

**A Covenant
for the Shared Ministry
of
(Name) Lutheran Church, (City, State)
and
(Name) Lutheran Church, (City, State)**

Seeking to build up one another in Christ and move forward in mission together, (Name) Lutheran Church, (City, State) and (Name) Lutheran Church, (City, State) 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 (date). Both congregations agree to continue engaging in this shared ministry partnership for _____ years. After _____ years, the shared ministry will continue on an annual basis with the approval of both congregations. Dissolution of the shared ministry partnership cannot be accomplished prior to consultation with the Bishop of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod.

3. **Sharing a Pastor**

One full-time pastor is shared between (Name of church) and (Name of church). The pastor will serve the two congregations based on a percentage of time in a work week: _____% time to (Name of church) and _____% time to (Name of church) 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 (list any special events). Attendance at other activities and events will be discussed for the upcoming three months at each Joint Council meeting.

4. **Financially Supporting a Pastor**

(Name of church) covenants to provide _____% of the total cost of supporting one full-time pastor and (Name of church) covenants to provide _____. This percentage arrangement will be reviewed annually to determine if adjustments need to be made based on average worship attendance and/or financial means of each congregation.

(Name of church) will pay (name of church) 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. The current IN-KY Synod Compensation Standards and accompanying spreadsheets can be found on the IN-KY Synod website: <https://iksynod.org/call-process/>. (Increases in salary and/or benefits beyond the annual increase in the IK Synod Compensation Standards will be approved by each congregation.)

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.) (Name of church) and (Name of church) covenant to share 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 (Name of Church) Lutheran Church will be at _____am and worship at (Name of Church) Lutheran Church will be at _____am. 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. The host president will chair joint council meetings. 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. Affirmations and recommendations regarding this shared ministry partnership will be discussed annually at the (Month) Joint Council. This meeting’s agenda will also include review of the covenant and all agreements listed within it.

Covenant Approved by the Congregation of (name) Lutheran Church on: _____

Signature of Council President: _____ Date: _____

Covenant Approved by the Congregation of (name) Lutheran Church on: _____

Signature of Council President: _____ Date: _____