

Indiana-Kentucky Synod Shared Ministry Discernment and Discussion Guide

Shared Ministry in the Indiana-Kentucky Synod is described as two or more congregations sharing pastoral leadership (and perhaps other staff) while also sharing some mission and ministry. If your congregation is interested in exploring shared ministry with one or more other congregations, please contact Pastor Nancy Nyland, DEM, at nnyland@iksynod.org.

What is Shared Ministry?

- It is NOT about closing, merging or making the congregations alike.
- It is about maintaining the unique identity of each congregation while sharing leadership and jointly participating in some mission and ministry.
- It is about being attentive to the Holy Spirit and the opportunities being offered for shared mission and ministry.
- It is about having a full-time pastor that your congregation is sharing.
- It is about freeing up resources to do mission and ministry.
- It is about gifts. No matter how big or how small, each congregation brings gifts into the partnership.
- It is NOT about surviving....it IS about thriving.
- It is about purpose. What is God calling your congregation to do and to be in the future? How will this shared ministry strengthen your mission and ministry? How will your congregation's relationship with God, one another and the world grow in this shared ministry?
- It is about risk and experimentation. As Bishop Bill says, "Let's throw our loaves and fish on the table and see how God might multiply them."
- It is about open communication and relationship building first with leaders and then with the entire congregation.
- It is about establishing a high trust level between the pastor, the lay leaders and the congregations.
- It is about compromise. What areas need compromise to make the shared leadership successful (i.e., worship times, midweek services, special services, annual meetings, etc.)?
- It is about strong lay leadership. How will lay leaders be responsible for tasks which previously were considered the pastor's responsibility?
- It is not about unseating a called pastor. If one of the congregations currently has a called pastor, this pastor will be the first candidate to be considered in the call process.
- It is about imagining and exploring various staffing models, as appropriate....ministers of word and sacrament (pastors); ministers of word and service (deacons); interns from seminary; shared administrative assistant, youth leader, music director, custodial staff, etc.
- It is about participating in a discernment process with another congregation(s) involving several meetings with congregational leaders facilitated by synod staff.
- It is about developing a shared ministry covenant (a sample covenant is available from the synod office).