week of vacation for them so they will often need to take calls and work with people from their home church. Being flexible is also important. It is not uncommon for a pastor to need to leave for a day to visit someone in the hospital, lead a funeral, etc. Camp Otterbein had this in mind when they built a new office and health center in 2018. One of the bedrooms in this new building is reserved for their CIR so they have a private place to stay.

Some pastors may even feel more comfortable coming for the day and going home at night.

## FINDING THE RIGHT FIT

Like with all volunteer positions, there are pastors who are a good fit to be a CIR at your site and there are pastors whose gifts fit well in other roles. When there isn't a good fit, the campers', staff, and the CIR's experience will suffer. But when you find the right person to fill the role of CIR and that person is prepared for the work, your ministry will be all the better for it.



## Recruitment

- It may seem obvious, but it's important to mention: Try to approach clergy who you think will enjoy the experience and do well at camp.
- Some sites offer the incentive of having a child come to camp for no cost which helps with recruitment.
- Consider working with DS's and former CIRs to recruit new pastors. Especially ones that don't already have a relationship with your camp, it can be helpful to hear from another pastor that they know about their experience.
- Another strategy may be to invite a "set" of MIRs from a church - for example you may invite the lead Pastor, the Youth Minister, & the Children's Minister from a church to all be at camp for the same week. Perhaps they are each "attached" to a different camp program to be the MIR for - for example: Day Camp CIR, Adventure Camp CIR, Basecamp CIR...
- Asking clergy who have had a connection to your camp as a camper or staff member (or parents of staff members) can be effective as well. It is a powerful message to the camp community to see people who have had the camp experience as part of their call story become ministers in our churches.
- While recruiting, pay attention to diversity in your choices including race, age, gender, and type of ministry.
- Always, keep your ears and eyes open to pastors you believe would be a good fit for a week at camp!

## Partnerships

- **Families**

- Example from Wesley Woods - "Our ministry focus is on youth and families. We apply this directly to the MIR, (Minister-In-Residence), program. We invite the MIR, as well as their family, to come to camp together for the week. Our most successful MIRs are the ones who understand children and youth development, and typically have children of their own that are camp age. We invite these children to come to camp at no cost to the MIR family. We have had the spouses of MIRs help with our programs, work in our office, kitchen, Day Camp, or just spend time with their spouse visiting camp programs together and talking to campers and staff. These families are our most consistent returning MIRs as they've immersed themselves into our 'camp family'."

- **Conference Organizations**

- Example from Don Lee Camp - "One of our partnerships has been with the executive director for the NC Methodist Home for Children, an ordained minister working in another extension ministry. We also have invited a member of the NC Conference who works for the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, which has been amazing."

- **Campus Ministries**

- Example from Mount Shepherd - "We try to partner with pastors who will view this experience as beneficial. This works most of the time, but not always. We had a partnership with a Wesley Foundation minister at one of the universities for a week and several other campus ministers. While some of those partnerships really didn't flourish in the way you might think we have had many work out well. So out of the 45 spaces for ministers we've had serve, there has only been 1 or 2 that were not a terrific partnership, and even then, it wasn't horrible, just not a good fit."

*Proverbs 27:17*  
**"Iron sharpens  
 iron, just as one  
 person sharpens  
 another."**



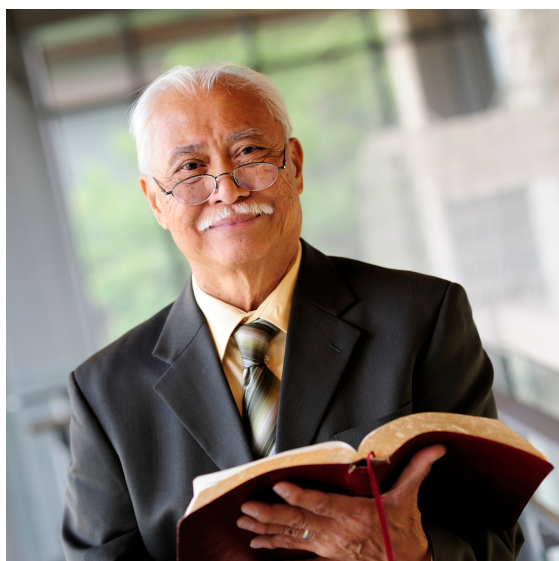
## MANAGING THESE VALUABLE VOLUNTEERS

One of the best things about a Clergy-in-Residence style program is the advanced level of skills that these volunteers bring. Once established, most clergy perform their duties with little intervention from the camp staff. Yay!

However, this is only true if the CIRs are adequately prepared, given clear expectations, and feel confident in their role. Below are strategies for ensuring your program runs smoothly.

### Skills & Training

- Clergy volunteers for CIR programs should go through your regular volunteer training process. If in-person training isn't feasible, you can offer written or recorded training materials. Important topics to cover are:
  - Safe sanctuaries and minimizing 1-on-1 interactions.
  - Basic emergency procedures.
  - Behavior/Conduct expectations, etc
- Obtain all required background checks on each CIR regardless of whether their church does this regularly.
- It is best to provide CIRs with some sort of manual that outlines expectations, the duties of a CIR, and what they can expect. [Click here to view the "Summer 2021 Minister-in-Residence Guide" generously shared by the leadership of the Holston Conference Camp & Retreat Ministries.](#)



## Volunteer CIR Responsibilities

In a typical CIR-style program, these volunteers are primarily responsible for giving the lesson at morning and evening worship times. They may also be asked to be present during free time to get to know the campers and be available if any of them would want to talk. The level of involvement may depend on the CIR. Some CIRs choose to be very involved while some choose to spend more time alone and use their time at camp as a pastoral retreat. You may even find some pastors who love to jump into other volunteer roles like meal clean-up and dishes!

CIRs tend to join the campers for meals, (except during Covid). They can join camper groups for activities and simply hang out during all camp times. Although a key role is to join the worship team in planning for worship. Sometimes they may assist with camper groups worship preparation as well, but not necessarily all the time. You may also consider having CIRs lead vespers.

*Luke 18:1*  
**Pray and  
 don't give  
 up**

On check-In day, some sites ask the CIR to come to camp several hours before the camper Check-In time for staff meetings and a one-on-one orientation with the Director or CIR liaison. As your program grows, you may find that having a designated person be the liaison each summer is helpful. Early arrival provides the opportunity for the CIR to settle into camp and then help greet each camper as they arrive at camp.

As mentioned in the previous section, it is a good idea to provide your CIRs with a guide to the week that includes the Bible Study and any expectations for their week at camp. These guides should be updated each year. This document may be put together by the site or by the Conference. Along with the guide, try to meet individually with CIRs each year, especially if they are new. This gives you the opportunity to help them prepare for their week and answer specific questions.

## Oversight and Support

The camp's role in guiding and supporting CIRs during their week may vary. However, it is common to find that pastors require some close guidance during their first year but usually get comfortable with the flow of camp quickly. Providing them with the curriculum ahead of time that gives them specific verses and points we want to hit on to correspond with what the campers are doing in their small groups strengthens their confidence quickly. Also, simply being available for them to ask questions is helpful. Be sure to giving them the day's schedule and make arrangements for them to participate in camp programming as they wish.

Remember, they're the professionals! Autonomy and creative freedom will bring more value to these volunteers and therefore a more effective ministry overall.





## Stories from the "trenches" -

### Reflections from camps and Annual Conference with CIR-style programs

#### Camp Wesley Woods - Holston Conference

- *"Several years ago, I had the opportunity to be a minister-in-residence at Camp Wesley Woods alongside my good friend, Rev. Skip White. Each day of the week, I noticed a larger and larger pack of kids following Skip wherever he went. Eventually, I asked him how he made such a quick connection with the campers. He responded, "Some of these kids have never had a man tell them he was proud of them before. So, I try to notice something good each camper is doing and then tell them I am proud of them. When you say you love them, they often think you are just saying that because that's what preachers are supposed to say. But when you notice something good about them and tell them you are proud of them, they hear you saying that you love them."*

#### Camp Otterbein - West Ohio Conference

- *"I can remember one week where we had a very challenging group of high school-aged campers. There were several campers who were dealing with some difficult issues at home including recently incarcerated parents and physical abuse. On top of that, there was a small group of girls bullying a few others from their church. Needless to say, the counselors were very overwhelmed and the directors needed to spend a lot of time and energy focusing on that particular group and were not able to focus on others. The Pastor that week was extremely helpful. He was able to spend most of his time with that group and assist the counselors, have some good 1-on-1 conversations with campers, and help the directors contact some local churches in the camper's areas to help out when they got home."*

#### Camp Tekoa - Western North Carolina Conference

- *"From personal experience as a summer staff member at Camp Tekoa, the Pastors of the Week volunteers were indispensable in my personal ministry growth. Anecdotally, they provided vital relationships for discerning a calling into vocational ministry."*

## Stories Continued ...

### Camp Glisson - North Georgia Conference

- *"One summer our TIR, theologian in residence, was working with a small group to plan worship, as is our practice. As they were finishing, an eighth grade girl timidly asked, "and who will be doing the sermon?" Sensing more behind the question than appeared, the TIR said, "Usually that's me. Why, is that something you're interested in?" The camper replied that she was and the TIR proceeded to take time with the 8th grader to plan a sermon on the text for the service. That week an eighth grade girl who had never preached before preached for 350 of her peers, forever changing how she saw herself, and inspiring among the other campers the possibilities of being in ministry."*

### Camp Pecometh - Pen-Del Conference

- *"I had just completed my first year in pastoral ministry when I was asked to volunteer as a Spiritual Life Coordinator (SLC) at summer camp. The SLC leads bible studies, vespers and closing worship. I had heard about Camp Pecometh, had even done family camping there with my church, but didn't know much about summer camp. I was blown away by the impact of camp on the campers. I was sold on its value. In a typical summer, we have two SLC's each week for eight weeks. We are always looking to include SLC's because we find that this immersion experience has the same affect on them as it did on me."*

## RESOURCE CONTRIBUTORS:

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