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A. Ways of Being:



COMMUNITY OF FAITH

A community of faith is any community of people within the United Church that gathers to explore faith, worship, and serve; including but not limited to pastoral charges, congregations, outreach ministries, chaplaincies, faith-based communal living, house churches, online communities; and is in a covenantal relationship with the regional council.

Communities of Faith may be intended as time-limited, transitional, or ongoing.

Every Community of Faith that is a Congregation or Pastoral Charge needs a chair, secretary and treasurer, a minimum of three Trustees, and an M and P Committee and a mission. *(Bylaws B.6 and B.7: (Ill. 5.3.1))*

For Communities of Faith other than Congregations and PCs, the governance requirements for each community of faith must be appropriate for the size, form, and mission of the community of faith, and these requirements must be set out in the covenant between the community of faith and the regional council *(Manual B.8.2.2)*.

(See Polity, III Communities of Faith and see Bylaws, General, B.1.1. Community of Faith.)



CONGREGATION

A congregation is a group of people in the United Church that meets for public worship. *(Bylaws B.1.2)*



PASTORAL CHARGE

A pastoral charge is a unit of organization that consists of one or more congregations.

A pastoral charge has a governing body which consists of one or more communities of faith under the spiritual leadership of a minister. All pastoral charges must be in covenant with the Northern Spirit Regional Council. *(Bylaws B.1.2)*



AMALGAMATION:

Amalgamation is the process when two or more Communities of Faith join together to form a new Community of Faith. This requires a decision by the Regional Council and when completed, a new Covenant with the Regional Council.

Models, such as Circuit Ministry, forming a multiple point Pastoral Charge, or Ecumenical Shared Ministry, are other options for a Community of Faith to share resources, both Ministry and other.



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING / MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT:

MOU stands for Memorandum of Understanding, in which a group of churches agree to share costs and responsibilities with regards to ministry personnel. This agreement is reviewed annually and is understood as a beginning first step.

MOA stands for Memorandum of Agreement which simply formalizes and makes permanent what was developed in the MOU following a trial period.



CIRCUIT MINISTRY

Circuit Ministry is a group of individual churches who agree to pay for clergy services individually. They have there set Sunday designation in which the clergy person is expected to do services, visitations, pastoral care etc. The next Sunday involves another church repeating the same requirements. So if you have four churches, each would have its own governance and agreement with the appropriate clergy. They may decide to share costs for office, secretary and other incidentals but no governing larger board would be required. Each church has its own governance and authority regarding its relationship with clergy. When the minister is not present at a pastoral charge, Lay people will provide for worship and Pastoral Care.

That is why it is called a circuit ministry as the minister goes each Sunday to another community of faith to perform the required duties.



ECUMENICAL SHARED MINISTRY:

Shared Ministry is the sharing of ministry, and/or physical resources with another related Christian denomination of similar theological persuasion, i.e., Anglican, some Lutheran, Presbyterian, and United. Whichever is available, the agreement is to share pulpits and churches with each having their own respective governance. Each denomination agrees to sharing resources, worship space, if need be, and other related concerns to support shared ministry. All involved parties must be accountable to and in good standing with all involved denominations (ie Anglicans and United).



MULTI-POINT PASTORAL CHARGE

A multipoint charge or faith community is a group of churches that have banded together to share the cost of a ministry personnel, i.e., office supplies and office; secretary, phone and internet costs and housing and education. These are shared by an allotment agreed upon by the parties involved. Each church has its own board and governance and has representatives on the larger pastoral board which normally meets quarterly. The larger board is responsible for worship planning, M.&P., and other related matters to the employment of the minister, i.e., salary, benefits, holidays, and other incidentals which are in turn administered by the Treasurer of the larger board. The allotment is set by the number of churches involved.

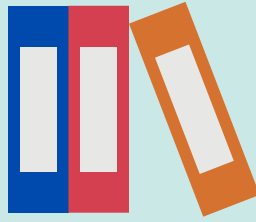


DISBANDING:

Disbanding, or closing, a Community of Faith means that the Community of Faith has discerned that its Mission and Ministry has been completed. The Community of Faith would ask the Regional Council to disband the Community of Faith. Before the decision is final, the Community of Faith must divest itself of all assets, must assist all members to transfer to a new Community of Faith, and must transfer its records to the archives.



B. Mission & Story



MISSION

A mission statement defines a community of faith's reason for being. In a few sentences, the statement should include the community of faith's reason for existing, and the core values that guide the community of faith's actions and decisions. Mission is what calls a community; ministry is their acting on that call.



COMMUNITY OF FAITH PROFILE

The purpose of the community of faith profile is to:

- Articulate the community of faith's witness to the gospel,
- Articulate the ministry needs of the community of faith, and
- Summarize the community of faith's resources and community context.

Elements that should be included in a community of faith profile include: a Living Faith Story; Financial statement; Demographics; Geographic context; Manse report, if applicable; Real property; learning site requirements (Student Ministry Employment), if applicable.

If a community of faith is experiencing a change in pastoral relations, the profile needs to be updated so that it is ready to post for search and selection. Specifically, an updated financial viability review and position description(s) need to be drafted to support the search and selection process.



LIVING FAITH STORY

The living faith story articulates the community of faith's ministry focus. This story tells why a congregation exists as a community of faith. All communities of faith are expected to develop a living faith story, review it regularly, and share it with the regional council so that support can be programmed. The living faith story is an opportunity to tell where God is leading a community of faith. Creating this story is an invitation to articulate, assess, and perhaps even reframe how a congregation comes together as a church.

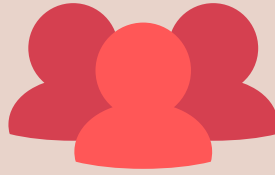
The living faith story can be written, or it can be an audio or video recording of the community telling their story.

The living faith story is used in a few different ways:

1. It is a required element of a community of faith profile as part of the pastoral relations process.
2. It is part of the covenantal relationship with the regional council and part of the self-assessment process with the regional council.
3. It is posted on ChurchHub as a description of the community of faith. For communities in search of a new ministry personnel, this is part of the invitation to ministry personnel to consider whether they are being called to serve a specific ministry context.
4. It can guide a community of faith in shaping ministry priorities and sharing a vision of the community and its mission.



C. Roles



TRUSTEES (Board of Trustees)

A Trustee is a person holding legal title to a property in order to administer it for a beneficiary. Board of Trustees means all the trustees together as a group. The terms “Board of Trustees” and “the Trustees” are used interchangeably. The congregational property is all property and assets owned by the congregation, including land, buildings, funds, investments, and any other kind of property. The congregation is the beneficial owner of the congregational property as long as the congregation is in existence. Every congregation must have at least three trustees.



LICENSED LAY WORSHIP LEADER:

A licensed lay worship leader (LLWL) is a full member of a United Church Community of Faith who has been determined to have gifts and a sense of call to the ministry of worship leadership and preaching, who has developed these gifts through participation in a course of study and is licensed by a regional council. LLWLs are not eligible for appointment to any paid accountable ministry personnel position. LLWLs are not eligible, by virtue of their license, to preside at the sacraments or to wear vestments.



PASTORAL CHARGE SUPERVISOR:

A supervisor appointed by the Region to support the official board of a Charge in maintaining their ongoing ministry of the Pastoral Charge while they are not being served by a clergy person.



PASTORAL RELATIONS LIAISON:

A Pastoral Relations Liaison is appointed by the Region to assist the official board or search committee in creating a Community of Faith Profile, and in conducting a search for new ministry personnel.

