

**Tri-County Ministry Agreement**  
**Effective**  
**January 1, 2023**

**I. Ministry Identity**

- A. The name by which the ministry is to be known shall be: Tri-County Ministry. (This Tri-County Ministry relationship began on August 1, 1992.)
- B. Member congregations are: Faith Lutheran Church of Hannaford, First Presbyterian Church of Cooperstown, Grace Lutheran of Grace City, Lutheran Church of McVile, Our Savior's Lutheran Church of Kloten, and Trinity Lutheran Church of Binford.

**II. Mission Statement**

We exist to serve Christ in harmony with our member churches and communities.

**III. Rostered Leaders**

Any Minister of Word and Sacrament or Minister of Word and Service called to serve the ministry shall be on the active ministry roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or on the Presbyterian Church (USA) ministry roster with approval of the END Synod and Presbytery of the Northern Plains, and shall be called with approval of all congregations of the parish.

**IV. Worship**

- A. Each congregation shall retain its own order of worship.
- B. Weekly Service: one service per week or as requested per church, in conjunction with the clergy.
- C. Scheduling of ministry worship services for Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas Eve/Day, Lent, and Easter shall be done by the Parish Administrator.

**V. Financial Obligations**

The Tri-County Ministry expenses shall be divided proportionately among the congregations based on the percentage of active confirmed membership as of July 1 of the current year.

**VI. Congregational Identity**

Each congregation shall maintain its own identity as it now exists, and will be accountable to the Eastern North Dakota Synod for representation at Synod events and for the expenses of such representation at those functions. The Presbyterian Church shall be accountable to the Presbytery of the Northern Plains and for Presbytery expenses.

## **VII. Tri-County Ministry Council**

- A. One person shall be elected from each congregation to serve on the Tri-County Ministry Council. Each congregation shall have a designated alternate who will attend the TCM Council meetings in the absence of the elected representative.
- B. The Tri-County Ministry Council shall meet at least quarterly, with meeting locations determined by the TCM Council.
- C. The major areas of responsibility shall be:
  - 1. To identify leadership needs of the Ministry and the sharing of the ministers' time in an equitable way.
  - 2. To periodically review the terms of the Letters of Call and the ministry expectations of Tri-County Ministry and rostered leaders.
  - 3. To support the rostered leaders and spouses.
  - 4. To review annually the parsonages and their needs.
- D. The length of term shall be three years, not to exceed two consecutive terms. A member can be off the board one term and be eligible for re-election.
- E. A quorum shall be one member from each congregation. (See Section XII)
- F. One vote per congregation.
- G. Two-thirds majority needed on votes. Exception: unanimous vote required for approval of a Letter of Call and for approval of TCM budget.

## **VIII. Tri-County Ministry Officers**

The Tri-County Ministry Council shall elect from among its membership four officers: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, for a term of one year. It is recommended that at least one officer carry over to the following year.

## **IX. Parsonages**

- A. The Tri-County Ministry budget shall include a monthly allotment for the Parsonage Fund.
- B. All funds coming into the Parsonage Fund shall be equally earmarked for the three parsonages. Should Tri-County Ministry dissolve, earmarked funds shall be distributed to the congregations owning the parsonages.

## **X. Length of Agreement**

- A. Parish configuration may be altered only by mutual agreement of all the congregations, together with the approval by Eastern North Dakota Synod of the ELCA and Presbytery of the Northern Plains of the PC (USA).
- B. The Agreement shall be reviewed annually by the Tri-County Ministry Council before December 31. It may be altered only by approval of the TCM Council.
- C. The parish agreement will be reviewed and revised with the inception or withdrawal of any congregation comprising the parish.

**XI. Joining Tri-County Ministry**

- A. A congregation may join the parish of Tri-County Ministry at any time upon approval of two-thirds of the congregations of the parish. Congregational special meetings shall be held for vote of approval.
- B. A congregation must have an updated active confirmed membership number before joining the TCM parish.
- C. A congregation's financial responsibility to TCM will be figured at the Congregational Ministry Contribution rate of the current year.
- D. Financial responsibility and representation on the Tri-County Ministry Council begin on the date of the revised parish agreement.

**XII. Congregational Withdrawal from the Parish / Reconfiguration of Parish**

- A. A congregation considering termination of its membership in Tri-County Ministry shall give written notice to the TCM Council by March 1.
- B. Final notification of a congregation's intent to separate from Tri-County Ministry must be given in writing to the TCM Council by July 1.
- C. Official withdrawal date of a congregation shall be December 31. A congregation wishing to withdraw previous to that date shall fulfill their financial obligation to Tri-County Ministry through December 31. After July 1, that congregation's representative to the TCM Council shall not have voice in votes concerning Letters of Call, the TCM budget for the coming year, or any decisions which would go into effect after December 31.
- D. If the parish is reconfigured, rostered leaders' Letters of Call shall be terminated, in accordance with the Constitution of the ELCA and the Presbyterian Church USA. Letters of Call may be re-issued following approval of all congregations.

**XIII. Establishment of a Call Committee**

- A. Upon the departure of a rostered leader or the addition of another rostered leader, the TCM Council may authorize the establishment of a Call Committee.
- B. The Call Committee shall consist of one member of each congregation of Tri-County Ministry. Each congregation shall have a designated alternate to the Call Committee; the alternate attends meetings of the Call Committee only in the absence of the designated member.
- C. Members of the Call Committee shall not be representatives to the Tri-County Ministry Council.

**Tri-County Ministry  
Continuing Resolutions  
2021 Revision  
Effective January 1, 2022**

**THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

**Section I.**

There shall be an executive board of the Tri-County Ministry Council whose membership shall be:

- 1) President
- 2) Vice President
- 3) Secretary
- 4) Treasurer
- 5) Pastors/Deacons and Parish Administrator (ex officio)

**Section II.**

The duties and responsibilities of the Executive Board shall be:

- 1) To hold meetings as needed between council meetings to handle emergency ministry business, to investigate pertinent topics, and to make recommendations to the ministry council as necessary.
- 2) To review the TCM Agreement and By-laws and report/recommend to TCM Council.
- 3) To be responsible for staff benefit recommendations, and to submit a report to the TCM Council by September 1 each year.
- 4) The Executive Board shall not spend monies unless authorized by two-thirds of the TCM Council. All actions are to be ratified by the full council.
- 5) To serve as the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee shall:
  - a. Present a budget for the succeeding year to the TCM Council for its review and approval at their September/October meeting.
  - b. Ensure that the approved budget is submitted to each congregation for review and approval.
  - c. Implement the new budget effective January 1, upon all congregations giving their approval.
  - d. Oversee all financial affairs of the parish to make sure they are being conducted with efficiency and transparency.
  - e. Be responsible for ministerial investments, with approval of the TCM Council.
  - f. Provide for annual review of all accounts of the Treasurer and Parish Administrator, and file a report of those reviews to the TCM Council.

**DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

- 1) The president shall preside at meetings of the TCM Council and shall serve as the ex officio member of committees.
- 2) The vice-president shall preside at meetings in absence of the president.
- 3) The secretary shall attest to the minutes of ministry TCM Council meetings, which shall be recorded by the Parish Administrator. The archives of the ministry shall be kept in the TCM parish office.
- 4) The treasurer shall oversee all funds of the parish, shall make sure that they are disbursed in accordance with decisions of the TCM Council, and shall serve on the board of the Tri-County Ministry Foundation.

## **COMMITTEES**

### **Section 1**

Ad hoc committees and standing committees may be formed when necessary.

### **Section 2**

#### **Standing Committees**

Investment Fund Committee:

- 1) Committee Membership: Appointment by TCM Council of at least three people and treasurer.
- 2) Purpose:
  - a. To manage gifts and bequests received and use them to support the mission and ministry of Tri-County Ministry.
  - b. Income funds from unrestricted gifts and bequests to the Fund will be used for projects and programs recommended and approved by the TCM Council.
  - c. The principal of Fund investments shall not be distributed to the parish's operating budget except as approved by the TCM Council.
- 3) Committee Duties:
  - a. Receive designated donations, gifts and contributions on behalf of the Tri-County Ministry.
  - b. Retain authority to hold, sell, exchange, rent, lease, transfer, convert, invest, reinvest, and in all other respects to manage and control the assets of the FUND.
  - c. Make recommendations for dispersion of both principal and income from the fund when the principal exceeds \$50,000. Principal shall not be spent until a \$30,000 base is established without a unanimous vote from the Tri-County Ministry Council.
  - d. Dispersion of interest income is available to Tri-County Ministry for general purposes as approved when the minimum base reaches \$30,000.
  - e. Provide quarterly reports of asset accounts to the Tri-County Council.
  - f. Facilitate annual review of holdings coinciding with audit standards of the TCM organization

#### **ADOPTING CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

Continuing Resolutions shall be adopted or amended by the TCM Council at any legally called meeting with a quorum present by majority vote. No continuing resolution may conflict with the TCM Agreement.