

# Tri-County Ministry Agreement

Revised 2012

## I. Ministry Identity

- A. The name by which the ministry is to be known shall be: Tri-County Ministry.
- 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 Klotten, Our Savior's Lutheran Church of McHenry, and Trinity Lutheran Church of Binford.

## II. Mission Statement

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

## III. Pastor

Any pastor called to serve the ministry shall be on the active clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or on the Presbyterian Church (USA) clergy 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 will 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 will be done by the Parish Administrator.

## V. Financial Obligations

The Tri-County Ministry expenses will be divided proportionately among the congregations based on the percentage of active confirmed membership.

## VI. Congregational Identity

Each congregation will 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 will be accountable to the Presbytery of the Northern Plains and for Presbytery expenses.

**VII. Tri-County Ministry Council**

- A. Two persons shall be elected from each congregation to serve on the Tri-County Ministry Council.
- B. The Tri-County Ministry Council shall meet at least four times per year, 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 pastors' 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 pastors.
  - 3. To support the pastors and spouses.
  - 4. To review annually the parsonages and their needs.
- D. The length of term shall be two 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, unless otherwise determined by the TCM Council because of a congregation's intent to withdraw from the parish.
- F. One vote per congregation.
- G. Two-thirds majority needed on all votes.

**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.

**IX. Parsonages**

- A. The Tri-County Ministry budget shall include a monthly allotment for the Parsonage Fund. This allotment will remain in place until the Parsonage Fund reaches a ceiling of \$9000, and shall resume when the fund drops below \$6000.
- B. Disbursement of this money shall be determined by the TCM Council. Should Tri-County Ministry dissolve, the Parsonage Fund will be redistributed on a per capita basis.

**X. Length of Agreement**

This Tri-County Ministry relationship began on August 1, 1992. The Agreement will be reviewed annually by the Tri-County Ministry Council before December 31. It can 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).

**XII. 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 will 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 assessment rate of the current year.
- D. Financial responsibility begins with pastoral service.

**XIII. 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.
- D. If the parish is reconfigured, ELCA pastors' Letters of Call shall be terminated, in accordance with the Constitution of the ELCA. Letters of Call may be re-issued following approval of all congregations.

## **Tri-County Ministry**

### **By-laws**

Revised 2012

#### ***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 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.

#### ***DUTIES OF OFFICERS***

- 1) The president shall preside at meetings of the TCM Council, and shall serve as the ex officio member of all Standing Committees.
- 2) The vice-president shall preside at meetings in absence of the president, and shall serve on the board of the Tri-County Ministry Foundation.
- 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.

#### ***ADOPTING BY-LAWS***

By-laws shall be adopted or amended by the TCM Council at any legally called meeting with a quorum present by majority vote. No by-law may conflict with the TCM Agreement.

#### ***STANDING COMMITTEES***

##### **Section I.**

In addition to the TCM Council, there shall be three standing committees to carry out the mission and task of the church as stated in the Tri-County Ministry Agreement. Standing Committee assignments are for one year. These committees shall be:

- 1) Christian Faith, Life, and Education
- 2) Church Property
- 3) Finance

## **Section II.**

Council members shall be assigned to each of the standing committees at the annual organizational meeting.

- 1) Each committee shall be composed of one or more members of the council. Parishioners not serving on the TCM Council may be invited to serve on a standing committee.
- 2) The minimum number of members required on each committee shall be determined by the TCM Council.

## **Section III.**

The duties of the standing committees shall be governed by the TCM Council.

- 1) Each committee shall report its activities to the Council.
- 2) Each committee shall initiate and carry out such activities and programs with the parish as assigned by the agreement and by-laws, or by specific resolutions of the ministry.

## **Section IV.**

The roles of the standing committees shall be:

- 1) The Christian Faith, Life, and Education Committee, in association with the pastors, shall oversee the content of education programs provided by the parish, facilitate fellowship opportunities for all ages, and assist with coordinating parish-wide mission projects.
- 2) The Church Property Committee shall see to the proper maintenance, protection, and repair of any vehicles owned by Tri-County Ministry and all parsonages of Tri-County Ministry.
  - a. Parsonages:
    - i. To make, together with the congregations, resident pastor and/or spouse, regular annual checks of the parsonages, the grounds, and utilities.
    - ii. To establish long-range parsonage maintenance and repair plans based on urgency of need.
    - iii. To work with the congregations toward upkeep, repair, and/or improvements of the parsonage property.
    - iv. To report needs and actions to the council.
  - b. TCM vehicles
    - i. To regularly review the policy regarding the use of TCM owned vehicle(s).
    - ii. To report needs and actions to the council.
- 3) The Finance Committee shall present budget for the succeeding year to the TCM Council for its approval at their September/October meeting. The budget shall then be submitted to the congregations, and pending the approval of all congregations, shall become effective January 1 of budget year. The committee shall oversee all the financial affairs of the parish to make sure that they are being conducted efficiently. The committee shall, subject to the approval of the TCM Council, be responsible for ministerial investments, and shall provide for annual reviews of all accounts of the Treasurer and Parish Administrator.