

Indiana-Kentucky Synod Area Mission Conversations

In the Indiana-Kentucky Synod, Area Mission Conversations are Christ centered. The goal of the conversations is to maximize and focus the mission and ministry of the participating sites. The partnership creates the opportunity to share ideas, energies, leadership, and resources for mission and ministry.

Area Mission Conversations might result in a Shared Ministry. A Shared Ministry is defined as two or more congregations sharing pastoral leadership (and perhaps other staff) while also sharing some mission and ministry.

Area Mission Conversations

What might Area Mission Conversations offer?

- Unify and strengthen the witness of the ELCA in a community
- Opportunity to clarify mission and vision for the church
- Pray for each other
- Strengthen and support individual ministries
- Gain strength, support, and hope from other congregations
- Make ministry more efficient
- Stimulate energy and growth
- Help a congregation extend beyond itself
- Financial savings as staff and resources are shared
- Improved relationship, individually and organizationally
- Strength in numbers
- Increased empowering, equipping and encouraging of lay leadership
- Opportunity to learn about and try new things
- Improved programming in each congregation (sharing ideas, creativity, talents)
- Opportunity for pastoral leaders and staff to be more effective as they work out of their gifted areas. Pastoral leaders in adjacent congregations see that they often duplicate efforts – visit the same hospitals and nursing homes, instruct confirmands, work with youth from the same school districts, etc. How could these ministries be shared?

What are some of the challenges?

- Discerning God's will for the community
- Promoting growth in discipleship that is expressed in mission
- Building infrastructure
- Communication

- Fear of Change, Failure, Risk-taking
- Ambiguity (Chaos during transitions)
- Feeling that change offers no rewards for our own congregation
- Theology of scarcity – not enough resources
- Loss of control, power, prestige – Change threatens position

Shared Ministry

What makes Shared Ministries effective?

- Effective shared ministries share a common mission and vision – Discerned through prayer, study, dialog, and trust
- Congregations in shared ministry identify strongly with the ministry and provide strong lay leadership to strengthen and guide the ministry.
- Congregations in shared ministry have active prayer and spiritual lives, vibrant worship, discipleship, relational evangelism, an outward focus toward the community and its needs, caring ministries, and shared leadership

What Shared Ministries are Not

- About survival. The mission of the church is not about survival. If “keeping the door open” is the mission statement (written or unwritten) this is not for the congregation. The reason for developing a shared ministry should be mission driven and not survival driven.

What Shared Ministries Are

- Creative – ministry can expand with a different pastoral configuration and new resources. We gain diversity and enjoy gifts that are shared.
- Respectful – two or more congregations can share and live out the Gospel together, yet respect each other’s history.
- Mutual support – prayers, hope, and fellowship
- Shared expenses – in a shared ministry arrangement, a congregation that cannot afford a full-time salary for pastoral leadership can continue their mission and ministry.