

Considering a
MutualMinistry
Committee
in your congregation.



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For: Learning – Leadership Development Committee
of the Synod of Alberta and the Territories
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

A Mutual Ministry Committee supports your pastor by serving as advocate, mentor, listener, coach, encourager and confidant. Its primary purpose is the well being of your minister. Its secondary concern is the health of the ministry of the congregation.

Mutual Ministry Committee

What is a Mutual Ministry Committee?

It is a group of about three, four or five people, whose mandate is to advocate for your pastor's well being. It will be concerned about the pastor's personal wellness and working conditions in order that the ministry of the congregation is effective. A similar committee may be formed for each of your staff members. The ministry of your congregation depends upon the wellness of your staff. This is its mandate.

What is the purpose of a Mutual Ministry Committee?

The Mutual Ministry Committee is meant to minister mutually:

- to your pastor as a way to assure good ministry within your congregation.
- with your pastor to assure good ministry among your members.

This committee will normally be the first and safest place for members to express concerns and issues regarding your pastor, and the first and safest place to hear your pastor express concerns about the congregation. Openness is important, confidentiality critical. This committee will from time to time be a liaison between pastor and congregation. The Mutual Ministry Committee is a 'sounding board' for both pastor and congregation and therefore will play an intercessory role. Its most powerful role is in affirming what is going well. [See appendix B for sample 'charters'.]

What is the makeup of the Mutual Ministry Committee?

The members of the Mutual Ministry Committee would be selected from the most nurturing and caring, the wisest, most trustworthy and best listeners of your membership. They will be asked to sensitively carry messages of congratulations and of appreciation, as well as questions and concerns between your congregation and your pastor and perhaps between your pastor and the council. In so doing, the committee contributes to the effectiveness of the mission of the congregation.

What is the value of a Mutual Ministry Committee?

A Mutual Ministry Committee is a response to the gospel's admonition to love and care and minister to one another. It provides an opportunity for early intervention and therefore early resolution of any differences or misunderstandings. It provides an opportunity to express gratitude and appreciation. [See appendix A for sample agenda.]

What is the domain of the Mutual Ministry Committee?

The Letter of Call to your pastor contains reciprocal and complementary obligations that can be an effective agenda discussion topic for this committee – it may be helpful for both the congregation and your pastor to review the Letter of Call. The 'functions' of the congregation as described in the constitution about the mission, the purpose and the ministry of your congregation provide the topics and themes for discussion at the Mutual Ministry Committee meetings as well. This committee serves the pastor through the beginning, the middle and the end of the call. [See appendix C or D for a helpful list.]

Forming a Mutual Ministry Committee

Membership

- Candidates may be selected in several ways:
 - all recruited by the Pastor,
 - half recruited by the council and half by the Pastor,
 - one third by the council and two thirds by the Pastor,
 - ALL members of this Mutual Ministry Committee MUST be acceptable to the Pastor.
- Candidates MUST keep confidentiality. They should be your best communicators with strength of sensitivity while maintaining honesty. These members will be obvious for their desire for the ministry of your pastor to go well and for the ministry of the congregation to go well. They are known for their zeal for prayer and worship, for their trustworthiness and wisdom and for their faithfulness and their knowledge.
- Members of this committee are gifted with helpfulness; they are enablers, encouragers and exhorters.
- They are aware of the activities in the congregation.

Terms for the Mutual Ministry Committee

- Consider using a rotating three-year term so that one third of the membership changes each year, or a two-year term with half of the members new each year.
- Council appoints members, after appropriate consultation.
- This committee reports to the council following each meeting, being careful to maintain confidentiality.
- This committee reports annually to the congregation, being careful to maintain confidentiality.
- This committee meets about four or five times a year or as special situations arise.
- The pastor drafts the agenda with members invited to add items that have been brought to their attention, and conducts the meeting.

Getting Started

- Discuss it frequently until both pastor and the leadership desire a support committee of this type and recognize its value. Establish the committee as suggested above.
- Prepare a document detailing the composition and structure of the Mutual Ministry Committee that will suit your situation.
- Orient candidates. Meet to share the mandate and purpose for this committee.
- Begin slowly, use agenda items that are uplifting and encouraging for the first few meetings. Slowly increase the depth and scope of the committee's work over the first few years. Implement this committee when things are going well, so that there is a good level of trust and confidence as a team.
- After four or five years, this committee may be actively initiating and conducting assessments of the ministry of the congregation. [See appendices C and D]

APPENDIX

A. Sample Agenda

Mutual Ministry Committee Agenda 7:00 September 10

Devotions

Issues

Follow-up from the discussion last time on the soup kitchen idea.

[What might we recommend to council?]

Time commitments for counseling. [One parishioner says she had to wait for two weeks]

With the intensity of the last three funerals, is some R&R needed?

How is the staff reacting to the new youth leader?

What's going well?

Some people want to keep the sermon tapes for the shut-ins?

Most had a good response to the new songs.

Many are using the counseling services.

Have the salary and pension guidelines arrived? How is our salary compared to the average?

When does council begin budget talks?

There is a 'Caring Ministry' training session in Hawaii next January. Are you interested?

When should this be presented to the council?

Should our report to council be verbal and in person this time? Or written?

Could we be prepared to discuss at the next meeting the counseling service and its effect on other programs?

Closing prayer.

Next meeting is December 5th, 7:00 at the church office.

B. Sample Charter

Mutual Ministry Committee for Agape Lutheran Church

Adopted on September 10, 2002

This committee will:

- Be an advocate for our pastor in all aspects of well being.
- Be a listener to concerns of the pastor and of the congregation and respond in Christian love and wisdom. It will be a sounding board.
- Be helpful in a loving and a sensitive manner. It will nurture healthy working relationships. It may work at conflict resolution among the people.
- Be active in support for the health and welfare of our pastor for the sake of ministry, and also be actively involved in the effectiveness of the ministry and mission of the congregation.

This committee will:

- Have three members who are appointed by council and are acceptable to the pastor.
- Report to council after each meeting.
- Serve a term of three years; one being newly appointed each year.
- Meet at least three times a year.

This committee may:

- Make recommendations to both the council and the congregation.
- Serve as mutual minister to other paid staff.

This committee seeks:

- The trust, support and prayers of the council, the congregation and the pastor.
- The commitment to honesty, to effective ministry and to caring for one another.
- The dedication to growth in faith and in ministry.

This committee believes:

- That effect ministry is best obtained within a mutually ministering community.
- That the pastor has a right to know how we think they are performing.
- That the pastor has a right to our prayers, love, assistance and solidarity from those they minister.

[Other details may be added to your agreement to suit your congregation. Reach consensus before proceeding.]

C. Choosing Agenda items.

Select from Functions of the Congregation

- **Worship**
- **Learning**
- **Service**
- **Witness**
- **Support**

These functions of the congregation, taken from the model constitution for the ELCiC congregations, are a suitable source of themes and discussion topics at the Mutual Ministry Committee meetings. It would be helpful to include an item or two from this list for you to ponder at every meeting.

This list is intentionally incomplete. Add to the list as needed for your congregation. This list may help you assess your ministry and begin discussions in areas worthy of your attention. Be deliberate about investing time and energy acknowledging what is going well among you. In fact, choose to begin the Mutual Ministry work at a time when things are going well.

Worship

Elements of Worship

The major elements are word and sacrament.

Evidences of Worship

Gathering
Listening
Receiving
Responding
Remembering
Celebrating
Equipping
Speaking
Singing
Playing
Praying
Feeling
Thinking

Examples of Worship

Sacraments
Sermons
Music
Liturgy
Confession
Praise
Offering
Pray

Learning

Elements of Learning

The major elements are study and growth for knowledge and for faith and grace.

Evidences of Learning

Growing
Studying
Equipping
Training
Recruiting
Witnessing

Serving
Teaching
Leading
Praying
Worshipping

Examples of Learning

Sunday School
Adult study classes
Curriculum development
Retreats
Workshops
Conferences

Service

Elements of Service

The major elements are faith and equipping.

Evidences of Service

Caring
Loving

Sharing
Helping

Examples of Service

Involvement
Seeking justice
Applying fairness

Witnessing

Elements of Witnessing

The major elements are proclaiming and modeling.

Evidences of Witnessing

Inviting
Recruiting
Training
Proclaiming
Repenting
Welcoming
Motivating
Hosting

Examples of Witnessing

Visitation
Hospitality
Modeling
Telling
Serving
Supporting
Interdenominational

Support

Elements of Support

The major elements are leadership and stewardship

Evidences of Support

Organizational involvements

Select from Acts 2

- **Kerygma**
- **Didache**
- **Koinonia**
- **Diakonia**

This description of congregational activities is based on Acts 2. These topics may serve as a beginning for consideration and study. Freely add detail to this list or prayerfully rewrite them as questions for yourselves. Expect to find themes where you'll want to increase your ministry. Be sure to acknowledge those areas where you are doing well.

Kerygma [proclaiming the word, worship]

Worship
Sacraments
Scripture
Confession

Absolution
Sermon
Music
Participation

Involvement
Testimonies Witness
Evangelizing
Media

Didache [teaching, learning, study, knowledge]

Bible reading
Scripture studies
Topical studies
Sunday school
Adult studies

Book talks
Sermons
Library
Video collection
Conferences

Workshops
Church literature
Periodical reading
Dialogue

Koinonia [fellowship, friendship]

Gathering
Visiting
Meeting

Eating
Hospitality
Caring

Helping
Celebrating

Diakonia [service, helping]

Helping
Feeding
Clothing
Visiting
Supporting

Assisting
Caring
Youth
Aged
Weak

Poor
Hopeless
Victim
Helpless

Mutual Ministry Committee

Record of Concern

Concerned congregational member _____

Date: _____

Issue: _____

The concern was brought to committee member, _____
and presented to the MMC meeting held on _____

Summary of concern:

Mutual Ministry Committee's response:

Action taken [if any]:

Action completed by committee member _____ on _____.

Report to council:

Closing Report: [Resolution, referral]

Concern closed on _____.

*[This only copy of this Record of Concern will be kept in the minutes of the MMC
and will be destroyed on or before the end
of the present pastor's term at this congregation.]*