



# Holy Conversations

Options for congregations considering a vital and sustainable future.

## Shared Ministry Conversation Guide

*As your congregation begins conversation with neighbors to talk about forming a parish relationship, here are some questions to consider as you envision what your ministry will look like.*

### Identity and Purpose

1. What is a Bible verse or short sentence that explains why partnering together can help your congregations better fulfill its mission and ministry to share Jesus Christ in your context?
2. What is a Bible verse or short sentence that explains your shared purpose in ministering to your shared context.
3. In a short paragraph, what are your shared hopes for this parish?
4. If you'd like, you can come up with a parish name.

### Worship

1. When will we each worship?
  - A. Sunday morning schedule (May include some compromise. Some settings shift everyone's worship, some choose to rotate worship times over 3-6 months).
  - B. Worship times and locations for festival and holiday worship
    - Advent mid-week services
    - Christmas Eve
    - Christmas Day
    - Ash Wednesday
    - Lent mid-week services
    - Maundy Thursday
    - Good Friday
    - Easter Vigil
    - Easter Sunday
    - Summer worship
    - Thanksgiving Eve
    - Annual meetings
    - Other...
    - Will there be seasonal worship services together? When?
2. How will the pastor spend his/her time in each church location?
  - Sunday mornings
  - Office hours
  - Time in the community
  - Balancing hours with needs
  - Others...
3. Who lines up pulpit supply when the pastor is gone? Is the supply pastor for both ministries/congregations? How are these expenses handled?
4. When joint worship is held or members from one place attend the other, how is the offering handled?

## **Governance**

1. Is this a yoked parish agreement or a contract? Will the contract be for a specific length of time?
2. A parish council consisting of people from each congregation should meet on a regular basis.
  - How often will the joint council meet?
  - What decisions will the churches make together?
  - How will people get appointed or elected to this team?
  - Who will govern it?
3. Will the parish provide a joint Mutual Ministry Committee? How will this be formed?
4. How will the relationship be reviewed? How often?
5. What ministries and programs will be shared between the congregations?
6. What staff people will be shared? Who will not be shared?
  - Administrative or Bookkeeping?
  - Custodial?
  - Music?
  - Youth or Program Staff?
  - Pastor, Deacon, or Lay Minister (SAM)?

## **Finances**

1. What will the shared expenses consist of?
2. What percentage will be paid by each ministry/congregation? What will this percentage be based on?
3. How often will the percentage be reviewed?
4. How will payroll be handled?
5. What will the total salary package be for our pastor?
  - Salary
  - Housing
  - Mileage
  - Portico Benefits
  - Continuing Education
  - Phone Compensation
  - Professional Expenses
  - Pastor Discretionary Fund
  - Vacation and SickTime
  - Other...
  - Do any of the congregations have a parsonage? How will this be included as expenses are shared?
6. Any other shared staff? What will their salary and benefits be?
7. How will pulpit supply expenses be paid?
8. How will expenses for special events like Fall Theological Conference, Winter Theological Conference, Synod Assembly, etc. be paid?
9. Will there be a parish bank account? A parish treasurer? How will finances be handled?
10. What other ministries that the parish engages in together will need finances? How will we budget for these other ministries?

## Ministry and Programs

1. How will your congregations format youth and family ministry? Will these programs and ministries be shared or separate? Where will they take place? What will the schedule be? Who are the adult leaders that will take responsibility for them?
  - Sunday School
  - Confirmation
  - Youth Group
  - Vacation Bible School
  - Bible Camp Program
  - Mission Trip Program
  - Other?
2. How will Social Justice Ministry work among your congregations? Will there be a shared Social Justice Ministry team or will this work be done separately? What ministries will be highlighted? Who is responsible for them?
3. How will WELCA, Men's Groups and Adult Education take place in your parish? Will these ministries be shared or separate? Who is responsible for them?
4. What community or social events are important to your congregation? Do you have any annual events that are important to you? Will these events be shared opportunities between the congregations or separate? Who is responsible for them?