

Cooperative Ministry Agreement

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church & St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church

The congregations of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hudson, N.C. ("St. John's) and St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lenoir, N.C. ("St. Stephen's), as congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ("E.L.C.A."), have agreed to enter into a cooperative ministry to share the services of a pastor, as well as to participate in other activities together. This Cooperative Ministry Agreement sets forth the details of the agreement.

Purposes. The primary purpose of this agreement is to set forth the basis for St. John's and St. Stephen's sharing of a common minister for both congregations. Such sharing is intended to be on an equal basis, with a balanced program for worship and pastoral services for each congregation respectively. In addition, it is the congregations desire to share together in some common education and group activities as may be mutually agreeable.

This agreement shall not supersede the constitutions of the respective congregations nor the constitution of the North Carolina Lutheran Synod.

It is the common mission of both St. John's and St. Stephens, empowered by God the Holy Spirit, to seek to live in obedience to the will of God the Father, and to provide a community in which to grow in faith and love for the Triune God and all of God's people, so that we may faithfully proclaim in word and deed the love and forgiveness of God the Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In doing so it is the aim of both congregations to maintain a spirit of peace and harmony in our cooperative ministry; to encourage both St. John's and St. Stephens, as they maintain their separate congregational identities, to cooperate in their sharing of a pastor and in other ways and activities, to accomplish this common mission.

The Pastor. St. John's and St. Stephen's agree to share the pastoral services of a common pastor. Both congregations shall equally share and approve the financial compensation and benefits of such pastor, and shall equally and timely pay for one-half (/12) of the costs of such financial compensation and benefits. The Bishop of the North Carolina synod of the E.L.C.A. shall determine which congregation is designated as the "call congregation" for synodical purposes; however, both St. John's and St. Stephen's shall equally determine the financial compensation of the pastor, and equally participate in review and

direction of the pastor in the performance of his/her pastoral responsibilities for both congregations.

Joint Parish Council. St. John's and St. Stephen's shall each respectively designate and appoint three congregational members to serve one-year terms on a Joint Parish Council ("JPC"), which shall meet at least quarterly, and at other meeting called at the request of the pastor or any Parish Council meeting, to discuss and consider matters and issues which may arise in the implementation of this Cooperative Ministry Agreement. The pastor shall also be a member of the JPC. The primary purposes of the JPC is to facilitate effective communication between the congregations regarding pastoral services and other joint activities and to coordinate separate worship services and other scheduled events and activities of the two congregations. A written report summarizing each meeting of the JPC shall be prepared and distributed to each congregation.

In the event of a pastoral vacancy the JPC shall meet with appropriate officials of the North Carolina Synod regarding joint efforts to secure a new pastor and pastoral supply for both congregations during the vacancy. The congregations shall follow the direction of the Bishop of the North Carolina Synod in the pastoral call process.

The JPC may establish other joint committees in the implementation of this agreement. In January of each year, the JPC shall designate one of its members as Chair, and another member as Vice Chair. These positions shall not be from the same congregation, and the Chair shall alternate annually from between the congregations. The Chair shall preside at JPC meetings and the Vice Chair shall preside in the absence of the Chair.

Service Schedules. Until such time as both congregations shall otherwise determine, the regular Sunday morning worship service of the St. John's congregation shall be held at 9:30 a.m., and at 11:00 a.m. for the St. Stephen's congregation. The JPC shall coordinate and determine the respective worship services during Lent, Christmas and other special church seasons, and it shall be the intent of this agreement that in general the congregations encourage the sharing of these special seasonal services.

Ratification of this Agreement. This Cooperative Ministry Agreement shall become effective upon approval of both congregations in separate called

A Covenant
for the Shared Ministry
of
Faith Lutheran Church, Logansport, IN
and
St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Camden, IN

Seeking to build up one another in Christ and move forward in mission together as a two-point parish, Faith Lutheran Church, Logansport, IN and St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Camden, IN covenant to engage in shared ministry together in the following ways:

1. Continuity of Identity

Although we are joined together as one in the Body of Christ, this ministry partnership maintains the distinct identities of each congregation. This shared ministry partnership is not a merger, consolidation, nor a dissolution of either congregation. Both churches will maintain their own constitution, budget, councils, and committee structures.

2. Term of Shared Ministry Partnership

Following approval of both church councils and both congregations, this ministry partnership officially began June 5th, 2016. Both congregations agree to continue engaging in this shared ministry partnership for three years. After three years, the shared ministry will continue on an annual basis with the approval of both congregations. Dissolution of the shared ministry partnership cannot be done prior to consultation with the Bishop of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod.

3. Sharing a Pastor

One full-time pastor is shared between St. Peter's and Faith. The pastor will serve the two congregations based on a percentage of time in a work week: 75% time to Faith and 25% time at St. Peter's, respectively. Both congregations covenant to be understanding and flexible towards this percentage of time functioning as a *guideline* due to the nature of the office and duties of a pastor. Additionally, the pastor will covenant to be present for both council meetings at each church each month and both annual meetings at each church. The pastor will also covenant to participate and be available for St. Peter's (Camden) Vacation Bible School.

4. Financially Supporting a Pastor

Faith covenants to provide 75% of the total cost of supporting one full-time pastor and St. Peter's covenants to provide the remaining 25%. The 75%-25% arrangement will be reviewed annually to determine if adjustments need to be made. St. Peter's will pay Faith their respective portion on a periodic basis as recommended by the respective treasurer's from each congregation.

The total amount of financially supporting a pastor will adjust slightly year to year based on changes in benefits and salary costs. *Compensation Standards for Ministers of Word and Sacrament* will be utilized to determine salary and benefits in accordance with Indiana-Kentucky Synod, ELCA guidelines:

<http://iksynod.org/document/2017-2018-minister-word-sacrament-compensation-guidelines/>

Additionally, the pastor will maintain a log of mileage for church business and activities related to each congregation and submit mileage to each church for reimbursement on a monthly basis. In circumstances where the pastor is incurring mileage for both churches (i.e. pericope group, ministerium, first call theological education, synod meetings, synod assembly, etc.) St. Peter's and Faith covenant to split the cost of that shared mileage.

5. Worship

Worship of the Triune God is the epicenter of congregational ministry. Although each congregation maintains their own regular Sunday services, opportunities for worshipping God together will be lifted up throughout our ministry partnership as well. Joint worship services may take the form of, but are not limited to: Mid-week Lenten services, holiday services (such as Thanksgiving and/or New Year's Day), select holy week services (such as Maundy Thursday and/or Good Friday), and 5th Sunday joint worship services. The Joint Council in partnership with the pastor will determine the frequency of these joint services.

Sunday Worship Service Times: worship at St. Peter's Lutheran Church will be at 8:30am and worship at Faith Lutheran Church will be at 10:10am. The pastor will be present at both congregations every Sunday, unless the pastor is on vacation or continuing education.

Other Service Times: There will be separate services at each congregation for Christmas Eve and Easter morning worship. These service times, and all other non-regular Sunday service times, will be discerned by both councils at Joint Council meetings.

6. Joint Council Meetings

Joint council meetings will take place four times a year (quarterly). The agenda for these meetings will include a time of devotion/spiritual growth, a time of deepening our relationships with one another, review of the progress of our shared ministry, discussion of ways to expand our shared ministry, and any additional items proposed by members of either church council or the pastor. Location of these meetings will alternate between each church. Minutes of these meetings will be taken by the secretary of the council who is “hosting” that particular joint council meeting at their church.

7. Communication and Conflict Resolution

Both councils covenant to practice healthy communication and conflict resolution with one another and the pastor. As Christians, we understand this to take the form of Matthew 18 when we are in community with one another. Matthew 18 outlines the importance of addressing issues directly and compassionately, while uplifting the values of transparency, truth-telling in love, integrity, forgiveness, reconciliation, and prayer.

8. Shared Ministry

Both congregations will continue to explore ways to expand our shared ministry and mission together for the sake of God’s world, as well as ways to deepen our relationships with one another and our communities. This may take the form of, but is not limited to, youth group, confirmation instruction, Christian education, newsletter, outreach activities, etc. We can do more as church together!

9. Review of Shared Ministry

The effectiveness of this shared ministry partnership will be reviewed annually and discussed at a Joint Council meeting. This meeting’s agenda will also include review of the covenant and all agreements listed within it.

Covenant Approved by the Congregation of Faith Lutheran Church on _____
Signature of Council President: _____

Covenant Approved by the Congregation of St. Peter’s Lutheran Church on _____
Signature of Council President: _____

**A Resolution
for the Shared Ministry
of**

_____ Lutheran Church, _____, IN/KY
and
_____ Lutheran Church, _____, IN/KY

Be it hereby resolved that _____ Lutheran Church, _____, Indiana/Kentucky enter into a shared ministry arrangement with _____ Lutheran Church, _____, Indiana/Kentucky.

This arrangement will include the following provisions:

1. **Congregation Identity** - Each congregation will maintain its own identity. This arrangement is not a merger, not a consolidation, and does not involve the dissolution of either congregation. Both Churches will maintain their own constitution, budget, Congregation Council, and committee structure.
2. **Effective Start Date** – Starting this shared ministry will require the approval of both Church Councils followed by the approval of both Congregations. Pending Council approval the resolution will be presented to both Congregations on _____(date). If approved by both Congregations the shared ministry will begin on _____(date).
3. **Shared Pastor** - A Pastor will be shared. The Pastor at the start of this shared ministry will be Pastor _____. The Pastor will serve the two congregations based on a percentage of time in a work week. This percentage will be calculated based on average worship attendance numbers reported in ELCA Annual Congregational Report (Form A). The average worship attendance will be compared annually and the percentage of time adjusted each year on February 1. It is clearly understood that the percentage of time is a guideline and, due to the nature of the duties of a Pastor, both congregations will need to be flexible and understanding concerning the Pastor’s time commitment to each congregation.

4. **Pastor Financial Compensation** – The Pastor’s annual compensation will be based on the current synod/ELCA minimum standards for compensation. The compensation for _____(year) shall be as follows:

Base Salary	\$
Additional Stipend for Attending Meetings	\$ 1,000
Housing Allowance (30%)	\$
Social Security Allowance (7.65%)	\$
Total Defined Compensation	\$
Health and Pension (Portico)	\$
Total Compensation & Benefits	\$

The Pastor’s annual compensation will be shared by the two congregations based on a percentage. The percentage will be calculated based on average worship attendance numbers reported in ELCA Annual Congregational Report (Form A) for the previous year. The average worship attendance will be compared annually and the percentage of salary adjusted each year on Feb. 1. Annual compensation will be established, after consultation with the Pastor, at a joint council meeting in September.

5. **Pastor Benefits** – Benefits will include the following;

Weekly Days and Hours – The Pastor on average will have two days off per week. It is understood that the nature of the Pastors duties may require fewer days off some weeks and additional time off during other weeks. The Pastor’s weekly schedule on average should not exceed a 50 hour work week.

Holidays / Personal Business Days – The Pastor will have ten holidays each year and three additional days to conduct personal business. The Pastor is encouraged not to use Sundays for holidays or personal business.

Vacation - The Pastor will have four weeks (28 days) of vacation each year including four (4) Sundays.

Continuing Education – Continuing education is expected and encouraged. The Pastor will be provided with up to two weeks annually for continuing education. The cost of continuing education must be approved by both Councils and each Church's financial obligation for continuing education will be prorated the same as the Pastor’s compensation. The annual financial obligation annually for continuing education shared by both Congregations is \$700.

Mileage – The Pastor will maintain a log of mileage for church business for each Congregation and submit mileage for reimbursement monthly. The compensation rate for mileage will be the IRS mileage rate (currently \$0.545).

Sabbatical Leave – During the first year of shared ministry the concept of sabbatical leave will be discussed with the pastor. The discussion will include time to serve the congregations prior to a sabbatical, length of sabbatical leave, and the financial obligation of both congregations.

Pastor Attendance at Official Assemblies and Conferences – Attendance at the Annual Indiana Kentucky Synod Assembly is mandated in the constitution. Registration, lodging, meals, and travel expenses will be paid by the congregations and prorated based on annual attendance. The Pastor may submit a request to the Councils for attendance at other conferences.

6. **Worship Schedule** - The worship schedule will be as follows:

Sunday Worship Services – Beginning on _____ (date) worship at _____ Lutheran Church will be at _____ a.m. and worship at _____ Lutheran Church will be at _____ a.m. This schedule will remain in effect until _____ (date) when the schedule will alternate. Thereafter the _____ a.m./ _____ a.m. worship schedule will alternate annually on June 30 and December 31.

Other Services – Service times for Lent, Advent, and Christmas Eve will be determined by mutual agreement of the two Congregation Councils. Shared services for Lent and Advent will be discussed by the respective Worship Committees and Councils as an option.

7. **Joint Council Meetings** – The Church Councils shall have joint council meetings at least twice each year with one meeting in March and one in September. The agenda for these meetings will include a review of the progress of the shared ministry, discussion of ways to expand our shared ministry, and any agenda item proposed by either church Council. The first joint meeting will be chaired by the President of the _____ Church Council. The chairmanship of the joint council meetings shall alternate thereafter between the current Council Presidents.

8. **Shared Ministry** – Confirmation instruction will be shared. Both Congregations will continue to explore ways to expand our shared ministry and mission.

(add other current shared ministries under this section)

9. **Review of Shared Ministry** - The effectiveness of the shared ministry of _____ Lutheran Church and _____ Lutheran Church will be reviewed annually and discussed at a joint meeting of the councils. Both Congregations agree to maintain this shared ministry through _____(year). After _____(year) the shared ministry will continue on an annual basis with the approval of both congregations. A dissolution of the shared ministry cannot be done prior to consultation with the Bishop of the Indiana Kentucky Synod.

Resolution Approval

Resolution Approved by the Congregation of _____ Lutheran Church on _____.

Signature of Council President: _____

Resolution Approved by the Congregation of _____ Lutheran Church on _____.

Signature of Council President: _____