

## ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT (PARISH)

These Articles of Agreement will govern the *cooperative/parish* agreement between [among] *church name, city, state and church name, city, state*, congregations of the Lower Susquehanna Synod, ELCA.

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### 1. Name

- Name by which this common ministry/parish will be known:

- List congregations involved as well as their locations (as we do above).  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Purpose of Relationship

1. share pastoral ministry and other ministry opportunities
2. share resources for ministry and mission for the good of the participating congregations

### 3. Guidelines

As the \_\_\_\_\_ Parish/Cooperative we will:

1. Listen for God's guidance through engagement with the Scriptures and prayer
2. Be open to change, be flexible and be respectful of one another
3. Pray for one another and support one another

### 4. Administration and Management

- *The \_\_\_\_\_ ministry shall be managed by a Parish Council, which consists of \_\_\_\_\_ members of each Congregation Council.*
- *The president of the Parish Council shall be elected annually with the presidency rotating among the congregations.*
- *The secretary of the Parish Council shall be elected annually with the position rotating among the congregations.*
- *The treasurer of the Parish Council shall be appointed by the Parish Council. However, the parish treasurer would not simultaneously serve as treasurer of any participating congregation.*
- *In the event of the resignation of a pastor or deacon, a Call Committee comprised of an equal number of persons appointed from each congregation in accordance with its constitution, shall be established. (See Call Process below)*
- *The Parish Council shall meet at least bi-monthly and implement goals established by the Parish Council for the outreach, witness and all parish ministries*
- *Special meetings may be called by the Parish Council president, in consultation with the individual council presidents and the pastor.*
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- The \_\_\_\_\_ Parish shall endeavor to work cooperatively for the sake of the mission of the church and the efficient utilization of the pastor's time.

#### **5. Authority**

- The authority of the \_\_\_\_\_ Parish rests with the Parish Council, which is responsible to develop ministry plans for the parish and strive to implement those plans. OR  
The purpose of the \_\_\_\_\_ council is to develop \_\_\_\_\_ plans and make recommendations to the respective congregation councils. Each congregation shall maintain authority for decisions regarding the individual congregation.
- The Parish Council has authority to set the compensation package for the pastor.

#### **6. Entry**

- For each congregation, a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present and voting at a Congregation Meeting called in accordance with the constitution, shall be required to adopt these Articles of Agreement and enter into this relationship

#### **7. Time**

- Based on ratification by each congregation, these Articles of Agreement shall take effect \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **8. Responsibilities of the Pastor [Deacon]**

- *Worship Leadership: Coordinate times of Sunday worship with the steering committee*
  - *Coordinate Special liturgies – Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, Easter etc.*
- *Visitation: establish expectations, equip eucharistic ministers, and foster congregation self-care*
- *The Pastor, together with eucharistic ministers or other visitation ministers, will respond to the pastoral needs of the people in both congregations as they arise*
- *Provide crisis ministry as needed*
- *Preside at services of Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, Burial of the Dead, including preparation*
- *Shall be a voting member ex officio of all Congregation Council meetings and Congregation Meetings*
- *Provide educational opportunities as requested*
- *The Pastor at the pastor's discretion shall divide time among the congregations for the successful enhancement of the ministry of the parish*

#### **9. Call process**

1. The call of a pastor or deacon shall be under the guidance of the Bishop's Office. A two-thirds majority vote in each congregation shall be necessary for approval of the pastoral candidate. If the call is approved, \_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran Church will issue the call.
2. A Call Committee comprised of 6 to 8 persons, equally representing each congregation selected according to that congregation's constitution, shall be established

- 3. The Parish Council or call committee shall prepare a ministry site profile which is descriptive of each of the parish congregations as well their shared ministry needs

**10. Mutual Ministry Committee**

- There shall be a Mutual Ministry Committee consisting of (6-10) members, equally representing all congregations. The pastor [deacon] will select (2) and each congregation will select (2).
- The Mutual Ministry committee shall be affirmed by the Parish Council
- The Mutual Ministry committee shall assist the pastor [deacon] and the congregations in facilitating healthy communication and in reviewing the ministry goals for the parish

**11. Shared expenses of this agreement include:**

*– using the Lower Susquehanna Synod’s compensation guidelines to determine the following*

- *Pastor [Deacon] salary*
- *Healthcare costs*
- *Retirement benefits*
- *Travel, continuing education, etc.*
- *Parsonage, housing allowance, etc.*
- *The total compensation package (salary, social security allowance, housing allowance/parsonage, benefits, mileage reimbursement and professional expenses) for the pastor, shall be divided equitably among the participating congregations.*
- *Programmatic expenses specific to a particular congregation are the responsibility of that congregation. Expenses for shared programs shall be divided equally*
- *The pastor’s [deacon’s] total compensation shall be reviewed annually by the Parish Council*
- *The intention of this relationship is to share expenses equitably. If any congregation sees a dramatic shift in size (dramatic being in excess of 10% of voting members) the Parish Council shall review the agreement and recommend a change at that time as necessary*
- *The place of residence of the pastor [deacon] shall be negotiated as part of the call process. If there is a parsonage available at any congregation, the other congregations shall pay an equal share of the housing*

**12. Pastor’s [Deacon’s] Compensation**

- To be in line with the Lower Susquehanna Synod’s Compensation Guidelines
- Salary and Housing \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Social Security allowance \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Mileage Reimbursement at IRS prevailing rates
- Health care \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Retirement \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Disability Insurance \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Continuing Education \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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- Books and Media Allowance \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Professional Expenses Reimbursable Account \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**13. Finances**

- There shall be a parish treasury out of which the parish treasurer shall pay all expenses, e.g. compensation of the pastor, [deacon], other parish-employed staff and other parish ministry expenses.
- An annual audit will be conducted and shared with the Parish Council and all congregations

**14. Review and Changes**

- The participating congregations agree to an annual review of this agreement to be handled with the consultation of the pastor, the councils of the participating congregations and the office of the Bishop
- Changes or modifications to these Articles of Agreement, except routine adjustments to compensation, may be made by recommendation of the Parish Council to each Congregation Council, and then by a two-thirds vote of members of each congregation present and voting at legally called Congregation Meetings, in accordance with the constitution.

**15. Terms of Dissolution/Termination**

- After consultation with the Office of the Bishop, in accordance with †S14.43.d., termination of this agreement by a congregation shall be by a two-thirds majority vote of a legally called Congregation Meeting
- At least six months’ notice will be given of a congregation’s intention to withdraw from the \_\_\_\_\_ Parish

**16. Specific Arrangements/Other**

- *Expectations regarding relating to organizations or schools of the congregations, participation in special events, committee meetings, etc.*
- *Exceptions to above principles*
- *Background checks*
- *Office hours*

\_\_\_\_\_  
 , Council President  
 Lutheran Church

\_\_\_\_\_  
 , Council President  
 Lutheran Church

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Bishop  
 Lower Susquehanna Synod, ELCA

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Mission Statement of the _____</b>
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