

Covenant of Renewal Commitments
Lower Susquehanna Synod
2019-2021

Grounded in the life-changing grace of God in Jesus Christ, the participants in this congregational renewal process covenant to share the following commitments. We do this as fellow members of the body of Christ, our shared desire to be participants in God's mission to love and reconcile the world, our deep love and commitment to the well-being of Christ's church, and out of a desire to respond by more fully loving the world around us and the neighbors God has given us.

The two-year commitments below reflect the shared ministry to be done by all partners to spiritually renew congregations in the Lower Susquehanna Synod. The commitments below are not exhaustive but reflect significant elements needed to increase the likelihood of meaningful engagement and missional participation within the lives of the leaders and congregations engaging in this process. There is an added "spirit" within these that implies that being involved in this might call for more than what is listed, not because of any legalism but because of the commitment and passion needed to renew the church in today's world.

RENEWAL TEAM

The scriptural vision of the church as the body of Christ shares a clear picture of a community of the faithful who bear the image of Christ and a common calling to continue the work of Christ together. Leaders in this process are lifted up to help the entire congregation better live out this calling. Members who accept roles on the Renewal Team commit to the following:

- Spend time in prayer for the renewal of the church, for your rostered minister(s) and for the fellow Renewal Team members from the congregation.
- Intentionally love the people among whom God has placed you to serve as a Renewal Team member.
- Communicate clearly with the congregation throughout this renewal process.
- Lead the congregation as they spiritually discern God's desire for the ministry and invite others to participate in God's mission together.
- Spend time encouraging and supporting your rostered minister(s) as he/she develops new skills and ways of doing ministry.
- Invite and equip others to join in the work of renewal.
- Participate fully in all trainings and gatherings (9/21 and 11/23/2019; 1/11, 3/7, 5/2, 9/19 and 11/14/2020; and 3/20/2021) including scheduling personal events around this ministry. This means practicing the art of saying "no" as a spiritual discipline to fully honor this covenant.
- To remain coachable throughout the process, be open to new ideas, insights and practices.
- Practice living in hope through word and deed.

ROSTERED MINISTER

Rostered ministers are called to keep the Gospel central and to gather the community around Word and Sacrament and/or around Word and Service. Rostered ministers are to “equip the saints” for ministry and to share leadership with others. To do this faithfully, rostered ministers commit to the following:

- Spend time in prayer for the renewal of the church and for the Renewal Team members from the congregation.
- Intentionally love the people among whom God has placed you to serve as rostered minister.
- Seek to preach and teach in ways that help people encounter and see God in Christ as present and active in our lives and world.
- Encourage and equip Renewal Team members to take visible and meaningful roles in the ministry and mission of the congregation.
- Participate fully in all events listed about and pastors’ training days (9/20/2019; 1/10 and 11/13/2020) including scheduling pastoral acts intentionally in order to not compete with them. This means practicing the art of saying “no” as a spiritual discipline when receiving requests for weddings, etc. on training and gathering dates.
- To remain coachable throughout the process, be open to new ideas, insights and practices.
- Practice living in hope through word and deed.

COACHES

Research shows that anyone who wants to succeed at doing something new benefits from a supportive and accountable partner. Likewise, the same research shows that almost no long-term change is likely without this. Therefore, as an expression of the interdependent nature of the church, this process includes coaching and cohort connections as an essential component of the renewal of congregations. Coaches commit to the following:

- Pray for the congregations and Renewal Teams with whom you have a coaching relationship.
- Attend events with the congregational renewal teams – this means making this a scheduling priority for you as you walk along side these congregations.
- Be proactive about reaching out to Renewal Teams, setting meeting dates, etc.
- Meet with each Renewal Team at least once between each event.
- Attend cohort meetings in order to facilitate and encourage the learnings among Renewal Teams.
- Participate fully in synodical gatherings, continuing education around this process, etc.
- Communicate openly with synod staff and with rostered ministers/ Renewal Teams.

- To ensure the highest chance of success make adjustments as needed in consultation with the Director for Evangelical Mission.

SYNOD STAFF/CONSULTANT

The church is the body of Christ, a reality that is lived out both locally and in ever-widening circles throughout the world. Within the ELCA, the synod is made up of congregations who “walk together” for the sake of Christ’s work in the church and world. The synod staff and consultants involved in this process bring broad commitments and understandings from things learned in many times and places about the renewal of the church and its leaders. To equip leaders and congregations throughout the process, the synod staff and consultants commit to the following:

- Pray for the process and for each rostered minister, Renewal Team, and coach as they work with their congregations.
- Have each event ready and well planned so that participants are engaged and time is well used and fruitful.
- Prepare meaningful work to be done in each congregation’s home context that focuses on increasing the congregation’s sense of mission.
- Equip congregations to know and love the neighbors and communities in which they serve.
- With the coaches, monitor progress within the congregations and cohorts.
- Make needed adjustments quickly and effectively.
- Provide life-giving and fulfilling support and accountability for coaches.
- Say “thank you” and lift up/share stories of successes along the way.

Signed:

Rostered minister, each Renewal Team member, related coach, synod staff and consultants