

Tri-County Ministry Agreement

Updated February 1, 2007

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Agreement is to authorize a relationship between these congregations: Trinity Lutheran Church of Cooperstown; Trinity Lutheran Church of Binford; Faith Lutheran Church of Hannaford; Our Savior's Lutheran Church of McHenry; Grace Lutheran Church of Grace City; Mabel Lutheran Church of Sutton; First Presbyterian Church of Cooperstown, Lutheran Church of McVile; Our Savior's Lutheran Church of rural McVile.

II. Mission Statement

The mission of such a fellowship is to provide a working relationship among these churches, in order that they may carry out the ministry of their respective congregations. We do not exist to serve ourselves, but to serve Christ.

III. Ministry Identity

The name by which the ministry is to be known shall be: Tri-County Ministry.

IV. 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 clergy roster with approval of the END Synod office, and shall be called by a two-thirds majority vote of the ministry, with each church having one vote on the Tri-County Ministry Council.

V. Worship

- a. Each congregation will retain its own order of worship.
- b. Sunday Service: one service per Sunday or as necessary per church, in conjunction with the clergy.
- c. Scheduling of occasional ministry worship services for Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas Eve/Day, Lent, and Easter will be done by the Tri-County Ministry Council.

VI. Financial Obligations

- a. The Tri-County Ministry expenses (including the pastors) will be divided proportionately among the congregations based on the percentage of confirmed members of each.
- b. This criterion is used only to determine financial obligation to the ministry, and does not determine individual congregational expenses.

VII. 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.

VIII. Tri-County Ministry Council

- A. The Tri-County Ministry Council shall consist of eighteen members. The council of each congregation shall elect from the congregation the following number of persons to serve on the Tri-County Ministry Council: one from council, one from congregation; recommended but not mandatory.
- B. The Tri-County Ministry Council shall meet at least four times per year, with meeting locations being rotated among the churches of Tri-County Ministry.

- 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 Letter of Call and the ministry expectations of Tri-County Ministry and pastors.
 - 3. To be a supportive group for the pastor and spouse and to make an annual review of 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 reelection.
- E. A quorum shall be at least 50% of each congregation's representatives.
- F. One vote per congregation.
- G. Two-thirds majority needed on all votes.

IX. 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.

X. Parsonage

- A. The parsonages are to be free of debt and require only to be maintained.
- B. This requirement shall be provided for at the beginning of the year in the following way: Each congregation, on the basis of confirmed membership, shall contribute its portion of \$3000 annual to the parsonage fund until it reaches a ceiling of \$9,000 or until it drops to \$6,000 when assessments shall resume.
- C. Should Tri-County Ministry dissolve, the parsonage fund will be redistributed on the same basis as the contributions were made.

XI. Offering

- A. Envelopes: Each congregation shall continue to use its own.
- B. Joint ministry worship services shall designate loose offering for the Tri-County Ministry fund, while envelopes go to their designated church.

XII. Length of Agreement

This Tri-County Ministry relationship will begin on August 1, 1992, and 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. In order to withdraw from the parish, a congregation must give due notification of such by October 1 of the year it wishes to do so.

Tri-County Ministry Continuing Resolutions

The Executive Board

Section I.

There shall be an executive board of the church council whose membership shall be:

1. Lead Pastor
2. President
3. Vice President
4. Secretary
5. Treasurer

Section II.

The duties and responsibilities of the Executive Board shall be:

1. To serve as a personnel committee,
 - a. to be responsible for staff review, and report to the Council by the February meeting each year;
 - b. to be responsible for benefit recommendations, and to submit a report to the Tri-County Ministry Council at the May meeting each year.
2. To hold meetings as needed between council meetings for the purpose of handling emergency ministry business and to investigate pertinent topics and make recommendations to the ministry council as necessary.

Section III.

The executive board shall not spend monies not authorized it by two-thirds of the ministry council. The Executive Board shall keep minutes of its meetings. These minutes shall become part of the ministry council records. All actions are to be ratified by the full council.

Duties of Officers

1. The president shall preside at meetings of the Ministry 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.
3. The secretary shall keep the minutes of Ministry Council meetings and shall have custody of the archives of the ministry.
4. The treasurer shall have oversight of all funds of the congregation and shall receive and disburse such funds in accordance with the decisions of the Ministry Council and shall maintain records of all contributions and make regular reports to the council and to the members as required by the Council. All disbursements shall have two signatures, one being that of the treasurer, the other being that of the Executive Secretary of Tri-County Ministry.

Adopting Resolutions

1. This Ministry may adopt continuing resolutions. No continuing resolution may conflict with the Tri-County Ministry Agreement.
2. These continuing resolutions may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this ministry with a quorum present by majority vote.

Standing Committees

Section I.

In addition to the Ministry Council, there shall be five 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 Education
2. Church Property
3. Finance and Audit
4. Evangelism and Outreach
5. Foundation Board Representatives

Section II.

Council members shall be assigned to each of the standing committees at the first council meeting in January.

- A. Each committee shall be composed of one or more members of the council.
- B. The minimum number of members required on each committee shall be determined by the Ministry Council.

Section III.

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

- A. Each committee shall submit a report of its activities to the Council.
- B. Each committee shall initiate and carry out such activities and programs with the ministry as will enable it to effectively perform the function and duties assigned it by the agreement and continuing resolutions, or by specific resolutions of the ministry.
- C. Each committee shall furnish to the council a written report of each meeting.

Section IV.

The purposes of the standing committees shall be:

- A. The Christian Education, in association with the pastors, shall oversee the conduct and promotion of education within the Tri-County Ministry. It shall oversee the conduct of specific programs, provide material, provide training, and continually strive to improve the educational programs.
- B. The Church Property Committee shall see to the proper maintenance and protection of all parsonages of the Tri-County Ministry, and shall take care that the same are kept in good repair.
 1. To make, together with the congregations, resident pastor and/or spouse, regular annual checks of the parsonages, the grounds, and utilities.
 2. To work with the congregations toward upkeep, repair, and/or improvements of the parsonage property.
 3. To report needs and actions regularly to the council.
- C. The Finance and Audit Committee shall prepare a draft budget for the succeeding year, and shall submit such draft budget to the Ministry Council for its action at the July Tri-County Ministry Council meeting. The budget shall be submitted to the congregations, who will report to the Tri-County Ministry Council at the September meeting, and pending the approval of the congregations would become effective January 1 of budget year. The committee shall exercise oversight of all the financial affairs of the ministry to make sure that they are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations. It shall, subject to the approval of the Ministry Council, be responsible for ministerial investments, and shall also provide for annual audits of the accounts of the Treasurer and Financial Secretary, as well as the accounts of organizations within Tri-County Ministry. They will make an annual audit of the accounts of the Financial Secretary and Treasurer and accounts of other organizations within the Tri-County Ministry in January of the current year and prior to the drafting of a budget for the succeeding year.
- D. The Evangelism and Outreach Committee shall stimulate and lead the members of the ministry to endeavor to re-awaken the spiritually indifferent and to reach those who do not know the Gospel. To this

end, the committee shall devote itself to deepening spiritual life, and shall periodically study the ministry in the context of its surrounding community.

- E. The Foundation Committee will consist of two members of the Tri-County Ministry Council. They will represent the Council on the Tri-County Ministry Foundation Board.

Parish Records

The records of the individual congregations shall be and remain the property of the congregation.

Parish Council

Each Church Council could appoint an alternate to attend in case one or both of their elected representatives are not able to attend a meeting. Each congregation is encouraged to do this, as a quorum is not possible without at least one representative from each congregation present.